

Washington Update 4-14-09

On March 31, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) released a climate change draft bill, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. For the text, see:

http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press_111/20090331/acesa_discussiondraft.pdf

This is the first major effort of the 111th Congress to create a bill that addresses global warming and energy policy. UCAR has been asked to comment on the draft and will do so this week. Hearings begin next week in the House Energy and Environment Subcommittee, chaired by Congressman Markey. The schedule includes having the bill "marked up" in full committee by Memorial Day. Speaker Pelosi plans to introduce climate/energy legislation by July; this bill could be incorporated into that package, but that is not certain at this point. We will keep you posted.

Sections of particular interest to the UCAR community (summarized by LBA) include:

National Climate Change Adaptation Program (sec. 461), starts on page 577 of the draft.

This section would create an interagency council for the consultation and coordination of federal policies relating to the assessment of and adaptation to climate change in the U.S. (Note that NSF is absent -- in comments on the draft, UCAR will recommend that the agency be included.)

National Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments (sec. 464) starts on page 581 of the draft. According to the draft, the interagency council of federal agencies (again, not including NSF) would carry out regional assessments and a national assessment regarding vulnerability to impacts of climate change, strategies to adapt to such impacts, and priorities for further research related to climate change impacts and adaptive capacity. This sounds similar to the ad hoc regional climate change network.

Climate Change Adaptation Services/ National Climate Service (sec. 465) starts on page 586 of the draft. The Waxman draft bill would establish a National Climate Service within NOAA. Within Section 465, note (b) Regional and National Workshops and (c) Observation and Monitoring. The bill would charge the Administrator of NOAA with holding regional and national workshops regarding the efforts on assessment of and adaptation to climate change impacts and authorize NOAA to deploy observation and monitoring systems, including remote sensing systems (no mention of NASA or NSF) regarding climate change.

Federal Funding for State, Local, and Tribal Adaptation Projects (sec. 467) starts on page 591 of the draft. This section of the bill would establish a National Climate Change Adaptation Fund to provide financial assistance to state, local, and tribal governments for implementation of projects to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts. Again, the draft directs NOAA to advise on the establishment of this program.