



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on December 5, 2009

Obama's Science Czar in Climategate Hot Seat

President Obama's science adviser faced intense questioning from House Republicans this week in a hearing on Capitol Hill. At issue was the role Science "Czar" John Holdren played in Climategate and his support of researchers implicated in that scandal.



The stated intent of the [hearing](#) of the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming was to help "reach diplomatic consensus on a planetary solution" before the UN Climate Change Conference begins in Copenhagen on Monday. Committee Chair Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), who denied Republican requests to invite witnesses to the hearing, [opened](#) it by explaining the science on climate change is settled and warning of the serious impacts society faces if Congress does not act quickly to reverse global warming.

Ranking committee member James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.) [contended](#), "What we have just heard from the Chairman is a case of denial on what's happened recently." He pointed to private e-mails hacked from a climate research facility in November that implicate many of Holdren's colleagues in complicity to forward their own political agenda, saying: "As policy makers we should all be concerned when key climate scientists write in private correspondence that they found a 'trick' to 'hide the decline' in temperature data documented in climate studies."

While Sensenbrenner readily admitted the e-mails "don't undermine everything we know about climate change," he called the content shocking and said they "show a pattern of suppression, manipulation and secrecy that was inspired by ideology, condescension and profit." He accused those involved of scientific fascism and declared his hope that the scandal proves climate-change science is not settled.

He proceeded to question Holdren as to whether he advises the President based on the fraudulent science and whether he still supports the scientists implicated in Climategate. Holdren did not answer directly but claimed he would like to get to the bottom of the controversy. He said the e-mails do not call all climate-change science into question. Sensenbrenner then quoted Holdren from the e-mails and scolded him for "name-calling" of global warming skeptics.

Congressman Jay Inslee (D-Wash.) countered Sensenbrenner's accusations of "scientific fascism" with an emotional rebuttal. Sensenbrenner defended his statement, saying the e-mails show Climategate scientists used intimidation techniques against skeptics. "We're being asked as a Congress to make major changes in American society ... as a result of this debate," he warned. "The scientists may be able to change their story, but once Congress passes a law, it will be as difficult to repeal the consequences of that law as putting milk back into the cow." He also showed evidence that Holdren's own track



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record demonstrates he has often held extremist views later proven wrong. He questioned Holdren's suitability as science adviser to President Obama and the U.S. Congress in light of that fact. Holdren said he always bases his advice on the best information available at the time.

The remainder of the hearing focused on recent climate-change findings, including a multi-media presentation by Chairman Markey. The only scientists allowed to testify were Holdren and Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Both witnesses are outspoken advocates of legislation to curb greenhouse gas emissions and impose cap-and-trade measures on Americans.

Thumbnail photo of John Holdren: AP Images



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