To expand communications between Washington and California, the California Institute provides periodic news bulletins regarding current activity on Capitol Hill and other information that directly impacts the state. Bulletins are published weekly during sessions of Congress, and occasionally during other periods.

**CONGRESS: HOUSE REPUBLICANS ELECT REP. KEVIN MCCARTHY MAJORITY LEADER**


Rep. McCarthy represents California’s 23rd District, which covers most of Kern and Tulare Counties, and northeastern Los Angeles County. He was first elected to Congress in 2006. After the 2010 elections, he was elected to the number-three leadership post in the House as Majority Whip.

Among the Majority Leader’s primary responsibilities is setting the House floor schedule and working with committee chairmen to set legislative policy priorities.


The votes in the meeting were by secret ballot.

**TECHNOLOGY: HOUSE JUDICIARY APPROVES PERMANENT TAX-FREE INTERNET**

The House Judiciary Committee, by a vote of 30-4 on June 18, 2014, approved H.R. 3086, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act (PITFA). The legislation makes permanent the provisions of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA) that temporarily bans states from taxing Internet access or placing multiple or discriminatory taxes on e-commerce.

ITFA was first enacted in 1998 and has been extended three times. The most recent extension of ITFA expires on November 1, 2014. By striking the 2014 expiration date, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act makes the moratorium permanent, obviating the need to reauthorize the legislation every few years.

During the markup, Rep. Zoe Lofgren, offered and then withdrew, an amendment that would have placed a five-year moratorium on mobile service taxes.

For more information, go to:
http://www.judiciary.house.gov/index.cfm/hearings?ID=A3C5AA9C-0D61-4B9E-A9C5-3DC657E60ADE
APPROPRIATIONS: HOUSE COMMITTEE APPROVES ENERGY & WATER BILL

The House Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year 2015 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill by voice vote on June 18, 2014. The legislation provides annual funding for national defense nuclear weapons activities, the Army Corps of Engineers, various programs under the Department of Energy (DOE), and other related agencies. The bill totals $34 billion – a $50 million reduction from the fiscal year 2014 enacted level and an increase of $327 million above the President's request. This includes a total of at least $19.992 billion for the Energy Department ($11.4 billion of which is for the DOE's Nuclear Security Administration) and $5.5 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers. Spending provided for the Interior Department includes $856 million for water and related resources, $57 million for the Central Valley Project Restoration fund, and $37 million for the California Bay-Delta restoration.

The bill includes $5.1 billion for the Office of Science – the same as the fiscal year 2014 enacted level, and $40 million below the budget request. This funding supports Advanced Scientific Computing Research, Basic Energy Sciences, Biological and Environmental Research, Fusion Energy Sciences, High Energy Physics, Nuclear Physics, Workforce Development for Teachers and Scientists, Science Laboratories Infrastructure, Safeguards and Security, and Program Direction.

The legislation also contains $1 billion – $100.7 million below the fiscal year 2014 enacted level and $29 million below the President’s request – for the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation to help manage, develop, and protect the water resources of western states.

In response to the drought in California, the bill includes a provision that would allow at least 90% of funds appropriated for the California Bay-Delta Restoration Fund and the Central Valley Project Restoration Fund to be used for purchasing water, until the Secretary certifies that another solution has been implemented in regards to the San Joaquin Valley water shortage. The bill would also prohibit funds from being used to enforce a proposed rule to change the definition of national waters under the Clean Water Act.

The following amendments were adopted by voice vote: the manager's amendment that makes technical and non-controversial changes to the bill and report; an amendment that prohibits funds to implement, finalize, or enforce a new DOE regulation on ceiling fans; and another amendment that adds report language clarifying a provision in the bill to protect pension plan contributions by the National Nuclear Security Administration.

An amendment by Rep. Graves prohibits funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to enforce a ban on firearms on Corps land, as long as the possession of the firearm is in compliance with state law, was adopted on a vote of 31-18.

Two amendments were rejected. One would strike language from the bill that would prohibit funds provided by the bill from being used to enforce an EPA proposal to expand the definition of "national waters" under the Clean Water Act, and failed under an 18-31 vote. The other would strike language in the bill that would give the Army Corps of Engineers the authority to change the definition of "fill materials" or "discharge of fill materials" under the Clean Water Act, and failed by voice vote.

