

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Hearing on A Factual Look at the Relationship Between Climate and Weather**

Chairman Smith: Administration officials and the national media regularly use the impacts from hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, and floods to justify the need for costly climate change regulations. President Obama stated in his 2013 State of the Union Address that, “We can choose to believe that Superstorm Sandy, and the most severe drought in decades, and the worst wildfires some states have ever seen were all just a freak coincidence. Or we can choose to believe in the overwhelming judgment of science and act before it's too late.”

However, the “overwhelming judgment of science” does not support the President’s claims. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), there is “high agreement” among leading experts that long-term trends in weather disasters are not due to human-caused climate change.

The story is the same when we look at each type of extreme weather event.

Hurricanes have not increased in the US in frequency, intensity or normalized damage since at least 1900. It has been seven years since a Category 3 or stronger hurricane made landfall in the US. Government data also indicates no association between climate change and tornado activity. Whether measured by the number of strong tornadoes, tornado-related fatalities or economic losses associated with tornadoes, the latter half of the 20th century shows no climate-related trend.

The data on droughts yields similar results. For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration concluded that “climate change was not a significant part” of the recent drought in Texas. And the IPCC found that “in some regions droughts have become less frequent, less intense, or shorter...”

The IPCC’s latest report also states there is “low confidence” in any climate-related trends for flood magnitude or frequency on a global scale. The science is clear and “overwhelming,” but not in the way the president said. The fact is there is little evidence that climate change causes extreme weather events.

Instead of trying to scare the American people and promote a political agenda, the administration should try to protect the lives and property of our nation’s residents from extreme weather by better weather forecasting.

This Committee last week passed bipartisan legislation to do just that. The Weather Forecasting Improvement Act of 2013 strengthens our nation’s ability to save lives and property through advanced research and implementation of next generation weather forecasting abilities.

I hope this hearing will make clear that the impact of climate change is often exaggerated. Politicians and others should rely on good science, not science fiction, when they discuss extreme weather. Otherwise, they will lack credibility when advocating new policy changes.