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August 22, 2024

Dr. Richard Spinrad
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Spinrad:

The Biden-Harris administration marked Earth Day this year by touting its efforts to combat “the climate crisis,” including its quixotic quest for net-zero emissions, the formation of a multi-billion-dollar American Climate Corps, and the restriction of federal oil and gas leases.¹ Young people are absorbing the rhetoric; they report high levels of anxiety about climate change and are adapting their behavior in radical ways, including by foregoing children. Is this anxiety based on science or sensationalism? The evidence points to the latter. Rather than presenting scientific evidence neutrally, agencies like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are producing faux-educational materials that fuel climate alarmism to manufacture support for the administration’s goals. In the midst of what the Biden-Harris administration has called a “youth mental health crisis,”² NOAA’s hyperventilating campaign of youth indoctrination is irresponsible. It is time to correct course.

The last few years have seen a dramatic increase in what the American Psychological Association dubs “eco-anxiety,” *i.e.*, a “chronic fear of environmental doom.”³ Generation Z is especially worried.⁴ In 2020, just under half of young adults (ages 18–34) said “the stress they

¹ *President Biden Marks Earth Day 2024 with Historic Climate Action*, WHITE HOUSE (April 22, 2024), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/22/fact-sheet-president-biden-marks-earth-day-2024-with-historic-climate-action/>.

² *Biden-Harris Administration Takes Action to Advance Kids’ Online Health, Safety, and Privacy*, WHITE HOUSE (July 22, 2024), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2024/07/22/biden-harris-administration-takes-actions-to-advance-kids-online-health-safety-and-privacy/>.

³ SUSAN CLAYTON ET AL., *MENTAL HEALTH & OUR CHANGING CLIMATE: IMPACTS, IMPLICATIONS & GUIDANCE*, AM. PSYCH. ASS. 68 (Mar. 2017), <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2017/03/mental-health-climate.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.* at 36 (“Children, with less ability to articulate their feelings in language, are also more likely to regress, showing babyish behaviors, or somatize, developing stomachaches or other physical symptoms to express upset, as did one child when his school cafeteria refused to recycle.”); *See also* ANTHONY LEISEROWITZ ET AL., *CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN MIND: BELIEFS & ATTITUDES*, FALL 2023, YALE PROGRAM ON CLIMATE CHANGE

feel about climate change affects their daily lives.”⁵ Today, 85 percent of Gen Z is “very” or “somewhat” concerned about global warming,⁶ and many attribute their anxiety to a “failure of governments to take action.”⁷ They are accordingly taking action—or inaction—of their own. In 2021, just under 40 percent of those between the ages of 16 and 25 said they were “hesitant to have children” due to climate change,⁸ contributing to a declining birth rate.⁹

It is natural to feel some stress about important issues, but when it comes to climate change, a level-headed approach grounded in scientific inquiry—not in fearful adherence to “the science”—is needed. The government has a responsibility to present scientific evidence objectively—to inform, rather than persuade. When it instead incites panic by selectively presenting propaganda that masquerades as scientific data, eco-anxiety follows.¹⁰ And when it offers ready-made programs to channel anxiety into activism, it looks like that was the goal all along.¹¹

NOAA is fueling youth climate anxiety by pushing alarmism under the guise of science. This May, for instance, NOAA used its social media to promote *Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science*, an outdated, 15-year-old interagency guide for teaching students about climate change.¹² This guide was initially supposed to be updated last year to incorporate input from “environmental justice communities,” including “personal narrative[s]” and “lived

COMMC’N & GEORGE MASON UNIV. CTR. FOR CLIMATE CHANGE COMMC’N (Jan. 11, 2024), <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/climate-change-american-mind-beliefs-attitudes-fall-2023.pdf>; BRUCE BEKKAR ET AL., MENTAL HEALTH AND OUR CHANGING CLIMATE: CHILDREN AND YOUTH REPORT 2023, AM. PSYCH. ASS. 14 (2023), <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/10/mental-health-youth-report-2023.pdf>.

⁵ *Majority of US Adults Believe Climate Change Is Most Important Issue Today*, AM. PSYCH. ASS. (Feb. 6, 2020), <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/02/climate-change>.

⁶ *Big Generational Differences on Legal Weed, Climate Change, and Health Care*, MARIST POLL (Jan. 30, 2024), <https://maristpoll.marist.edu/polls/big-generational-differences-on-legal-weed-climate-change-and-health-care/>.

