



## United States Senate

November 2, 2020

Dr. Neil Jacobs  
Acting Administrator  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Jacobs:

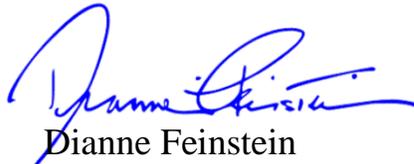
I write to express my concern regarding recent reports that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is sidelining career scientists in an attempt to downplay the threat of climate change and to undermine NOAA's scientific publications regarding climate change. I ask that you respond to the attached questions in a timely manner.

Climate change is an existential threat, as evidenced by the historic fires raging across California and the Western United States. As such, I find it deeply troubling that those serving in key posts at your agency have questioned the basic tenets of climate change. For example, Dr. David R. Legates, recently appointed as NOAA's Deputy Assistant Secretary, has a long record of climate change skepticism. As recently as December 2018, Dr. Legates coauthored "Climate Change Reconsidered," which claimed that the use of fossil fuels has no net impact on extreme weather or rising sea levels, an assertion that directly contradicts peer-reviewed research published by NOAA.

I am particularly concerned that political influence could undermine the National Climate Assessment, the authoritative federal report on climate change that is produced and vetted by 13 federal agencies. This quadrennial report has illustrated for both policymakers and the American public the devastating impacts that a warming climate will have on our current way of life. On November 23, 2018, the most recent report found that "climate change threatens the health and well-being of the American people by causing increasing extreme weather, changes to air quality, the spread of new diseases by insects and pests, and changes to the availability of food and water." The continued scientific integrity of this report is essential if we are to successfully combat climate change.

I urge you to promote reliable and properly vetted information at NOAA so that the public may have faith in the information it receives. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and I look forward to your responses to the attached questions.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Enclosure: Questions for NOAA and *New York Times* Article

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Enclosure: Questions for NOAA from Senator Dianne Feinstein

1. As Acting Administrator, what role did you play in appointing non-career staff to key positions at NOAA, including Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction?
2. As Acting Administrator, did you sign-off on the removal of Craig McLean as NOAA's acting chief scientist? For what purpose was Mr. McLean removed from his position?
3. Do you agree with NOAA's scientific integrity policy, including that under "no circumstance may any NOAA official ask or direct Federal scientists or other NOAA employees to suppress or alter scientific findings"?
4. How can you assure the American public that the next National Climate Assessment will be based solely on science and not inappropriate political pressure?