

Nancy M.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 7, 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRIS DAWSON
MIKE DELAND
TERESA GORMAN
BOB GRADY
BOYDEN GRAY
HENSON MOORE
BILL REILLY
DICK SCHMALENSEE

FROM: STEVE DANZANSKY

SUBJECT: Letter on IPCC Conclusions Paper

Attached for your review is a draft letter from Fred Bernthal to Bert Bolin, which spells out the U.S. views on the most recent draft of the IPCC Overview and Conclusions Paper. The letter represents a compilation of the major comments from the various departments and agencies involved in the PCC that has been preparing for the upcoming IPCC meeting in Sweden, and has previously been reviewed by the members of the PCC. It is critical that the letter be sent to Bolin this week, so please review it at your earliest convenience and provide comments to Barry McBee at 456-2800 (or by fax at 456-2223) by 11:30 a.m. tomorrow.

*prepared for review by special SLP to meet with
Sumner at 11:30 8/8
(meeting was cancelled 8/8 at 10 + rescheduled
for 8/9 4pm)*

Revised, 8/7/90, 4:00 p.m.

Professor Bert Bolin
Department of Meteorology
University of Stockholm
S10691 Stockholm, Sweden

Dear Bert:

At the outset, I want to thank you for your careful consideration of the points raised in my previous letter. I realize that a wide range of comments had to be taken into account following our meeting in Geneva, and I commend your work in synthesizing these ideas into the July 1990 Draft IPCC Overview and Conclusions Paper.

I have a number of additional comments to offer on behalf of the United States.

There is concern that the careful balance which was struck in the Working Groups on a number of issues has not been maintained in this draft. We recognize that in summarizing the underlying reports of the Working Groups it is necessary to use portions of each rather than the whole. For this reason, you may wish to consider a significantly shorter Overview and Conclusions document, drawing heavily on the three Executive Summaries, to which the underlying Summaries for Policymakers would be attached.

In addition, Section VI, "Strategies for the Future", goes significantly beyond the results of the IPCC assessment effort. We would suggest that this section be moved to the very beginning of the document and be titled IPCC Chairman's Introduction (as is done in the RSWG Summary for Policymakers).

Other comments are outlined below:

Science and Impacts Issues:

- o The current draft still understates the fundamental scientific uncertainties regarding possible climate change. To put the scientific understanding of this issue in perspective, the fact that there are significant uncertainties regarding the timing, magnitude and regional distribution of climate changes should be highlighted with a separate heading.

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- o Scientific findings are expressed with a higher degree of confidence than is warranted (e.g. the words "will" or "would" are used throughout rather than "may" or "could") and in some cases worst-case figures are used rather than a mean figure or the full range of figures.
- o A more extensive discussion of the relative impacts of all the greenhouse gases is needed in the science section. We suggest including the table on Global Warming Potentials (GWPs) from the WGI Policymakers Summary, with appropriate introductory language.
- o In general, the discussion of possible climate change impacts places undue emphasis on the potential negative consequences of climate change, while minimizing potential positive impacts.

Response Options:

- o A continuing concern is that the discussion of WGIII Task A does not reflect the uncertainties surrounding these exercises. It is important to make clear that these scenarios are not projections or predictions, but are based on varying assumptions. The explanation of how they were formulated should be taken from the WGIII Summary for Policymakers, Sections 3.1 and 3.2. and be placed in a separate section at the beginning of the document (not in an appendix).
- o The report does not adequately address the uncertainties and lack of information policy makers face in dealing with climate change. To place the issue in perspective, it is important to include the language contained in the RSWG report that:

"The information available to make sound policy analyses is inadequate because of: (a) remaining scientific uncertainties regarding the magnitude, timing, rate, and regional consequences of potential climate change; (b) uncertainty with respect to how effective specific response options or groups of options would be in actually averting potential climate change; and (c) uncertainty with respect to the cost, effects on economic growth, and other economic and social implications of specific response options or groups of options. The potentially serious consequences of climate change on the global environment, however, give sufficient reasons to begin by adopting response strategies that can be justified immediately even in the face of such significant uncertainties."

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- o There is little discussion of the fact that the RSWG did not have time to consider the vital social and economic issues which are necessary for devising sound policies to address climate change. This point should be set forth prominently at the beginning of the Overview and Conclusions paper to place the IPCC's work in its proper perspective.
- o Some of the economic concepts are not accurately stated. For example:
 - The definition of "no regrets" policies on page 31 is incorrect. The current wording implies that such policies include actions which have any benefits beyond those related to climate change, whereas the WGIII report refers to those actions which are justified in their own right.
 - The discussion of the comprehensive approach does not describe its benefits. We suggest drawing from the WGIII Summary for Policymakers (p. 38, lines 10-13) to make clear that such an approach would advance environmental protection and minimize economic costs.
 - The description of the "tragedy of the commons" on page 30 (lines 12-16) is flawed as written. This section would be substantially improved if restated along the following lines:

"If individual countries continue to pollute while others pay the costs of global pollution control, this will encourage nations to avoid mutually advantageous cooperative action."
- o Given the target audience, it is important to specify throughout the report the baselines being used: Are the emissions changes from present levels or from projected future growth levels?
- o The report does not adequately address the important role of sinks and the possibilities either for expanding sink resources or for implementing adaptation strategies.
- o The current draft overstates the ability of the industrialized countries to reduce global emissions regardless of events in the rest of the world. The language from the WGIII Summary for Policymakers that "Developing countries should, within the limits feasible, take measures to suitably adapt their economies" needs to be included in the Executive Summary.
- o The discussion of "narrowing the gap between the industrialized and developing world" would be more accurately characterized as follows:

"Improved economic performance and living standards in the developing world are important to developing a full global partnership to deal with the climate change issue."

These are some of the main comments I would like to bring to your attention as you continue preparations for the Sundsvall meeting. In order to assist in this process, the United States is developing more extensive comments and specific proposed wording changes.

I look forward to working together to develop a final IPCC paper which reflects the findings of the IPCC Working Groups. I am optimistic that the IPCC report will promote a reasoned and effective international response to this important issue.

Very best regards,

Frederick M. Bernthal

There are concerns that the careful balance which was struck in the Working Group on a number of issues has not been maintained in this draft. We recognize that in summarizing the underlying reports of the Working Groups it is necessary to use portions of each rather than the whole. For this reason, you may wish to consider a significantly shorter Executive and Conclusions document, drawing heavily on the more detailed Summaries, to which the underlying Summaries for the Working Groups would be attached.

In addition, Section VI, "Strategies for the Future", goes significantly beyond the results of the IPCC assessment effort. We would suggest that this section be moved to the very beginning of the Document and be titled IPCC Chairman's Introduction (as is done in the 2350 Summary for Policymakers).

Other comments are outlined below:

Executive and Conclusions, Summary:

- The current draft still underlines the fundamental importance of maintaining the global climate system, and that the world has a responsibility to take action to prevent, reduce and adapt to the risks of climate change. The current draft also states that the global climate system is changing and that the risks of climate change are being realized. It is suggested that the Executive and Conclusions document be significantly shorter and that the underlying Summaries for the Working Groups be attached to it.

Framework Convention on Climate Change