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Media Contacts: Kim Smith Hicks, Zachary Kurz
(202) 225-6371

**Statement of Environment Subcommittee Chairman Chris Stewart (R-Utah)
Hearing on “Policy Relevant Climate Issues in Context”**

Chairman Stewart: Good morning and welcome to this morning’s Environment Subcommittee hearing entitled “Policy Relevant Climate Issues in Context.”

At his State of the Union address earlier this year, President Obama cited as evidence of climate change that “heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and floods - all are now more frequent and intense.” After calling this issue one of the greatest priorities of his second term, he then signaled his intention to move forward with aggressive actions to combat climate change. Today’s hearing is intended to provide Members a high-level overview of the key factors that should inform our decision-making on what is unfortunately one of the most controversial public policy issues of our day.

Nobel Prize-winning physicist Neils Bohr—later followed by noted philosopher Yogi Berra—famously said, “Prediction is very difficult, especially if it’s about the future.” The scientific and political rhetoric associated with climate change could benefit greatly from the humility espoused by these two gentlemen.

For example, the number and complexity of factors influencing climate—from land and oceans to the sun and clouds—make precise long-term temperature predictions an extremely difficult challenge. This may help explain why “consensus” climate models likely to serve as the basis for major, economy-wide regulatory actions have such poor track records. These models regularly overestimate actual temperature changes and have failed to predict the current 16-year absence of global warming. And let me emphasize this last statement – contrary to the predictions of almost all modeling, over the past 16 years there has been a complete absence of global warming.

There are two obvious lessons here. First, modeling predictions are not infallible. Second, when we encounter those who claim to know precisely what our future climate will look like, and then attack any who may disagree with them, we have stepped out of the arena of science and into the arena of politics and ideology.

It is also important to recognize that the direction we choose to take on climate change is not resolvable by science alone. Once the scientific analysis is complete, we must then make value judgments and economic decisions based on a real understanding of the costs and benefits of any proposed actions. It is through this lens that we should review the President’s forthcoming executive actions and proposed regulations.

While we still don’t know all the specifics of the President’s plan, we know enough to cause me great concern. I am worried that his anticipated restrictions on industrial CO2 emissions may have no discernible impact on climate, but will amount to a significant energy tax on the American people. I am

also concerned that his proposals will reduce our economic activity at a time when we can least afford to do that, while sending jobs overseas to countries such as China and India.

I look forward to discussing this in further detail with our witnesses today, and learning more about how best to approach the important issues of energy, climate, and the environment.

I yield back the balance of my time, and recognize Ranking Member Bonamici for an opening statement.

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