

May 31, 2007

Mr. Chairman Markey, Congressman Sensenbrenner and other Select Committee Members:

I'm here to tell you about changes that I have observed over the forty years I have been hunting and fishing in the great state of New Hampshire.

I'm not a scientist, but from my subjective observations walking the woods and being on the rivers, lakes and ponds, I feel many changes are occurring that must affect fish and wildlife – and people.

Over recent years, I find that during the deer hunting season in November, I've been out on many more warm days, sometimes in the high 60's or low 70's. Instead of snow, I'm now more concerned with rain. Recently, a whole industry has risen for waterproof hunting gear. I've also been finding ticks on me and my hunting buddies when those ticks should be resting for the winter. While deer hunting, I've been swatting at mosquitoes when they too should have been knocked down with the first hard frost. To me this is a fairly recent phenomenon. Unfortunately, each of these insects now carries new, potentially lethal danger to humans in New Hampshire – West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease.

Although these right now, are annoyances to me, my major concerns are the dynamics behind these changes and the effects they will have on our environment, wildlife and people. The scientists have empirical data which they can use to make that determination. I know I have seen moose beds with blood in them due to heavy infestations of moose ticks. When the environment is right for them, these ticks can collect by the thousands on a moose and place such a heavy blood drain as to be fatal. I do know that northern wildlife can come under a lot of stress when we have longer and longer warm spells at a time when they have made necessary changes for cold weather. It's not uncommon to see white snowshoe hares running around in the snowless woods.

I also see that many of the ponds that I hunt near are not as regularly ice-covered as they were years ago. In days past I could walk across them during the hunting season, but not as much any more. I know ice fishermen who tell me they get fewer days out due to unreliable ice conditions on the lakes. When the ice-in comes, it comes with winds and temperatures in the 10's. So ice fishing as a sport, along with the small businesses that support it miss out.

More streams are warming. The most popular fish in New Hampshire is the native Brook Trout. This fish does poorly in warming water and many more of our streams seem to be warming sooner in the Spring. Aquatic insects, which make up most of the brook trout's diet, are also negatively affected by warmer water temperatures. No insects, no brook trout.

Back in the early to mid 1970's I, along with many others, noticed that we had some turkey vultures appearing around Ashland, New Hampshire, just a little south of Cannon Mountain. It was an attraction. These birds seldom ventured north of Connecticut. Now, while fishing or hunting I regularly see Turkey Vultures overhead along the New Hampshire – Canada border.

The other day, a friend helped a "threatened" Wood Turtle to cross a road in New Boston. This turtle was moving from a marsh to lay eggs in sandy soil. In the past, this friend has consistently recorded such Wood Turtle nesting activity in mid-June.

The American Woodcock season in New Hampshire is from October 1st to October 30<sup>th</sup> and has been for years. Over the last decade, New Hampshire hunters missed out on quality woodcock hunting as the southerly migration of this game bird has occurred much later, from very late October through mid-November. New Hampshire Fish & Game biologists agree that something has moved this bird's migration to a later date.

We now have Bluefish coming into New Hampshire and Maine waters. When I was a youngster, they didn't venture north of Cape Cod. It's something of a boon to anglers, but I'm concerned about the secondary effects of their presence on species that developed without them, and why we have the warmer water they follow.

To me, these are obvious signs of a warming of New Hampshire's climate and currents. But I think the term "Global Warming" doesn't do justice to the changes that are occurring. Along with a warming trend, we have more weather extremes. A popular trout river, the Piscataquog, in New Boston, has experienced two consecutive years of so-called Hundred Year Floods.

We have had disastrous floods occur within 10 years of each other along the Ashuelot and Cold Rivers in Western NH.

Again, I'm not a scientist and these are subjective observations. It's up to the many scientists and biologists to determine cause and effect. But I do know that what I see is a clear trend. I also know that carbon emissions which affect climate are a pollutant to the environment and have a negative affect on the health of all living things. I believe, we must take decisive action to dramatically reduce pollutants and that includes carbon emissions. New industries can emerge from such an effort.

When Congress set its mind to it, it cleaned up the multi-colored textile rivers, of the Merrimack and Nashua and many other rivers in America. It even cleaned up Boston Harbor (finally)! Across the country, we have reduced particulate matter in the air and the pollution in much of our running and standing water. I believe your Select Committee has the ability to start a new wave rolling to dramatically cut back on the gasses that I believe are now causing these climate changes.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bill Koury