⁷ Caroline Hickman et al., *Climate Anxiety in Children and Young People and Their Beliefs About Government Responses to Climate Change: A Global Survey*, LANCET PLANET HEALTH (Dec. 5, 2021), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34895496/>.

⁸ *Id.*; see also Navin Singh Khadka, *Climate Anxiety: ‘I Don’t Want to Burden the World with My Child’*, BRITISH BROADCASTING CORP. (Jan. 15, 2024), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-67298903>.

⁹ Greg Ip & Janet Adamy, *Suddenly There Aren’t Enough Babies. The Whole World Is Alarmed.*, WALL ST. JOURNAL (May 13, 2024), <https://www.wsj.com/world/birthrates-global-decline-cause-ddaf8be2>.

¹⁰ Arnaud Chiolero, *Academic Framing as a Cause of Eco-Anxiety*, EPIDEMIOLOGIA (Jan. 28, 2023) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9944577/>.

¹¹ See Emmanuel Maduneme, *Some Slice of Climate Anxiety . . . Is Good: A Cross-Sectional Survey Exploring the Relationship Between College Students Media Exposure and Perceptions About Climate Change*, 29 J. OF HEALTH COMM. 45, 49 (2024), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/10810730.2024.2354370> (citing the view that “climate change anxiety should not be pathologized because some levels might be beneficial for climate change action”).

¹² NOAA Climate.gov (@NOAAClimate), X (May 7, 2024, 4:19 PM), <https://x.com/NOAAClimate/status/1787940217397407867>; *Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Sciences*, CLIMATE ENGAGEMENT & CAPACITY BLDG. INTERAGENCY GRP. (Mar. 2009), <https://www.globalchange.gov/reports/climate-literacy-essential-principles-climate-science>.

experience[s].”¹³ For now, though, NOAA continues to “partner[] with the Climate Literacy and Energy Awareness Network (CLEAN) to use the *Climate Literacy* guide to identify and integrate effective resources across different educational levels.”¹⁴ The resulting curriculum “is syndicated to NOAA’s Teaching Climate portal” on Climate.gov, which, along with CLEANet.org, is the main “resource portal[] for climate education resources in the country.”¹⁵

One part of the *Climate Literacy*-based curriculum on Climate.gov is a video titled “Weather Girl Goes Rogue,” which “suggests what might happen if a weather forecaster reported the weather in the context of climate change.”¹⁶ In the video, a meteorologist reporting on melting polar ice caps describes “an inescapable death spiral.”¹⁷ Citing research, she forecasts a summer with no ice in the Arctic Ocean within 10 years. (The video was released in 2012.)¹⁸ According to NOAA’s website, “The scientific statements [in the video] are consistent with the consensus view,” and while “some of the details (sea ice extent, current average temperature) have changed” since 2012, “the message remains valid.”¹⁹



The “inescapable death spiral” of climate change

More recent Climate.gov materials employ a therapeutic approach that normalizes climate anxiety and redirects it toward activism on behalf of radical environmentalists. One “climate

¹³ Notice of Request for Information; U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), 88 Fed. Reg. 15981 (Mar. 15, 2023).

¹⁴ *Partnership with CLEAN Collection*, NOAA CLIMATE.GOV, <https://www.climate.gov/teaching/partnership-with-clean-collection> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

¹⁵ *Climate Literacy and Energy Awareness Network (CLEAN)*, COOP. INST. FOR RSCH. IN ENV’T SCIS., CTR. FOR EDUC., ENGAGEMENT & EVALUATION, <https://cires.colorado.edu/ceee/programs/climate-literacy-and-energy-awareness-network-clean> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

¹⁶ *Weathergirl Goes Rogue*, NOAA CLIMATE.GOV, <https://www.climate.gov/teaching/resources/weather-girl-goes-rogue-22838> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

¹⁷ *Weathergirl Goes Rogue*, DEEP ROGUE RAM (Sept. 12, 2012), <https://youtube.com/clip/UgkxrE1amXXnPpUeTxShV9TF9yz0Ys4bkAu-?si=-xr09QKGomAnResp>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Weathergirl Goes Rogue*, *supra* note 16.

mental health” lesson has teachers “[s]et up a ‘safe space’” to “[f]acilitate a Group Reflection around healing and coping.”²⁰ A “Climate Emotions Wheel” activity based on the work of a Finnish “eco-theologian” “allow[s] students to navigate their emotions before and after engaging in climate action.”²¹ NOAA’s webpage notes that “expert science review” of the wheel—copied below—is “pending.”²² Indeed.



