

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Ralph Hall (R-TX)
Full Committee Markup:
H.R. 2407, the National Climate Service Act of 2009
June 3, 2009

Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate comments I made at the subcommittee markup. This Committee has a very important role to play in any climate debate, and our Members' input should not be eliminated in favor of expediency. The letter I sent to the Speaker, outlining just a few of the provisions in the original Waxman/Markey discussion draft that I believe this Committee should mark-up, has not been acted upon. You and I serve on the Committee on Energy & Commerce, but this does not diminish the fact that the Members of the Committee on Science and Technology should be afforded the opportunity to discuss, debate and amend provisions in our sole or shared jurisdiction. The Committee's expertise and knowledge 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. I note that H.R. 2454 upon introduction received referral to 8 committees, including ours. Will we be marking up those provisions in our jurisdiction found in the introduced bill and the version as reported by the Committee on Energy & Commerce?

As to the task before us today, our Committee held a single hearing on the topic of a National Climate Service at the subcommittee level. Three weeks ago, we had a subcommittee mark-up. Now we move to mark-up the National Climate Service Act of 2009 at the full committee, and I am still not convinced this legislation solves a problem. Again, I say we should be cautious in moving forward until a *reliable and cohesive* national infrastructure for monitoring and modeling climate variability is in place.

I do not believe the products and services provided by a National Climate Service have been adequately explained to this Committee. What are these climate products and services? Who is delivering them? We are well aware of drought forecasts and other such physical science products. But we have also been told that climate products and services require the expertise and knowledge in a myriad of disciplines: meteorology, hydrology, oceanography, forestry, agriculture, human health, demographics, public policy, civil engineering, business, and finance, just to name a few. We need to understand what these products and services are BEFORE we mandate the establishment of a National Climate Service.

It is my understanding that both NOAA and OSTP have the existing authority to create a National Climate Service and are in the process of doing so. *We should certainly assert* our legislative authority over this Administration's proposals. However, language in the bill is phrased in such a way that we may be providing greater latitude than intended. If we are of a mind to authorize *what* the Administration is already doing, then I would suggest we start by authorizing NOAA through a NOAA Organic Act, like the one Dr. Ehlers offered at subcommittee a few weeks ago.

I have to say I have serious reservations about this bill being dropped into H.R. 2454, the Waxman/Markey Cap and Trade bill. The fact that this bill will be slipped into the larger climate bill making its way through the House ensures it is intended to be an even larger force than we were led to believe. The language in H.R.2407 seems to be constructed in a way to allow for the evolution of a National Climate Change Service. This service would not only provide products and services to *help inform* decisions on what crops to plant based on drought forecasts, or how much hydroelectric power may be relied upon for electricity generation in the face of variability in precipitation patterns, but also as part of the Waxman/Markey bill could be expanded to be used *to advance* a regulatory regime that will be disastrous for our country's economic viability.

There has been a misconception that Republicans are against *the science behind* climate change. This notion is not accurate. It is true that climate varies over time. The amendments Republicans offered at subcommittee, and the ones we offer today, are intended to ensure that we get the best data and information possible. These amendments are intended to make sure that Congress has an active hand in the development of a National Climate Service that has significant implications whether or not it is inserted into a larger cap and trade bill. These amendments make sure that the existing responsibilities at NOAA are not forgotten in the face of a brand new service. And finally, these amendments are intended to make sure that the technology and infrastructure upon which this whole concept relies is up to the task.