

Written Testimony of Dr. Maria Caffrey
Before the House Committee on Natural Resources
July 25, 2019

Introduction and Summary

My name is Dr. Maria Caffrey. I received my PhD in geography from the University of Tennessee, and my recent research has focused on the potential impacts in U.S. national parks of sea level change and flooding resulting from anthropogenic (i.e. human-caused) climate change.

In 2013, the National Park Service (“NPS”) named me Principal Investigator on a project to examine how sea level rise and storm surge would impact coastal national parks under a series of different future climate change scenarios, with the primary deliverable being a published scientific report (“the Report”). The Task Agreement that governed my project explicitly stated that my first major objective would be to use the various scenarios for anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases contained in the most current report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (“IPCC”) to develop estimates for what amounts of sea level rise and storm surge coastal parks would experience under those various scenarios. Since those scenarios are based on different assumed levels of future human greenhouse gas emissions, my Report was always inherently going to be an assessment of how human-caused climate change will affect coastal parks that the NPS is charged with preserving.

For this reason, when I handed in my first draft of the Report in August 2016, it referred to the fact that climate change is anthropogenic in nature, i.e. caused by human activity. The fact that future climate change will be driven by human activity is a fundamental premise of the Report’s analysis of different emissions scenarios, as well as its conclusions about how varying levels of anthropogenic greenhouse gases in the future will affect sea level rise in the national parks.

As the time for the Report’s publication approached in late 2017 and early 2018, my supervisors at NPS and other senior staff there repeatedly attempted to censor this scientific work by coercing me either into accepting the removal of references to anthropogenic or human-caused climate change from the Report, or into removing those references myself. I disclosed this attempted censorship to the NPS Scientific Integrity Officer, to the Department of the Interior’s Office of Scientific Integrity, the Department of the Interior’s Inspector General, and to a reporter at NPR’s *Reveal*. As a result of my disclosure, my access to NPS funding was gradually cut off until ultimately, in March of 2019, my last attempt at continued NPS funding failed and it became clear that I would no longer have a position at NPS. It is as a result of this that on July 22, 2019, I filed a whistleblower complaint with the Office of Special Counsel.

Factual Background

I first worked at NPS in the Geologic Resources Division around 2006 during the George W. Bush administration. I returned to NPS as a partner for the same division in January 2012.

Climate change is an increasingly urgent issue for park managers as rising sea levels threaten to affect or even completely engulf coastal parks. Sea level rise and storm surges pose significant risks to infrastructure, archeological sites, and various historic structures in coastal parks. I became interested in returning to NPS when I recognized that NPS was lacking vital coastal climate data necessary for it to develop appropriate management plans for future climate impacts on coastal parks. I therefore designed a project that would generate data relating to future sea level and storm surges for all coastal NPS units under a variety of different greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions scenarios. To develop this data would help not only the NPS, but also the public that uses the national parks, understand how climate change could affect parks in the future and how the parks need to be protected. I wrote the proposal for funding to pursue this project myself. As referenced above, the proposal explicitly involved using anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions scenarios contained in the most recent IPCC report, which represent potential human fossil fuel consumption over the next century. NPS accepted and funded my proposal without any changes. In August 2013, Leigh Welling, the then-Director of Climate Change Response Program at the NPS, named me Principal Investigator on the project, and I began work.

From January 2, 2012 until February 15, 2019, my salary was paid entirely with NPS funds at the direction and with the approval of NPS employees.¹ I had an NPS phone number and an NPS partner email address, as well as an NPS partner I.D. In addition, during that entire time, the computers, monitors, printers and other equipment I used to do my work were issued to me by NPS. From the time that I returned to NPS as a partner in January 2012, my office was located in an NPS building in Colorado. I was issued NPS business cards, and I appeared on behalf of NPS at public events, such as the Denver Museum of Nature and Science outreach days. My immediate supervisors on a day-to-day basis, as well as those at higher levels who were responsible for approving and overseeing my projects and reviewing my performance, were all NPS employees. It was one of my NPS supervisors who reviewed and approved my vacation requests. All my work was conducted using my NPS computer, and the NPS posted all my reports on one of its websites, irma.nps.gov.

One of the primary intended products of my project was a written technical report (“Report”) that was intended for an audience with a scientific background. This Report would examine how

¹ Note that during certain periods in 2012 and from October of 2018 until February 15, 2019 those funds were paid via a non-profit organization called Conservation Legacy. Nonetheless, my salary during this time was paid entirely with NPS funds, at the direction and with the approval of NPS employees.

numerous coastal parks would be affected by sea level rise under several different climate change scenarios. Those scenarios largely depend on levels of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions — i.e., anthropogenic climate change. The purpose of analyzing these scenarios in the Report was to inform the Park Service’s planning and adaptation strategies for its resources going forward. The intention for me to develop this technical scientific Report was memorialized in a Task Agreement signed by both NPS and the University of Colorado Boulder in August of 2013, which contained multiple references to the fact that the Report was intended to follow a similar format to the reports of the IPCC, which are highly technical documents that convey information using scientific terms.² The NPS even linked to the IPCC report in its data store.³

As a scientist and the Report’s chief author I concluded that discussing anthropogenic climate change in the Report was scientifically relevant and important for two primary reasons. First, based on my PhD training in paleoenvironmental change, the term “anthropogenic climate change” is a scientific term specifically used to indicate future climate change as distinct from any discussions about non-human-caused climate change occurring in the past. Indeed, “anthropogenic climate change” is a standard term used in the IPCC reports, which, under the Task Agreement, my Report was specifically intended to be modeled after. Eliminating this term from the Report would therefore alter its scientific meaning. Second, as already described, the Report presents several different climate change scenarios and examines the projected impact of sea level rise on coastal parks under each of those scenarios. Presenting these scenarios without any reference to the fact that which scenario plays out will depend on the amount of greenhouse gases humans put into the atmosphere in the future would have eliminated crucial context and made the scientific conclusions of the Report less clear.