For the text of the bill, please visit:
TRANSPORTATION: HOUSE SCIENCE EXAMINES TRANSPORTATION R&D

The Research and Technology Subcommittee of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee convened on Wednesday, June 18, 2014 for a hearing on the future of surface transportation. Witnesses testified about research, development, and technology deployment (RD&T) in surface transportation (rail, transit, motor carrier and highway), including more than $1.1 billion worth of federally-sponsored research activities at the Department of Transportation, relevant to consideration of the upcoming reauthorization of the surface transportation bill. Issues considered during the hearing included: the elevation of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration into the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, overview of University Transportation Centers, and considerations for the current focus in research on the development of intelligent transportation systems.

Witnesses included: Gregory D. Winfree, Assistant Secretary of Transportation; Scott Belcher, President and CEO, Intelligent Transportation Society of America; John Maddox, Director of Collaborative Program Strategy, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, and University of Michigan Transportation Institute; Kristen Tabar, Vice President, Technical Administration Planning Office, Toyota Technical Center; Christopher P.L. Barkan, Professor, Faculty Fellow and Executive Director, Rail Transportation and Engineering Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Troy Woodruff, Chief of Staff, Indiana Department of Transportation.

The USDOT surface RD&T endeavor is conducted by a host of multi-modal Administrations: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). These efforts have traditionally been coordinated through the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), but as part of the FY 2014 Omnibus bill, RITA was elevated into the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology. The agency now refers to this office as Transportation Planning, Research and Development (TPRD) within the Office of Science and Technology. This office coordinates DOT's research and development activities and investments, awards and administers grants to universities, including 60 University Transportation Centers (UTCs), and sponsors advanced research. According to Gregory Winfree, Assistant Secretary of Transportation, TPRD is committed to enhancing the cross-modal collaboration in research needed to meet 21st century challenges.

One key research program managed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology is the University Transportation Centers (UTC) program, which "supports advanced research, by enabling universities to use their cross-disciplinary capabilities to conduct the advanced work for which they are well-suited. Covering over 120 universities which bring expertise in multiple disciplines, both traditional (civil engineering) and not (public health, psychology and sociology, studying safety culture), UTCs enable the systemic, interdisciplinary, cross-modal research we need to address increasingly complex challenges that cross traditional boundaries," Winfree said. The program is authorized through a MAP-21 provision; for FY 2013 and 2014, the breakdown of funding per center per fiscal year is as follows: five national UTCs up to $3.0 million, ten regional UTCs (one of which must be dedicated to comprehensive transportation safety) up to $2.75 million, and twenty Tier 1 UTCs up to $1.5 million.

The University of California Transportation Center (UCTC) Research Consortium is led by the University of California, Berkeley. Core consortium members include UC Davis, UC Irvine, UC Los Angeles, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara. Affiliate University of California members are located in Pomona, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Luis Obispo. The UCTC was awarded a $3.4-million Region 9 grant from DOT (matched by a Caltrans grant), as authorized under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) transportation bill. For more
information about UCTC and other California-based UTCS, please visit:
http://www.dot.ca.gov/newtech/planning/utc.htm

Connected vehicle safety technology, or the development of an "intelligent transportation system," is currently a major focus of surface transportation R&D, Assistant Secretary Winfree testified. Applications are being developed and designed to increase situational awareness and reduce or eliminate crashes through vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) data transmission. The goals of connected vehicle research are to make surface transportation safer, smarter, and greener by leveraging the potentially transformative capabilities of wireless technology. However, policymakers must consider privacy and system security issues, such as concerns about data-tracking of individual vehicles and system vulnerabilities to cyber-attacks, he cautioned. In February of this year, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) decided to move forward with vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication technology for light duty vehicles. This technology is expected to improve safety and has the potential to reduce non-impaired crashes by 80%, Winfree cited as one example of progress made so far. Vehicles are just one application for connected technologies, as applications can be found across the range of modes of transportation. "I am excited about the research being conducted at the U.S. Department of Transportation. We are addressing serious issues in serious ways for the benefit of the traveling public," he concluded.