Climate Emotions Wheel Promoted by NOAA

NOAA’s partner organization, CLEAN, offers “climate mental health” resources for teachers, who are encouraged to practice “self-care,” “trust feelings,” and “include other ways of knowing” beyond “Western scientific approaches,” always remaining “aware of ‘settler privilege.’”²³ Crucially, “[t]he goal is *not* to eliminate negative emotions,” because “those who experience negative emotions about climate change are more likely to engage in climate action.”²⁴ Rather, teachers should “[e]ncourage youth to work through their grief through

²⁰ *Climate Mental Health: Facilitating Discussions and Creating Solidarity*, NOAA CLIMATE.GOV, <https://www.climate.gov/teaching/resources/climate-mental-health-facilitating-discussions-and-creating-solidarity-36821> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024); *Full Guide: Climate Mental Health Support Activities*, at 13, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Hkwmzv3L7xlygbEpwIxzA1tf9HdWWg5y1A8_0mckBXk/edit (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

²¹ *Climate Mental Health: Climate Emotions Wheel*, NOAA CLIMATE.GOV, <https://www.climate.gov/teaching/resources/climate-mental-health-climate-emotions-wheel-36820> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024); *Full Guide: Climate Mental Health Support Activities*, *supra* note 20, at 5. (“Tell students that any emotions that they feel about the climate crisis and/or natural hazards are normal and valid.”)

²² *Climate Mental Health: Climate Emotions Wheel*, *supra* note 21.

²³ *Full Guide: Climate Mental Health Support Activities*, *supra* note 20, at 2; *Climate Mental Health: Climate Justice*, CLEAN, https://cleanet.org/clean/literacy/tools/empowerment/climate_justice.html (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

²⁴ *Climate Mental Health*, CLEAN, <https://cleanet.org/clean/literacy/tools/empowerment/index.html> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024); *Cf.* Greta Thunberg, *Our House Is on Fire*, THE GUARDIAN (Jan. 25, 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/25/our-house-is-on-fire-greta-thunberg16-urges-leaders-to-act>

collective action,” always asking, “How can they use these feelings to facilitate action?”²⁵ CLEAN’s “overarching guiding principle” for teaching about climate is to ensure students can “take action to reduce climate change and its impacts,”²⁶ which are apparently “intersectional.”²⁷ Youth should attempt to influence policy by joining far-left political groups like Extinction Rebellion and Sunrise Movement.²⁸

Right on cue, the Biden-Harris administration is now providing outlets for the climate anxiety it has stoked. Explaining that “[y]outh engagement in environmental action has been shown to mitigate climate anxiety,” NOAA launched the Young Changemakers Fellowship for students looking to “work collectively” on environmental projects like “climate justice,” including by “increasing awareness” and “push[ing] for systemic change.”²⁹ The administration also introduced the American Climate Corps (ACC) to “mobilize more than 20,000 Americans in the clean energy and climate resilience sectors.”³⁰ President Biden recently pledged to expand the ACC to triple the number of taxpayer-funded political activists working “at the forefront of our clean energy future.”³¹ He has sought additional funding at a time when the Inflation Reduction Act, which supports the ACC, has already “delivered a massive windfall to a small group of Democratic donors.”³²

on-climate (“I don’t want you to be hopeful, I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act.”)

²⁵ *Climate Mental Health: Move Through Grief*, CLEAN, https://cleanet.org/clean/literacy/tools/empowerment/move_through_grief.html (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

²⁶ *Bringing Climate Topics into Your Classroom*, CLEAN, <https://cleanet.org/clean/literacy/climate/index.html> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

