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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

BETTINA POIRIER, STAFF DIRECTOR
ANDREW WHEELER, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

July 1, 2008

Mr. Jason Burnett
1415 Swann Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Burnett:

I am deeply concerned about recent reports of White House interference with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) efforts to address the public endangerment posed by global warming. These reports indicate that in your role as a senior climate official at EPA, you resisted White House efforts to censor or reject EPA proposed findings that global warming endangers the public and can be addressed under the Clean Air Act. I appreciate the courage it takes to stand up for your principles in these circumstances.

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works has an ongoing investigation into the Bush Administration's efforts to block meaningful action on global warming, including regulation under the Clean Air Act. Pursuant to that investigation, please answer the following questions:

1. It has been reported that you were asked in December 2007 to retract a communication sent to the White House that included information on the endangerment of public health or welfare from global warming, and that you refused to do so. Please describe your actions, including the communication that you sent, and any request that you received from White House officials that it be retracted or altered.
2. This Committee is also investigating other instances in which federal agency experts' statements on threats from global warming were altered or redacted prior to public release. For example, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) testified before this Committee in October, 2007, and was forced to redact a substantial portion of her testimony regarding the threats to public health from global warming. White House Counsel has confirmed that this testimony was circulated to other agencies for comment.
 - a. Are you aware of any efforts by White House or other officials to encourage or require the redaction of statements by CDC that global warming endangers human health or the environment?

- b. Is it your understanding that such redactions were sought in order to avoid support for a finding of public endangerment that could trigger regulatory action under the Clean Air Act?
 - c. Please provide information on who sought such changes in CDC's testimony, and any role you or White House officials may have played in that effort.
3. Please describe any efforts by White House officials to alter any other testimony regarding the threats posed by global warming in hearings before this Committee for the purpose of avoiding support for a finding of public endangerment that could trigger regulatory action under the Clean Air Act.

Please provide your responses by the morning of July 7, 2008. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Erik Olson of my staff at 202-224-8832. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
Chairman