

## Phrases Common to AAAS Climate Change Statements

The following is a comparison of the phraseology contained within two separate statements issued by the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) Board regarding its position on the alleged harassment of climate scientists. One asterisk (\*) denotes phrases appearing in the first statement<sup>[1]</sup>, and two asterisks (\*\*) denote almost identical phrases appearing in the second statement<sup>[2]</sup>.

\*The progress of science and its integrity depend both on full transparency about the details of scientific methodology and on academic freedom to follow the pursuit of truth wherever the data lead.

\*\*The progress of science and protection of its integrity depend on both full transparency about the details of scientific methodology and the freedom to follow the pursuit of knowledge.

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\*Scientific progress occurs largely through a self-correcting system, in which research results are shared and critically evaluated by one's peers, experiments are reproduced when necessary, and disagreements over the interpretation of data, the methodology of an experiment, or the revelation of errors in research are part of daily scientific discourse.

\*\*Science advances through a self-correcting system in which research results are shared and critically evaluated by peers and experiments are repeated when necessary. Disagreements about the interpretation of data, the methodology, and findings are part of daily scientific discourse.

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\*Scientists should not be subjected to fraud investigations simply for providing scientific results that may be controversial or inconvenient, particularly on high profile topics of interest to society.

\*\*Scientists should not be subjected to fraud investigations or harassment simply for providing scientific results that are controversial.

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\*In the majority of cases, scientific disagreements are unrelated to any kind of fraud and are considered a legitimate and normal part of the process of scientific progress.

\*\*Most scientific disagreements are unrelated to any kind of fraud and are considered a legitimate and normal part of the scientific process.

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\*Both scientists and policymakers may disagree with the scientific conclusions of Professor Mann and other leading scientists and with their policy implications. But there are proven and well established means for resolving disagreements over research results within the scientific community.

\*\*Scientists and policymakers may disagree over the scientific conclusions on climate change and other policy-relevant topics. But the scientific community has proven and well-established methods for resolving disagreements about research results.

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\*The scientific community takes seriously their responsibility for policing scientific misconduct, and extensive procedures exist to ensure the credibility of the research enterprise.

\*\*The scientific community takes seriously its responsibility for policing research misconduct, and extensive procedures exist to protect the rigor of the scientific method and to ensure the credibility of the research enterprise.

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**Phrases appearing in only the first statement:**

In April 2010, the Attorney General of Virginia, Kenneth Cuccinelli, launched an investigation of climate researcher Professor Michael Mann, currently the Director of the Earth System Science Center at Pennsylvania State University.

Mr. Cuccinelli's investigation, unless based on a much more substantial body of evidence than is apparent, could inappropriately inhibit the free exchange of scientific findings and ideas and thus limit the progress of science.

The investigation, under Virginia's Fraud Against Taxpayers Act, seeks very detailed information about five grants for climate change research in which Professor Mann was involved while serving on the University of Virginia faculty from 1999-2005.

While AAAS supports the responsibility of state and federal officials to oversee the proper use of grant funds, the manner in which this investigation is being conducted and the lack of a clear rationale for it suggest that the investigation may be aimed at something other than financial malfeasance.

The request for information goes far beyond what is needed to determine financial propriety, including substantive emails with colleagues, computer codes, and the detailed data resulting from Dr. Mann's work.

Thousands of studies, including Dr. Mann's work, have produced a growing mountain of evidence leading to the scientific consensus on human induced global climate change.

The way to resolve controversies of this nature is through scientific review and additional research.

Unless founded on some openly discussed evidence of potential misconduct, investigations such as that targeting Professor Mann could have a long-lasting and chilling effect on a broad spectrum of research fields that are critical to a range of national interests from public health to national security to the environment.

Unless more clearly justified, Attorney General Cuccinelli's apparently political action should be withdrawn.

### **Phrases appearing in only the second statement:**

We are deeply concerned by the extent and nature of personal attacks on climate scientists.

Reports of harassment, death threats, and legal challenges have created a hostile environment that inhibits the free exchange of scientific findings and ideas and makes it difficult for factual information and scientific analyses to reach policymakers and the public.

This both impedes the progress of science and interferes with the application of science to the solution of global problems.

AAAS vigorously opposes attacks on researchers that question their personal and professional integrity or threaten their safety based on displeasure with their scientific conclusions.

The sharing of research data is vastly different from unreasonable, excessive Freedom of Information Act requests for personal information and voluminous data that are then used to harass and intimidate scientists.

The latter serve only as a distraction and make no constructive contribution to the public discourse.

While we fully understand that policymakers must integrate the best available scientific data with other factors when developing policies, we think it would be unfortunate if policymakers became the arbiters of scientific information and circumvented the peer-review process.

Moreover, we are concerned that establishing a practice of aggressive inquiry into the professional histories of scientists whose findings may bear on policy in ways that some find unpalatable could well have a chilling effect on the willingness of scientists to conduct research that intersects with policy-relevant scientific questions.

### **References:**

- [1] Statement Concerning the Virginia Attorney General's Investigation of Prof. Michael Mann's Work While on the Faculty of University of Virginia (2010).  
[http://archives.aaas.org/docs/resolutions.php?doc\\_id=456](http://archives.aaas.org/docs/resolutions.php?doc_id=456) Accessed 2011/07/03
- [2] Statement of the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science Regarding Personal Attacks on Climate Scientists (2011).  
[http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2011/media/0629board\\_statement.pdf](http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2011/media/0629board_statement.pdf) Accessed 2011/07/03

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