



## U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Majority Page

### Senate EPW Republicans Take a Stand for Academic Freedom

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## Senate EPW Republicans Take a Stand for Academic Freedom

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OKla.), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW), today led all EPW Republicans in a letter promoting scientific discovery and academic freedom. The letter was sent to the same 107 recipients of letters sent earlier this week by Congressional Democrats to universities, private companies, trade groups, and non-profit organizations, asking for detailed information on funding climate science. As explained in the EPW Republican letter sent today, there is a real concern the Democrats inquiry may impose a chilling effect on scientific inquiry and free speech.

**“Rather than empower scientists and researchers to expand the public discourse on climate science and other environmental topics, the [Democrats] letter could be viewed as an attempt to silence legitimate intellectual and scientific inquiry,”** said the Senators in today’s letter.

There has been a public outcry in response to the Democrats letters. Noted climate scientist, Dr. Michael Mann spoke of the letters calling them “heavy handed and overly aggressive.” Earlier today the American Meteorological Society warned that the letters sent by Congressional Democrats send a “chilling message to all academic researchers.”

**“At the end of the day, those disagreeing with certain scientific findings should judge them based on whether or not they are sound and transparent,”** said Chairman Inhofe.

The full text of the letter is as follows:

February 27, 2014

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We write in regards to the recent request for information on your support of scientific research initiated by several of our colleagues in the United States Congress. At the outset, we are deeply concerned the letter calls into question the importance of scientific discovery and academic freedom. Rather than empower scientists and researchers to expand the public discourse on climate science and other environmental topics, the letter could be viewed as an attempt to silence legitimate intellectual and scientific inquiry.

Federal government-sponsored research is good and necessary, but such funding has limits. The federal government does not have a monopoly on funding high-quality scientific research, and many of the nation's environmental laws require decisions be based on the best scientific information available—not just federally funded research. At the core of American ingenuity are those researchers who challenge the status quo whether in matters of climate, economics, medicine, or any field of study. Institutions of higher-learning and non-governmental funding are vital to facilitating such research and scientific inquiry. Limiting research and science to only those who receive federal government resources would undermine and slow American education, economic prosperity, and technological advancement.

The credibility of a scientific finding, research paper, report, or advancement should be weighed on its compliance with the scientific method and ability to meet the principles of sound science; in short, it should be weighed on its merits. The scientific method is a process marked by skepticism and testing, rather than dogma. **If the work can be reproduced and independent experts have a fair chance to validate the findings then it is sound, irrespective of funding sources. Science the federal government uses to support regulatory decisions should also comply with the integrity, quality, and transparency requirements under the Information Quality Act and Office of Management and Budget Guidelines.**

Indeed, science is only one criterion we must take into consideration when developing laws and regulations. Credible deliberation requires thoughtful analysis and an understanding of the economy, policy, and legal framework in which we function. Dissenting opinions fostered through the encouragement of all ideas is what truly facilitates intellectual prosperity and political discourse.

The letter you received from our colleagues is a wholly inappropriate effort to challenge these well-accepted truths. We ask you to not be afraid of political repercussions or public attacks regardless of how you respond. Above all, we ask that you continue to support scientific inquiry and discovery, and protect academic freedom despite efforts to chill free speech.

Sincerely,

Sen. Jim Inhofe, Chairman  
Sen. David Vitter  
Sen. John Barrasso  
Sen. Shelley Moore Capito  
Sen. Mike Crapo  
Sen. John Boozman  
Sen. Jeff Sessions  
Sen. Rodger F. Wicker  
Sen. Deb Fischer  
Sen. Mike Rounds  
Sen. Dan Sullivan  
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[http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore\\_id=4e7cc6b6-9a99-4732-bcf7-f13bee221ab9](http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore_id=4e7cc6b6-9a99-4732-bcf7-f13bee221ab9)

**EPW Letter to University of Alabama, Huntsville, and other universities**

[http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore\\_id=196eb54d-de19-4f09-9879-a0e533147a1f](http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore_id=196eb54d-de19-4f09-9879-a0e533147a1f)

EPW Letter to American Petroleum Institute and other corporations