For more information, please visit:

RESOURCES: SENATE ENERGY COMMITTEE EXAMINES DOE PERMITTING OF LNG EXPORTS

On Thursday, June 19, 2014, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing titled "How to Harness a Game-Changing Resource for Export, Domestic Consumption, and Transportation Fuel," in which members examined the Department of Energy’s (DOE) program regulating the export of liquefied natural gas (LNG). As has been testified in other House and Senate hearings on the subject, the relatively recent shift in the position of the United States as primarily an importer of natural gas to now having the capacity to being a major exporter presents a number of complex policy considerations as to how to best take advantage of this natural resource to promote job growth, clean energy, and national security interests.

Witnesses included: Chris Smith, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy, Department of Energy; Marty Durbin, President and CEO, America's Natural Gas Alliance, Bob McNally, President, Rapidan Group; Liz Rosenberg, Senior Fellow and Director of the Energy, Environment and Security Program, Center for a New American Security; Daniel J. Weiss, Senior Fellow and the Director of Climate Strategy, Center for American Progress.

"Today, domestic natural gas prices are lower than international prices of delivered LNG to overseas markets. As in the United States, demand for natural gas is growing rapidly in foreign markets. Due primarily to these developments, DOE has received a growing number of applications to export domestically produced natural gas to overseas markets in the form of LNG," stated Chris Smith of the DOE. He provided an outline of the DOE's statutory authority in granting permits to exporters of LNG to both countries that have a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. and those that do not. Applications to export LNG to non-FTA countries are considered after the DOE conducts a full “public interest review.” On June 4, 2014, the Federal Register published a Notice of Proposed Procedures for LNG Export Decisions for a 45 day public review and comment period. Under this proposal, the DOE intends to make final public interest determinations only after a project has completed the National Environmental Policy Act review process, instead of issuing conditional authorizations, as is the current practice. By removing the intermediate step of conditional decisions and setting the order of DOE decision-making based on readiness for final action, DOE will prioritize resources on the more commercially advanced projects, Smith explained.
Robert McNally, President and Founder of The Rapidan Group LLC, testified in general support of this proposed rule, while also expressing some concerns. He testified that the new process will “level the playing field” for exporters, and that it will increase the capacity for the DOE to consider applications. However, he noted three main concerns: (1) there is no certainty this process will remain in force and it could be changed again; (2) there appears to be no timeframe for DOE to decide when to grant a final permit once the environmental review has concluded; (3) there are new risks that in the new process obstructionist litigation could increase project delays and uncertainty. “While the overall impact of DOE’s new LNG export approval process remains to be seen... going forward, policymakers should act expeditiously to remove outdated, inefficient, and costly barriers to energy production, transportation, and trade in order of our country to realize the full economic and national security benefits of the shale oil and gas boom,” McNally concluded.

For more information, please visit:

RESOURCES: HOUSE AG HOLDS OVERTSIGHT HEARING ON CLEAN WATER ACT DEFINITION

Following a hearing last week by the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on the joint Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers proposed rulemaking to redefine the regulatory term "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act, the House Agriculture Committee Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy and Forestry convened on Thursday, June 19, 2014 to examine the agricultural exemptions in the proposed rule. While the EPA and Corps contend that the rule is necessary to clarify and simplify issues around the definition of “navigable waters,” many have voiced concern that the rule extends the scope of regulatory authority unnecessarily and detrimentally.

Witnesses included: Robert Bonnie, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Don Parrish, Senior Director, Regulatory Relations, American Farm Bureau Federation; Andy Fabin, Producer, Fabin Bros. Farms, Indiana, Pennsylvania; on behalf of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association; Chip Bowling, First Vice President, National Corn Growers Association; and Scott Kovarovics, Executive Director, Izaak Walton League of America.