²⁷ *Climate Mental Health: Encourage and Take Action*, CLEAN, https://cleanet.org/clean/literacy/tools/empowerment/encourage_take_action.html (last visited Aug. 22, 2024) (“Be aware of intersectionality when implementing climate action.”); *Climate Mental Health: Climate Justice*, *supra* note 23 (“Climate justice is not possible without racial justice”); *Indigenous Acknowledgment*, CLEAN (June 18, 2021), https://cleanet.org/clean/about_project/Indigenous_acknowledgement (“We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced assimilation the inhabitants of Turtle Island [*i.e.*, North America] have faced as well as the future injustice frontline communities face from climate change.”); *CLEAN Statement on Racial Injustices and Violence*, CLEAN (June 20, 2020), <https://cleanet.org/clean/community/racialjustice.html> (“No field of science is neutral or objective . . . In a society built on a foundation of white supremacy and systemic racism, we must always act to counter such oppression . . . [D]oing nothing is an act of complicity with white supremacists.”).

²⁸ *Climate Mental Health: Encourage and Take Action*, *supra* note 27.

²⁹ *Young Changemakers Fellowship: Frequently Asked Questions*, NOAA, <https://www.noaa.gov/young-changemakers-fellowship/frequently-asked-questions> (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

³⁰ Megan Lebowitz & Caroline Kenny, *White House Launches American Climate Corps*, NBC NEWS (Sept. 20, 2023), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/white-house-launches-american-climate-corps-rcna105931>.

³¹ Presidential Statement, *State of the Union Address*, SPEECHES AND REMARKS (Mar. 7, 2024), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2024/03/07/remarks-of-president-joe-biden-state-of-the-union-address-as-prepared-for-delivery-2/>.

³² Brian Slodysko, *A Signature Biden Law Aimed to Boost Renewable Energy. It Also Helped a Solar Company Reap Billions*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (June 26, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/biden-solar-inflation-reduction-act-dca914675cd0855004214d82aab5b10c>.

The impetus behind the ACC is clear. It is “an opportunity to turn anxiety into action,” explains AmeriCorps CEO Michael D. Smith.³³ “We’ve heard a lot from young Americans about climate anxiety. It’s been heartbreaking to hear young people say, ‘This is overwhelming. I don’t know what to do, I don’t know if I want to bring children into this world.’”³⁴ ACC “gives you a way to not wait for somebody else to do something.”³⁵

Our country’s approach to climate change should be driven by science, not the woke zeitgeist. So that the American public and I may better understand your approach to climate education, please provide the documents requested below and responses to the questions below by September 5, 2024, and in accordance with the attached instructions:

1. Provide all documents and communications between NOAA or CLEAN and any of the following organizations referring or relating to the impact of the information presented on Climate.gov or CLEANet.org on collective action or “action to influence policy.”³⁶
 - a. Earth Guardians
 - b. Zero Hour
 - c. Sunrise Movement
 - d. Queer Nature
 - e. Climate Generation
 - f. Extinction Rebellion
 - g. Fridays for Future
 - h. YOUNGO
 - i. Citizens Climate Lobby
 - j. Our Climate
2. What measures does NOAA take to ensure that curricula it promotes is scientifically accurate, unbiased, and not misinterpreted by or stoking anxiety in young audiences?
3. Provide all documents and communications referring or relating to NOAA grants to CLEAN, including NA14OAR0110121, NA14OAR0110120, NA12OAR4310143, and NA12OAR4310142.³⁷
4. In December, the Secretary of Commerce signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the ACC.³⁸ The MOU says that ACC will seek to “[s]erve all of America’s communities by improving climate resilience” and “public health.” Do ACC’s efforts to improve “public health” include efforts related to mental health or climate anxiety?

³³ Gerard Edic, *American Climate Corps to Focus on Next-Generation Workers*, AMERICAN PROSPECT (Apr. 22, 2024), <https://prospect.org/environment/2024-04-22-american-climate-corps-next-generation-workers/>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ See *Climate Mental Health: Encourage and Take Action*, *supra* note 27.

³⁷ *About the CLEAN Project*, CLEAN, https://cleanet.org/clean/about_project/index.html (last visited Aug. 22, 2024).

³⁸ *American Climate Corps Memorandum of Understanding* (Dec. 19, 2023), <https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/American-Climate-Corps-MOU.pdf>.

5. The MOU says that ACC will “[l]ook like America” by leveraging “persons of color.” Forty percent of ACC benefits will “flow to disadvantaged communities.” Do such race-conscious efforts violate the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution or Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964? Why or why not?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ted Cruz', is written over a horizontal line.

Ted Cruz
Ranking Member