



August 4, 2011

Mr. Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dr. John P. Holdren, Director
Office of Science & Technology Policy
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Secretary Salazar and Dr. Holdren,

The protection of scientific independence and integrity is crucial to the creation of sound national policy, especially with respect to environmental and natural resource issues. We therefore fully support the spirit and letter of the President's Executive Order regarding scientific integrity, and it is with this memorandum in mind that we write you about the recent suspension of a senior scientist at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, Dr. Charles Monnett.

Dr. Monnett is responsible for undertaking and coordinating a broad slate of research into the distribution of marine mammals, including polar bears. This crucial long-term research has been approved by MMS/BOEMRE in part to produce baseline data against which to judge the potential impacts of proposed oil drilling in the waters off Alaska.

Prior to being placed on administrative leave, Dr. Monnett was subjected to an interrogation by criminal investigators from the Department of Interior Inspector General (IG) relating to his observations of drowned polar bears and the publication of those observations in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Based on the transcript of that interview, it appears that Dr. Monnett is himself being subjected to precisely the type of political interference in his work that the Executive Order and scientific integrity policy are designed to prevent. This apparent interference is originating not only from the IG, which has sent agents with no scientific training to ask decidedly unscientific questions about bizarre allegations relating to the polar bear paper, but also, as it emerged during the interview, from BOEMRE managers themselves.

Following clear evidence of misconduct within the BOEMRE's predecessor agency, the Minerals Management Service, it was hoped that this reorganized agency, under Michael Bromwich's leadership, would reform its working practices and usher in a new era of respect for independent scientific research. However, this incident indicates that the agency remains rife with problems and seems determined to restrict scientists from engaging in or

disseminating research that provides critical information on the potential impacts of oil drilling in a rapidly changing Arctic. This makes us question whether Mr. Bromwich, the agency and more broadly the Department of Interior are able to uphold the tenets of the Presidential Executive Order on scientific integrity or indeed the DOI's own Science Integrity Policy, issued in September 2010.

We are gravely concerned by the allegations of political interference with Dr. Monnett's work and other scientific research at BOEMRE, as well as by the conduct of the investigation against Dr. Monnett. This incident will chill other agency scientists' ability to carry out and communicate their research.

We thus request your assurance that these critically important issues will receive an immediate, full, and open review by both the Department of Interior and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

We look forward to your response and thoughts on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Kert Davies
Research Director
Greenpeace US
702 H St NW
Washington D.C. 20001
kdavies@greenpeace.org
(202)319-2455



Kassie Siegel
Senior Counsel
Climate Law Institute Director
Center for Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 549
Joshua Tree, CA 92252
ksiegel@biologicaldiversity.org
(760) 366-2232 x302