Last week, Bob Stallman of the American Farm Bureau testified against the rule, and his testimony was resubmitted as part of the record of this hearing. More specifically for this hearing, Don Parrish of AFB focused on the Interpretive Rule Regarding the Applicability of Clean Water Act Section 404(f)(1)(A) (IR) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among EPA, the Corps and USDA. His major concern stems from the view that the interpretative rule as published in the Federal Register is not a proposal, as it became effective immediately without advance public notice and comment, and it establishes binding and enforceable requirements for farmers. By this action, he argues, the EPA and the Corps have effectively limited congressionally authorized agricultural exemptions that have been in place for 37 years. “These actions by the agencies create tremendous uncertainty and risk for farmers and ranchers—especially in light of the proposed rule’s broad expansion of ‘navigable waters.’ Congress provided broad statutory exemptions for normal farming, silviculture and ranching activities. However, Congress also limited those exemptions, so that even ‘normal’ farming, silvicultural and ranching activities require a Clean Water Act section 404 permit if the activity may impair the flow or circulation of navigable waters or reduce the reach of navigable waters.” Similar arguments were given by Andy Fabin of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association; he said that the rule could have “devastating impacts” on conservation practices being implemented on the ground, due to the perception of increased liability for farmers and ranchers if the definition of “waters of the U.S.” is expanded.
In defense of the Interpretative Rule, Robert Bonnie explained how it is the view of the USDA that the IR will actually help rather than hurt farmers, and that it does not in effect expand regulatory authority. First, he refutes the claim that the rule will cause farmers to have to seek more burdensome permitting for normal farming practices; he emphasizes that the IR even lists 56 agriculture conservation practices, in addition to those that are traditionally considered “normal” practices, that fall under the statutory exemption and do not require a section 404 permit. Second, he says that the IR exemption is “self-implementing,” meaning that producers do not need to notify the regulatory agencies or seek review or certification. Rather, producers can follow the conservation practice standard and implement practices on their own, without NRCS involvement, and not be required to seek a 404 permit. “The benefit of the IR is that it provides clarity for agricultural producers, promotes conservation, and benefits agriculture and water resources....The list of successes will grow as the agencies and producers gain more understanding of the opportunity provided by the IR,” Bonnie concluded.


**ECONOMY: SENATE SMALL BUSINESS EXAMINES EXPORTS AND JOBS**

The Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee held a hearing entitled, "Growing Small Business Exports, Growing U.S. Jobs," on Wednesday, June 18, 2014. Witnesses, several of whom are owners of small businesses, identified obstacles to entering the international market as well challenges for growing businesses post market entry. All of the witnesses testified in support of the U.S. Small Business Administration's STEP (State Trade and Export Program), a three-year pilot initiative to make matching-fund grants to states to assist eligible small business concerns enter and succeed in the international marketplace.

Witnesses included: Mark Calhoon, Senior Managing Director, Business Services Division, Washington State Department of Commerce; Robert Campbell, President and CEO, Alliance Solutions Group, Inc.; Eric Hahn, Vice President of Organizational Development, General Plastics Manufacturing Company; W. Dan Hendrix, President and CEO, World Trade Center Arkansas; Donald F. Tyler, Director, Corfin Industries, LLC; and Jennifer Verdon, Manager, Idaho Commerce Department.

As a beneficiary of STEP, Bob Campbell described the success and challenges faced by his service-disabled, veteran-owned small business Alliance Solutions Group (ASG). The three most significant obstacles to market entry for his business, he explained, have been: lack of local presence; navigating the regulatory environment (both US and foreign) in regards to export compliance, tax-related, financial, and security issues; and limited financial capacity to invest in exhibitions, marketing, travel and legal consulting. After achieving market entry, he sees two new obstacles. First is a price disadvantage due to both competitors with high-knowledge, low-labor cost human resources, and tax treatment disparity between US-owned and foreign entities when operating internationally. Second is the challenge of assessing potential partners with due diligence and engaging in contracts in a way that adequately protects his business’s interests. "The complexity and multitude of risks involved are daunting for a small business and require extensive legal counsel in tax, security, contract law, export compliance, labor law, among other areas," he testified. The STEP program assisted the company with approximately $20,000 for a trade mission to the United Arab Emirates, market-specific conference and exhibition participation, development of an export compliance program, training, and completion of its first technical assistance agreement; STEP also introduced ASG to other businesses going global, consultants, law firms and the US Commercial Services in our Consulates. "Reauthorization of the STEP program will help enable more US businesses to establish their products and services abroad, creating more jobs, generating more revenue and investment, promoting economic development abroad as well as goodwill," Campbell concluded. Eric Hahn and Donald Tyler provided similar testimony about the positive impact STEP had on their small businesses.
In addition to managing the Washington State export promotion program, Mark Calhoon is a board member of State International Development Organization (SIDO), a cooperative effort of the Council of State Governments and the majority of state trade offices, which promotes best practices, and represents state interests relating to the trade agenda. He offered state level perspectives on helping small businesses start or expand their international sales, explaining that state export promotion programs are typically an integral part of a statewide economic development strategy that delivers a range of support and services to small businesses in order to drive economic growth and create jobs.

The California State Trade and Export Promotion (California STEP) project leverages a statewide network of state, federal, private and non-profit trade promotion organizations to facilitate export promotion, activities, serving targeted industries, to drive exports for small businesses. To learn more about California STEP, please visit http://citd.org/about/

For the complete testimony of witnesses, please visit:
http://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=Hearings&ContentRecord_id=515ab86e-6923-49c5-8f7a-8607d6de799e&ContentType_id=14f995b9-dfa5-407a-9d35-56cc7152a7ed&Group_id=43eb5e02-e987-4077-b9a7-1e5a9cf28964

**Homeland Security: House Committee Assesses First Responder Issues**

On Wednesday, June 18, the House Homeland Security Committee held a hearing titled "The Critical Role of First Responders: Sharing Lessons Learned from Past Attacks," in which witnesses discussed the role of first responders in their vital response and recovery mission, as well as how federal authorities can best coordinate with state and local law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical responders to prevent attacks. The Committee sought insight about the implementation of recommendations from the Boston Marathon bombing report and lessons from other attacks and disasters; witnesses testified that emergency preparedness has worked and must continue to be improved so that first responders have access to real-time threat reports and all applicable federal information so that they can do their job to the best of their ability.

Witnesses included: John Miller, Deputy Commissioner, Intelligence and Counterterrorism, New York City Police Department, New York City, N.Y.; James Schwartz, Chief, Arlington County Fire Department, Arlington, Va.; James Hooley, Chief, Boston Emergency Medical Services; and Brian A. Jackson, Director, RAND Safety and Justice Program, RAND Corporation.

In the wake of both the September 11, 2001 attacks and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, multiple legislative and executive actions have aimed to improve federal, state, and local coordination for subsequent response operations. "The contrast between well-executed recent responses like those in Boston or to Hurricane Sandy and the response to Hurricane Katrina is striking," testified Dr. Jackson of the RAND Corporation. Given the challenges of state and local level fiscal austerity since the economic downturn, and the upward trend of large-scale natural disasters requiring more extensive and expensive response operations, Dr. Jackson provided a set of recommendations for Congressional focus in its oversight role to improve the national preparedness system. The three top recommendations based on RAND research were: developing better ways to assess and measure preparedness to maintain both responders' and public confidence that the national preparedness system will be there when they need it; lessons from preparedness exercises should more effectively inform the goal of improved adaptability and agility of the national response system; and, continued support and improvement upon capabilities and programs that protect emergency responders' health and safety at large-scale incidents and disaster responses are vital.

As chairman of the Terrorism and Homeland Security Committee of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), which represents the leadership of the nation's fire, rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS), James Hooley provided an evaluation of the direct response to the Pentagon attacks of September 11 and the subsequent application of lessons learned, as well as an evaluation of the current strengths and weaknesses of the national preparedness system. He offered four key recommendations to address ongoing concerns about disaster readiness in diverse locales.
To begin with, he urged Congress to take action to ensure that local first response agencies are being reimbursed for their mutual aid activities. When a resource is dispatched from a locality across local or state lines to help with a mutual aid response, the local first response agency potentially can lose those resources for weeks and will have to backfill to protect its community. Citing the October 2007 California wildland fires, among other disasters, he said that a local fire department can be left waiting for months or even years to get reimbursed; in tight budget times, many jurisdictions cannot wait that long and as a result may not be as responsive to future requests for assistance during major national emergencies if the reimbursement system is not reformed and improved.

Next, he testified that best practices learned from successful uses of grant programs should be shared more widely. For example, the National Capital Region developed a patient tracking system to track victims' basic information and conditions, which allows them to be distributed to hospitals and tracked throughout their time in the system. If another jurisdiction is interested in developing a similar system, it should be able to find out about it at a clearinghouse instead of having to re-invent the wheel.

Third, he noted that while improved since September 11, federal information sharing with state and local partners remains an issue. The need for a security clearance remains a barrier for some fire chiefs to access information. Also, once a chief receives information, he or she is limited with what can be done with it as command staff may not have clearances. In other cases, information may be over-classified or not written with a practical purpose, Hooley testified.

