

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Feb. 24, 2015

Robert A. Altenkirch
President, The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Shelbie King Hall, room 374
Huntsville, AL 35899

Dear President Altenkirch:

As Ranking Member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, I have a constitutional duty to protect the public lands, waters and resources of the United States and ensure that taxpayers are able to enjoy them. I write today because of concerns raised in a recent *New York Times* report and documents I have received that highlight potential conflicts of interest and failure to disclose corporate funding sources in academic climate research. Understanding climate change and its impacts on federal property is an important part of the Committee's oversight plan.

As you may have heard, the Koch Foundation appears to have funded climate research by Dr. Willie Soon of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, some of which formed the basis of testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space and Technology and the Kansas State Legislature's House Energy and Environment Committee – funding that was not disclosed at the time. Exxon Mobil, in response to an inquiry from the House Science Committee, may have provided false or misleading information on its funding for Dr. Soon's work. Southern Services Company funded Dr. Soon's authorship of several published climate studies; Dr. Soon did not disclose this funding to many of those journals' publishers or editors.

If true, these may not be isolated incidents. Professor John Christy at the Earth System Science Center has testified many times before the U.S. Congress on climate change. His December 2013 testimony to the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology said of the Nobel Prize-winning U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "We need to put down the IPCC as soon as possible – not to protect the patient who seems to be thriving in its own little cocoon, but for the sake of the rest of us whom it is trying to infect with its disease. Fortunately much of the population seems to be immune, but some governments seem highly susceptible to the disease."¹

I am hopeful that disclosure of a few key pieces of information will establish the impartiality of climate research and policy recommendations published in your institution's name and greatly assist me and my colleagues in making better law. Companies with a direct financial interest in climate and air quality standards are funding environmental research that influences state and federal regulations and shapes public understanding of climate science. These conflicts should be clear to stakeholders, including policymakers who use scientific information to make decisions.

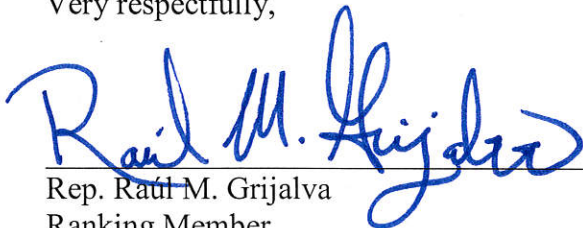
1 – <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/SY/SY18/20131211/101589/HHRG-113-SY18-Wstate-ChristyJ-20131211.pdf>

My colleagues and I cannot perform our duties if research or testimony provided to us is influenced by undisclosed financial relationships. Please respond to the following questions and requests for documents. Please ensure your response is in a searchable electronic format and that your reply quotes each question or request followed by the appropriate response. These inquiries refer to activities conducted between Jan. 1, 2007, and Jan. 31, 2015.

1. What is the university policy on employee financial disclosures? Please provide a full copy of applicable policies, including but not limited to those applying to Prof. Christy.
2. For those instances already mentioned and others that apply, please provide:
 - a. all drafts of Prof. Christy's testimony before any government body or agency or that which, to your knowledge, he helped prepare for others;
 - b. communications regarding testimony preparation.
3. Please provide information on Prof. Christy's sources of external funding. "External funding" refers to consulting fees, promotional considerations, speaking fees, honoraria, travel expenses, salary, compensation and other monies given to Prof. Christy that did not originate from the institution itself. Please include:
 - a. The source of funding;
 - b. The amount of funding;
 - c. The reason for receiving the funding;
 - d. For grants, a description of the research proposal and copy of the funded grant;
 - e. Communications regarding the funding.
4. Please provide all financial disclosure forms he has filed listing UA as his affiliation.
5. Please provide Prof. Christy's total annual compensation for each year covered here.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. Please provide a full response no later than March 16, 2015. Direct questions to Vic Edgerton at vedgerton@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-6065.

Very respectfully,



Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources