

**Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici**  
Subcommittee on Environment  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
*"A Factual Look at the Relationship Between Climate and Weather"*  
December 11, 2013 -- 10:00 am

**OPENING STATEMENT**

Mr. Chairman, today we continue what has been a popular topic for this subcommittee and indeed the committee at large: what impacts, if any, the changing climate is having on our daily life and the lives of our constituents. It is not likely that the committee will reach consensus on this question anytime soon, but nonetheless I welcome and appreciate the witnesses who are here today. Dr. Titley, I am interested not just in your experiences at NOAA, but in your work for the Navy, where you rose to the rank of Rear Admiral. And I know I speak for the entire subcommittee when I say that we are very grateful to you for your service to the nation.

Dr. Titley's work has been at the interface of weather and climate through his long career with the U.S. Navy and, now, at Pennsylvania State University. There is a long list of good scientists who would be capable of appearing before us to shed light on the "facts" of the relationship between climate and weather. Actually I would like to see more of them come before this committee, because whatever our diverse views on climate change, there is absolutely no disagreement that severe weather events can devastate our constituents, deprive them of their livelihoods, and sometimes even take their lives. Ruling out research into a potential link between climate change and severe weather events would be burying our heads in the sand.

Recently, I worked with members of the subcommittee on what is now bipartisan legislation to address the federal weather enterprise and how it might be improved to provide our constituents with better warning of severe weather events. My constituents on the coast of Oregon rely on weather forecasting information that can tell them when it is safe to go out fishing, and my constituents in Yamhill County need information on weather patterns to help make decisions about the grapes they grow to make world-famous Oregon pinot noir.

If we are here to learn that it is erroneous to associate any given day's weather or any particular storm with climate change, then that is fine. However, climate change challenges us to think in terms of decades of accumulated change. Making comments on today's weather is easy. Learning what factors might influence long-term climate patterns is significantly more difficult. Our constituents should be able to count on their elected leaders to take a difficult look at a complicated subject. The lesson of this hearing *cannot be* that a potential link between climate change and severe weather is too difficult to determine or understand, and therefore we should stop trying.

It should not be controversial to examine if the weather will change as a consequence of global warming. Scientific projections from the IPCC make it apparent that we will live in a hotter world--we already have a warmer world than that of our grandparents. In many of our districts, residents will experience drier environments with more drought. Those of us who represent particularly wet areas may find that precipitation arriving in more intense storms. The oceans will be warmer and that may well produce stronger or more frequent tropical storms. To focus only on the question of whether there will be more extreme events misses the point that by the end of this century much of the world as we know it, in our districts and states, will be considerably altered by the weather effects of climate change.

We need to face up to the risks of global warming and do more to reduce carbon emissions. Americans have always boldly faced risks and challenges. Our own Armed Services have already begun taking climate change seriously. The Navy, as retired Rear Admiral Dave Titley could attest, has been struggling with the strategic implication of year-round open seas in the Arctic.

In summary: anthropogenic climate change is real; there is a strong consensus that we are already seeing climactic consequences from warming; the continued warming of the globe will have profound effects on our country and the world. This situation creates an opportunity for the United States to show leadership in reducing carbon emissions, as well as in adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Finally I would like to note that I do not want the absence of members on my side of the aisle to be perceived as a lack of interest in this important topic. This morning there is a memorial service for Nelson Mandela at the National Cathedral, and many members are attending that service.

Thank you, I yield back.