Finally, the IAFC supports a continued focus on the adoption of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which has been developed as a comprehensive, nationwide approach to incident management. While federal grant programs provide assistance in NIMS adoption, because a grantee must comply with NIMS in order to receive grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), organizational and professional biases still present a challenge in its adoption. "We need to review NIMS training and ensure that federal, state, local, tribal and territorial partners are all adopting NIMS and operating with it," he testified. "The nation has made many improvements to its national preparedness system to prevent such a tragedy from happening again. However, the terrorist threat continues to adapt, and we must adapt to meet it."

For more information, please visit:

ENVIRONMENT: SENATE EPW COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

On Wednesday, June 18, 2014 the Clean Air and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing titled "Climate Change: The Need to Act Now," in which four former Administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as a University of California scientist, testified about the positive effects of landmark environmental laws, ongoing concerns about destruction of natural resources, and ways to address these concerns. Chairwoman Barbara Boxer opened by saying, “I am proud that our landmark environmental laws were created with an overwhelming bipartisan consensus...in 1970, the Clean Air Act passed the Senate by a vote of 73-0, passed the House by 375-1, and was signed into law by President Nixon. In 1990, revisions to the Clean Air Act passed the Senate by a vote of 89-11and by 401-21 in the House, and were signed into law by President George H.W. Bush.”

Witnesses included: Daniel Botkin, Professor Emeritus of Biology, University of California, Santa Barbara; William D. Ruckelshaus, Strategic Adviser, Madrona Venture Group and Former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; Christine Todd Whitman, President, Whitman Strategy Group, and Former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; William K. Reilly, Senior Adviser, TPG Capital, and Chairman Emeritus, ClimateWorks Foundation, and Former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; Lee M. Thomas, Former Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; Luther Strange,
Attorney General, State of Alabama; and Joseph R. Mason, Louisiana Bankers Association Endowed Professor of Banking, Louisiana State University, and Senior Fellow, The Wharton School.

“Several months ago, after talking with one another, the four former EPA administrators sitting in front of you found we were convinced by the overwhelming verdict of scientists that the earth was warming and that we humans were the only controllable contributor to this phenomenon. Given those facts we all signed an op ed piece that recommended that America get serious about reducing our contribution to changing the world’s climate rather than simply sitting back and accepting the avoidable consequences,” began William Ruckelshaus. “We have, as EPA administrators, served four Presidents over four decades. We have successfully wrestled with a variety of public health and environmental problems, all contentious, including severe automobile and industrial air pollution, widespread water pollution and the unacceptable effects of pesticides like DDT.” He cited examples of progress made, such as cutting automobile emissions by 95% while the number of cars has doubled, and testified that the hole in the ozone layer and acid rain are under control. While uncertain science and powerful economic interests resisted controls, in all of the cases cited, the solutions to the problems did not result in the predicted economic and social calamity, he argued. Legitimate scientific debate over the pace and effects of climate change should not be a reason for inaction, he said, and cautioned that if the U.S. fails to combat these effects, the rest of the world is unlikely to take responsibility either.

Dr. Botkin, of the University of California, Santa Barbara, has been publishing research since 1968 on theoretical global warming, its potential ecological effects, and the implications for people and biodiversity. He has served as an adviser in multiple capacities to the California State Legislature. He testified that his goal has always been to bring “a rational, scientific approach to addressing a highly charged issue.” His testimony was a critique of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2014 report and the White House Climate Change Assessment, in which he acknowledged claims in both reports that are scientifically sound while calling into question or altogether denying the validity of other claims. “My biggest concern is that both the reports present a number of speculative, and sometimes incomplete, conclusions embedded in language that gives them more scientific heft than they deserve,” he testified. “The extreme over-emphasis on human-induced global warming has taken our attention away from many environmental issues that used to be front and center but have been pretty much ignored in the 21st century. By my count there are ten issues, including global warming. A singular focus on climate change as the driver of the other nine obscures the best solutions to the full suite of environmental challenges we face. In terms of ‘the need to act now’ it is on these issues that we should focus, with the concern with a possible global warming prioritized properly with that group.” The most pressing environmental issues, besides climate change, according to Dr. Botkin are: energy, fresh water, habitat destruction, invasive-species control, direct threats to endangered species, pollution by directly toxic substances, fisheries, forests, and phosphorus and other essential minerals. He went on to recommend that there should be a return to the reliance on science done by individuals and small groups with a common specific interest and focus, and discussed specific areas where research should be bolstered.