

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 8, 2004

Extreme Weather Events and Climate Instability: Implications for Human Health and Agriculture

Dear Colleague:

We encourage you to attend a briefing presented by the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School on the implications of extreme weather events and climate instability on human health and agriculture:

Monday, September 20, 2004

9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Capitol Building, HC-6

For many years, scientists have expected changes in global trends for extreme weather events and climate instability to be an indicator of global climate change. In its Third Assessment Report of 2001, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change included a review of scientific literature and analysis of climate data linking certain weather event trends to rising global surface and ocean temperatures. Increases in certain extreme weather events around the world, over the past century, including droughts, floods, and heatwaves, have taken a toll on human health and survival, facilitating the spread of infectious disease, threatening supplies of food and clean water, and destroying homes. Weather patterns are now examined by scientists in the context of both human-induced global climate change and natural variability. Understanding the dynamics and impacts of extreme weather events provides insight that can help policy makers to both stem increases in climate change-inducing gases and to help a wide range of communities to adapt.

This briefing will cover the impacts of extreme weather events and provide a window into the public health and human welfare implications of such events as likely manifestations of global climate change.