

U.S. House of Representatives

Select Committee on

Energy Independence and Global Warming

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Ranking Republican

News Advisory

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‘Gloom-and-Doom’ Stretches Scientific Facts on Climate Change

*Sensenbrenner: Realistic Approach Will Protect Jobs and Create
Environmental Benefits*

Washington, D.C., April 26 - Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., ranking Republican on the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, issued the following statement during today’s hearing titled, “Dangerous Climate Change:”

“The title of today’s hearing sounds a little like a scary movie: Dangerous Climate Change!

“We’ve seen this film before. It stars industrialized society, a character who improves the livelihood of billions of humans by providing them with vital jobs and services. But in this movie, industry is actually the villain, with an evil plan to destroy the Earth with invisible, odorless gases.

“The hero, Al Gore, like an intrepid detective, has dug through the science and uncovered this nefarious plot. Naturally, our protagonist has a heroic way to defeat the villain: raise taxes.

“Yes, the climate is changing and human behavior bears some responsibility. But scientific predictions on whether these changes will be on the margin, or the extremes, or somewhere in between, remains a question.

“Without predicting catastrophe, it’s hard to advocate a tax hike.

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“As I said last week, I firmly believe that many of these gloom-and-doom scenarios are Hollywood-style stretches of scientific data that, when studied closely, presents a much more sober and thoughtful picture. And while extremist scenarios haven’t helped us make much progress in more than a decade of climate change debate, they’ve made for one scary script.

“I am pleased that one of our witnesses today, Dr. John Helms, offers climate change solutions that will not only protect American jobs, but also give us healthier forests. I would like to thank Congressman Walden for bringing Dr. Helms to the committee’s attention and I look forward to his testimony.

“As a member of the House Science and Technology Committee for nearly three decades, and as chairman of that committee for four years, I have developed a healthy respect for scientists when they are presenting the facts and answering specific questions posed by decision makers.

“Scientists are also entitled to step beyond that role and advocate policy. But when they do so, they are stepping out of the scientific debate and into the political debate, where jobs and the economy have to be considered along with the scientific data. And once scientists step into the political debate by advocating policy, their legitimacy and motives are open to questioning, just as they are for politicians.

“One of our witnesses today, Dr. James Hansen, has chosen to wade into the political debate by making these sorts of policy proposals, and I welcome him.

“I also welcome realistic proposals that will help us with energy independence and global warming, but any proposal must contain four key principles:

“First, it must bring tangible environmental benefits to the American people.

“Second, it must support advancing technology, including technologies across the energy spectrum, from nuclear to clean coal to renewables to improved energy efficiencies.

“Third, any climate change policy must protect U.S. jobs.

“And fourth, it must require global participation. China will pass us this year as the largest emitter of CO2.

“In creating global warming hysteria, the authors of that scary screenplay have stuck to a very simple script. But we in Congress know the story is more complex than that. The title of our movie – Protect the Economy and the Environment – may not sell as many tickets or win an Academy Award, but it is a common-sense plot that most Americans can understand.”

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