Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 19, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to convey our grave concerns about any attempt to derail or undermine the process for developing the Fifth National Climate Assessment. We implore you to preserve the integrity of our nation's premier climate science report and work with us to support federal science agencies.

The National Climate Assessment (NCA) is crafted and vetted by the thirteen federal agencies that comprise the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP). It is our government's most comprehensive science-based evaluation of the consequences of the climate crisis, the risks of inaction, and potential adaptation strategies for the United States. The Global Change Research Act of 1990 directs the USGCRP to prepare and submit an assessment to Congress at least once every four years that "integrates, evaluates, and interprets the findings of the Program and discusses the scientific uncertainties associated with such findings; analyzes the effects of global change on the natural environment, agriculture, energy production and use, land and water resources, transportation, human health and welfare, human social systems, and biological diversity; and analyzes current trends in global change, both human-inducted and natural, and projects major trends for the subsequent 25 to 100 years." [1] The sustained assessment process provides Congress, state, local, and Tribal governments, academia, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and the larger scientific community with trusted, reliable, peer-reviewed climate research on a regional scale to inform strategies and policies to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis. Any efforts to disregard the best available science in the process of drafting the Fifth National Climate Assessment would not only fail to comply with congressional intent but will also have long-term implications for the communities that we represent.

We are extremely concerned that the Administration delayed work on the next NCA.[2] These frustrations were only exacerbated by the recent removal of Dr. Michael Kuperberg from his detail as the Executive Director of USGCRP and subsequent reports that Dr. David Legates, a political appointee at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and a long-time climate change denier, may soon assume the role.[3] By undermining the trust built into the process and placed in the leadership of the USGCRP, the Administration is destabilizing the NCA process and politicizing the NCA and its findings.

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[1] Global Change Research Act of 1990. Pub. L. No. 101-606, 104 Stat 3096–3104, November 16, 1990.
[2] Scott Waldman, *Trump team delaying work on major climate report* (October 5, 2020), https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063715433
[3] Christopher Flavelle, Lisa Friedman, and Coral Davenport, *Trump Administration Removes Scientist in Charge of Assessing Climate Change* (November 9, 2020), https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/09/climate/michael-kuperberg-climate-assessment.html

The process for developing the NCA is world-renowned. Scientific experts from different institutions, sectors, fields, and geographic locations author the report. The National Academy of Sciences, an authoritative, independent, non-partisan scientific organization, reviews the NCA. Additionally, the thirteen federal agencies that comprise the USGCRP conduct a technical review of the assessment before it is publicly released. Public engagement is a cornerstone of the process through USGCRP workshops, listening sessions, and formal public comment periods. According to the USGCRP, "a public call for technical inputs resulted in the submission of more than 400 peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and other contributions authored by hundreds of individuals from academia, industry, various levels of government, and nongovernmental organizations" and the Program's National Coordination Office conducted a survey of more than 1,200 articles and reports for Fourth National Climate Assessment authors to consider in their work.[4]

We urge you to increase transparency and make sure that the NCA process is driven by high quality, evidence-based, peer-reviewed science. Our communities are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, facing raging wildfires and extreme weather events. We must preserve this robust process to make sure that they have the regional assessments they need to implement effective mitigation and adaptation efforts. The USGCRP must comply with the Global Change Research Act by evaluating higher-emission scenarios and analyzing all scenarios and effects on the 100-year outlook. The climate crisis is an existential threat and a national emergency. We cannot stand by and tolerate the suppression, censorship, and manipulation of climate science. Peer-reviewed, evidence-based science can and should support and inform policies, and it is vital that the NCA remain free from political interference or bias. We urge you to maintain a collaborative, transparent, peer-reviewed process through USGCRP and provide the nation's top scientists with the resources necessary to produce a Fifth National Climate Assessment that informs our work and the public about the implications of the climate crisis.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

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[4] *Appendix 1: Report Development Process*, Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II, U.S. Global Change Research Program, https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/appendix-1.

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