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RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6115
Majority (202) 225–2927
Minority (202) 225–3641

September 26, 2013

The Honorable Jack Lew
Secretary
U.S. Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Lew:

Pursuant to Rules X and XI of the United States House of Representatives, we seek information to help the Committee examine the development and use of estimates for the Social Cost of Carbon (SCC). These controversial estimates are currently being used by federal agencies to place dollar values on the potential climate damages purportedly avoided by carbon dioxide reduction in regulatory actions, with measurements of such effects extending hundreds of years into the future. The implications of quantifying future impacts raises serious questions about how federal agencies are developing these estimates to advance rulemaking.

We write following informal efforts by Committee staff this past August to schedule briefings with certain federal agencies that were listed in a Technical Support Document as participating in an "Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Carbon." According to that document, this interagency group was comprised of offices within the Executive Office of the President and a number of federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Transportation, and Treasury. We requested these briefings to learn how these agencies developed SCC estimates and about their specific roles in the interagency working group, which has periodically worked since 2009 to develop a common value for SCC for use across the government in climate-related activities and regulatory actions.

The agencies contacted by Committee staff have not accommodated our requests for briefings. Based on the agencies' responses, it seems agency officials were not fully aware of how their department participated in the working group, or they were reluctant to brief staff on specific details of their agency's participation without first coordinating with other participants in the interagency working group. For example, the Department of Commerce has informed the Committee that it had not had any involvement in the interagency working group since 2010 and was "unaware of any DOC work product that was produced as a result of this collaboration or contributed to the working group." The Department of the Treasury has thus far not identified the appropriate office to brief Committee staff or responded with a briefing date. Similarly, the

Department of Agriculture has not responded to the Committee's briefing request. Initially, the Department of Energy agreed to brief Committee staff but only with EPA participating; later, the Department of Energy explained that it could not provide that briefing until it resolved questions from the interagency group about the scope of the briefing.

The response of the federal agencies to our briefing requests has generated additional questions concerning the contributions of those agencies to the interagency group and the quality of that process. Therefore, we write today to formalize our request for specific information about your agency's role in developing SCC estimates, both within your agency, and for the interagency group. Accordingly, we request that you schedule a briefing for Committee staff to occur no later than October 11. In addition, we request that you provide written answers to the following questions no later than October 11:

1. Please provide a written description of your agency's work on SCC and its participation in any interagency process on the subject.

2. Please identify the staff and offices within your agency that were involved with SCC estimate development and who managed the process both at your agency and for the interagency group.

3. Please identify what records your agency maintained relating to your agency's involvement or participation in the development of SCC. This request would include memoranda, analyses, papers, drafts, and any schedules, agendas, calendars, or appointment or scheduling requests relating to SCC and the interagency working group.

4. Please identify whether your agency consulted with any third parties, including individuals or entities outside the federal government, regarding your agency's work on SCC.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Sam Spector or Peter Spencer with the Committee staff at (202) 225-2927.

Sincerely,

Fred Upton
Chairman

Tim Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Joe Barton
Chairman Emeritus

John Shimkus
Chairman
Subcommittee on Enviroment and the Economy

Ed Whitfield
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power

Michael C. Burgess
Vice Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Marsha Blackburn
Vice Chairman

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Member

The Honorable Diana DeGette, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

The Honorable Paul Tonko, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy

The Honorable Bobby Rush, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Power