

Protect Science and the Clean Air Act

January 19, 2010

Dear Senators

We—the 195 undersigned endorsers—urge you to oppose an imminent attack on the Clean Air Act (CAA) that would undermine public health and prevent action on global warming. This attack comes in the form of an amendment by Senator Murkowski to the debt limit bill (H.J.Res. 45) that would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from acting on its finding that global warming endangers public health and welfare. Because the EPA's finding is based on solid science, this amendment also represents a rejection of that science.

The EPA's "endangerment finding" is based on an exhaustive review of the massive body of scientific research showing a clear threat from climate change. The 2007 Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that global warming will cause water shortages, loss of species, hazards to coasts from sea level rise, and an increase in the severity of extreme weather events.¹ The most recent science includes findings that sea level rise may be more pronounced than the IPCC report predicted² and that oceans will absorb less of our future emissions.³ Recently, 18 American scientific societies sent a letter to the U.S. Senate confirming the consensus view on climate science and calling for action to reduce greenhouse gases "if we are to avoid the most severe impacts of climate change." The U.S. National Academy of Sciences and 10 international scientific academies have also released such statements.⁴ Unfortunately, the Murkowski amendment would force the EPA to ignore these scientific findings and statements.

The CAA is a law with a nearly 40-year track record of protecting public health and the environment and spurring innovation by cutting dangerous pollution. This effective policy can help address the threat of climate change—but only if the EPA retains its ability to respond to scientific findings. Instead of standing in the way of climate action, the Senate should move quickly to enact climate and energy legislation that will curb global warming, save consumers money, and create jobs. In the meantime, we urge you to respect the scientific integrity of the EPA's endangerment finding by opposing Senator Murkowski's attack on the Clean Air Act.

Sincerely,

¹ IPCC (2007) Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (AR4). S. Solomon et al. eds., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and NY, USA. More than 450 lead authors, 800 contributing authors, and an additional 2,500 reviewing experts from more than 130 countries contributed to AR4.

² Stroeve, J. Marika M. Holland, Walt Meier, Ted Scambos, and Mark Serreze (2007) Arctic sea ice decline: Faster than forecast Geophysical Research Letters, Vol. 34, L09501, Doi: 10.1029/2007gl029703

³ Canadell, J.G., C. Le Quéré, M. R. Raupach, C. B. Field, E. T. Buitenhuis, P. Ciais, T. J. Conway, N. P. Gillett, R. A. Houghton, and G. Marland. 2007. Contributions to accelerating atmospheric CO₂ growth from economic activity, carbon intensity, and efficiency of natural sinks, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

⁴ A list of these scientific societies and academies and links to their statements is available at <http://www.ucsusa.org/ssi/climate-change/scientific-consensus-on.html>



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