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ExxonMobil

December 15, 2000

Lloyd D. Keigwin
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Woods Hole, MA 02543

Dear Dr. Keigwin:

I am writing to confirm our telephone conversation yesterday regarding your published work on Sargasso Sea Surface temperatures. I learned that Campaign ExxonMobil was making use of a letter from you in reply to questions from their coordinator, Peter Altman. I called to better understand your views, since your letter states that ExxonMobil has been misleading in the use of your data.

I found that claim to be very troubling; since I am a scientist and have read your paper with care. In our discussion, and indeed in your letter to Mr. Altman, you confirm that analysis of sediment cores show evidence of natural variability in Sargasso Sea surface temperature over the last 3000 years. In particular the more recent data, covering the last 1000 years show a warm-cold-warm cycle with sea surface variations of 1-2 degrees C. We cite your work as evidence of significant recent natural climate variability that scientists cannot yet explain. I also noted that the existence of natural variability makes it difficult to sort out the extent to which humans may be having an impact on climate today. This is of fundamental importance in the scientific debate concerning attribution of recent change to human activities.

Consequently, we are surprised and troubled that your letter claims that "ExxonMobil has been misleading in its use of the Sargasso Sea data." I also note in your letter to Peter Altman that you imply that we have not supported research on climate change, which is incorrect.

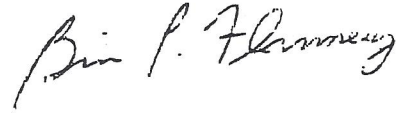
For over 20 years ExxonMobil has sought to maintain an objective, rigorous approach to understanding scientific as well as technical, economic, and policy matters relating to climate change. We have worked both on our own and through support to others. Our efforts includes support for research at major institutions including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory, The Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction, Bermuda Biological Station for Research, Woods Hole Marine Biology Laboratory and Carnegie Mellon University. We conduct our own research, often in collaboration with recognized experts from outstanding universities, which we publish in the peer-reviewed literature. My colleague Dr. Haroon Kheshgi and I are both contributors to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Mr. Lloyd Keigwin
December 15, 2000
Page 2

The extent and cause of natural climate variability have a direct and essential bearing on the capability of science today to answer questions concerning a human contribution to climate change. We have cited your work because it helps add to understanding of natural variability, and further points out that we do not yet know its cause.

Perhaps your misunderstanding of our views has been shaped by your conversations with Peter Altman, who in our opinion fails to articulate them correctly. At John Farrington's suggestion Dr. Frank Sprow, Vice President Safety Health & Environment, Exxon Mobil Corporation, and I will visit Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution early next year and discuss these issues with you at greater length.

Sincerely,



c: F. B. Sprow
J. W. Farrington