

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4404

COMMITTEES:

JUDICIARY

ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES

JOINT ECONOMIC
COMMITTEE

BUDGET

March 12, 2024

Dr. Richard W. Spinrad
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, D.C. 20320

Administrator Spinrad,

We are deeply concerned that the Biden Administration has been using fundamentally inaccurate temperature readings as the underlying justification to advance the climate change agenda, at great cost to the American taxpayer. In 2023, an estimated \$45 billion in federal funds were spent on climate change initiatives.¹ NOAA is responsible for providing the U.S. surface temperature to inform these funding decisions. The data that provides the justification for this massive injection of tax payer dollars should be unbiased, rooted in objective facts, and accurate. To ensure precise data, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) created proper siting standards² for all of its temperature monitoring stations, which are used to determine the U.S. surface temperature. The American public should be able to expect that these standards would lead to an accurate reporting of temperature increases or decreases.

NOAA, however, does not have a history of being compliant with its own standards. In 2011, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) submitted a report to Congress after the temperature monitoring stations were found to be noncompliant with NOAA's own siting standards. The OIG found that 40% of your stations were noncompliant.³ In 2022, a follow up study was done to see if the temperature monitoring stations were relocated, and it found that the proper siting problem has only worsened, with a whopping 96% of your stations reported as noncompliant.⁴

Compounding these problems, NOAA uses volunteers to collect the temperature from your noncompliant temperature monitoring stations.⁵ This has created a situation in which temperature readings that are recorded by unqualified individuals, using machines that don't work, are being

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2022/04/04/quantifying-risks-to-the-federal-budget-from-climate-change/#:~:text=The%20President's%20Budget%20for%20fiscal,60%20percent%20over%20FY%202021.>

² The sensor should be mounted 5 feet +/- 1 foot above the ground. The ground over which the shelter [radiation] is located should be typical of the surrounding area. A level, open clearing is desirable so the thermometers are freely ventilated by air flow. Do not install the sensor on a steep slope or in a sheltered hollow unless it is typical of the area or unless data from that type of site are desired. When possible, the shelter should be no closer than four times the height of any obstruction (tree, fence, building, etc.). The sensor should be at least 100 feet from any paved or concrete surface.

³ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-11-800.pdf>

⁴ https://heartland.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/2022_Surface_Station_Report.pdf

⁵ <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/products/land-based-station/cooperative-observer-network>

used to inform public policy and major spending decisions. Your agency presents its climate reports as a matter of scientific fact, but we now know that the data is not collected in a rigorously controlled scientific environment. "Faking it until you make it," has become the mantra of the Biden Administration's climate policy.

It is with these concerns in mind that we ask that you answer the following questions:

1. How are your volunteers trained to collect data from your temperature monitoring stations?
2. What is your policy to track adherence to your established standards system-wide to ensure consistent and accurate temperature reporting?
3. What are the methods used to standardize your data, and how is the margin of error calculated?
4. How do you peer review your data, and who peer reviews it?
5. Your monitoring stations can detect a change of temperature in seconds. Temporary changes in temperature can be caused by something as simple as a semi-truck blocking the wind. How does your agency account for outliers when computing its daily averages?
6. How many executive branch departments cite NOAA's climate reports to make funding decisions?
7. How long have you known your agency has been noncompliant with its own temperature monitoring station siting standards? Can you commit to relocating every temperature monitoring station that does not comply with your siting standards? If so, when will this relocation be completed?
8. How much taxpayer money has been spent on these temperature monitoring systems nation-wide?
9. Has the manipulation of your temperature data resulted in higher funding levels for NOAA?

We look forward to your answers to the above questions, and urge you to uphold your commitment to your own proper siting standards to ensure informed decisions are made when crafting public policy.

Sincerely,



Senator Mike Lee



Senator Ron Johnson



Senator Pete Ricketts



Congresswoman Harriet M. Hageman