

**Opening Statement**  
**Rep. Ralph Hall (R-TX), Full Committee Ranking Member**  
Committee on Science and Technology  
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment  
MARKUP  
Committee Print, *The National Climate Service Act of 2009*

May 13, 2009

Mr. Chairman, while I think it is important that we are considering this Committee Print, which as I understand it is intended to replace some language in the Waxman-Markey discussion draft to be marked up in Energy & Commerce next week; I would be remiss if I did not express some concern about how this language will be incorporated into a comprehensive cap and trade bill.

I want to ensure that this Committee print will have an opportunity to be marked up at both the subcommittee and full committee to give all our Members a chance to consider the language. I also want to ensure that this will not be the only piece of the Waxman-Markey discussion draft that our Committee will consider.

This Committee has a very important role to play in any debate on a cap and trade and our Members input should not be eliminated in favor of expediency. I sent a letter to the Speaker outlining areas of the original Waxman/Markey discussion draft that I believe this Committee should mark-up. Our Committee's expertise should inform and determine whether and how to implement an economy altering regulatory regime that at its very core will require accurate scientific observations, monitoring, and verification of emissions of greenhouse gases.

As Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson recently stated, "...science must be the backbone of what EPA does..." This Committee stands for that principle and therefore it was of great concern to me that an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memo scrutinized the scientific objectivity surrounding the EPA's recent endangerment finding for greenhouse gases (GHGs).

The White House memo questions the linkage between the Agency's scientific technical support document and the Agency's political summary. OMB in the role of assisting federal regulatory agencies in ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility and integrity of information, noted the EPA endangerment technical support document mentions areas where essential behaviors of GHGs are not well determined and not well understood. Further, the memo points out "there are currently no models available that forecast the potential impacts of greenhouse gases on climate change at the regional and local level, which are the levels at which our decisions are made." This begs the question if a regulatory scheme is not ready for primetime what makes a legislative scheme ready for primetime?

Why would we as a Committee move forward with even one element of a comprehensive regime to regulate greenhouse gases when neither Congress nor the EPA have undertaken

a systematic risk analysis or cost benefit. We should be cautious in moving forward before we have the proper national infrastructure for monitoring and modeling climate variability in place. I would ask that the OMB memo be included in the record of today's subcommittee markup and further that we seek to limit duplicative effort in favor of gathering the necessary sound scientific data so that we move forward in an informed manner. An informed decision is better than a billion dollar gamble on our future.

Weather and climate are very important topics, and I am pleased that our Committee remains at the forefront of policy discussions of this magnitude.

Several years ago, we passed the National Integrated Drought Information System or NIDIS. This program provides information about current and past droughts and also produces drought seasonal forecasts. This type of information is essential to farmers, water managers, energy providers and many others. This is a climate service that NOAA is already providing. The bill before us would coordinate with NIDIS and other programs within NOAA to provide a more organized system to provide climate information to the nation.

While I'm not entirely convinced that any legislation on a climate service is necessary at this time, I understand that our hand has been forced by the workings of other Committees. Therefore, as long as we are moving forward with this idea, I would like to state for the record some concerns that I hope will be resolved before our Committee finishes its work. Specifically, I am concerned about duplication of efforts, the potential for a massive expansion of bureaucracy, a potential ballooning of costs, and the creation of a top-heavy Federal institution that squeezes out the work being done already at the State level and forces local policy-makers to make decisions with information that really isn't useful to them.

I am hopeful that as we move through regular order we will be able to find some common ground.