

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2010

The Honorable Todd J. Zinser
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of Inspector General
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Inspector General Zinser:

We understand that at the request of Members of Congress your office is currently reviewing the reliability of temperature networks maintained by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). I look forward to reading your report on this topic.

Your investigation into this matter is essential in light of the correspondence released last November between researchers at the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia and many of the world's leading climate scientists. I was encouraged to read recently that the Met Office, the UK's equivalent of the U.S. National Weather Service, has initiated a 3-year reexamination of 150 years of global temperature records. This effort was spurred in good measure by the CRU controversy, as the Met Office collaborates with CRU in publishing one of three of the world's leading temperature datasets.

With this in mind, I am concerned by the reported reaction of NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco to the CRU controversy. She has been quoted as saying that "the emails really do nothing to undermine the very strong scientific consensus and the independent scientific analyses of thousands of scientists around the world that tell us that the earth is warming and that the warming is largely a result of human activities." To my knowledge, neither NOAA nor Commerce has initiated a review similar in scale and scope to that of the Met Office in response to the CRU controversy. For this reason, I am requesting the following:

- Please determine whether NOAA has conducted any level of review of temperature data contained in the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) Global Historical Climatology Network (GHCN) dataset (Dataset Index Identifier-9100). If not, determine why such a review of NCDC's GHCN temperature data has not been conducted in lieu of the correspondence released last November between CRU of the University of East Anglia and many of the world's leading climate scientists.
- Given that Dr. Thomas Karl, Director of NCDC, was noted on several CRU emails, please determine whether any information exchanged in those emails impinges on: 1) the methodologies used to compile the raw (i.e., actual measurements) data or adjusted (e.g., algorithms and computer codes) data that comprise the NCDC GHCN temperature

dataset, 2) whether this information affected NOAA's peer-review procedures, and; 3) whether this information affected NOAA's obligations to comply with the Federal Information Quality Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and the Shelby Amendment.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with these requests. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Minority Staff at (202) 224-6176.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sen. M. Inhofe", with a horizontal line underneath.

Senator James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment
And Public Works