I researched and drafted the Report myself, although throughout the course of my work on the sea level rise project I met periodically with communications and science teams comprised of NPS employees who gave me input and feedback as my work progressed. The Report ultimately projected the effects of sea level rise at 118 coastal national parks in three different time frames (2030, 2050, and 2100), and under four different greenhouse gas emissions scenarios. While the work in the Report was my own, I offered both Rebecca Beavers, the Coastal Geology and Coastal Adaptation Coordinator for NPS’s Climate Change Response Program (CCRP), and Cat Hawkins Hoffman, the National Adaptation Coordinator the CCRP, co-authorship because they helped secure the funding for this project from NPS and because my direct supervisor, Ms. Beavers, wanted to achieve more “ownership” over the Report by adding NPS co-authors. Ms. Beavers also attended all of the science- and communication-team meetings that had been held to allow NPS staff to have input into the products of the projects carried out under the task agreement. Finally, I offered Patrick Gonzalez, NPS’s principal climate change scientist, co-

² When I wrote the proposal, NPS also required that it have a public education component. I met that requirement by proposing to design three waysides and a public-facing website that would educate the public on the challenges of coastal climate change.

³ <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2215238>.

authorship on the paper because he had offered me useful advice as I conducted my research and developed my Report.

I handed in my first draft of the Report to Ms. Beavers in August 2016. Over the course of the fall of 2016 and early 2017 the Report went through the normal editing and peer review process. As is standard practice, the peer review of my Report involved numerous scientists, some who were NPS employees and some from outside NPS. Initially, this process proceeded without incident. I received input from these reviewers, with both Ms. Beavers and Ms. Hoffman providing relatively minor input about wording, as was expected in their roles in CCRP. During this period, neither Ms. Beavers nor Ms. Hoffman raised any concerns about the references in the Report to anthropogenic climate change. In April 2017, after the review process was complete and I had incorporated the substantive comments and suggested edits I had received as appropriate, a “final” version of the Report went out for copy editing. This version of the Report included references to anthropogenic climate change.

Under normal circumstances, I would have expected the Report to have been published in early 2017. When this did not happen, I initially assumed any delays were due to new staff still learning the ropes after the change in administration.

Beginning in about May 2017 I began to question the real cause of the delay as NPS continued to push back the release of my Report. In May or June 2017, Ms. Beavers told me that NPS was delaying the release in order to coincide with the release of another report. Then in August of 2017, she told me that it was delayed again because Hurricane Harvey had hit and NPS did not wish to release a report focusing on sea level rise and storm surge at a time when hurricane activity was so much in the news. In September 2017, CCRP’s Communications Coordinator, Larry Perez, told me that NPS Associate Director Ray Sauvajot had directed that the release of my Report be once again delayed. This time I did not receive any clear explanation as to the reason for the delay. Finally, in November or December 2017, Larry Perez told me that he anticipated that the Report would be released in January 2018, with no further edits. This was my expectation when I left for maternity leave in December 2017.

Instead, around the time I left on my maternity leave, NPS began making explicit attempts to get me to remove references to anthropogenic or human-caused climate change from my Report. The most concerning of these attempts fell into a few distinct categories.

First, my NPS supervisors and other senior NPS employees repeatedly threatened that if I refused to remove references to anthropogenic climate change (or to accept their removal by other NPS employees), NPS would not release my Report or would release it without the references to anthropogenic climate change and without me listed as an author. For example, in December 2017, Ms. Beavers came to my office and pressured me to remove references to the

human causes of climate change from the Report's executive summary by suggesting that if I refused to do so, NPS would not release the Report at all. Specifically, during this encounter she told me: "It's better for you to make the changes than for this report to not go out at all. How would you feel if the parks don't get this? It's more important they get it." Ms. Beavers repeated this threat in a phone call with all the co-authors sometime in February or early March 2018. Another NPS employee who was eventually recruited to attempt to mediate the dispute over the Report, Brendan Moynahan, also made this same threat in a phone call on April 6, 2018, telling me that unless I agreed to whatever changes to the Report he deemed appropriate, he would release the Report with the content as he decided it should be and would remove my name.

The seriousness of this threat to my career is difficult to overstate. The phrase "publish or perish" is a common maxim among researchers. I dedicated several years to this research. For those years of work to fail to result in any publication, or for NPS to publish my research without properly crediting me as an author, would have been extremely damaging to my publication record and therefore to my ability to advance in my career. It is inconceivable that Ms. Beavers and Mr. Moynahan were not aware of the seriousness of the threats to my career when they made these statements.

Second, unable to convince me to remove references to anthropogenic climate change myself, NPS employees attempted at various points to remove those references from my Report themselves, without my authorization. The first time this happened was while I was out on maternity leave from December 24, 2017 to March 5, 2018. On February 27, 2018, I learned that Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Beavers removed all references to anthropogenic climate change from the Report – on which, again, I was the principal author – without consulting me. Ms. Hoffman did the same thing a few months later, after numerous failed attempts by her and others to coerce me into altering my Report. On March 27, 2018, again without my prior knowledge or authorization, she rewrote the introduction and conclusion sections of the Report to relegate the terms she did not like to a subsection on the second or third page.

This was beyond anything I had ever experienced before from any of my NPS colleagues. It went well past the kind of minor wordsmithing that it would have been reasonable for Ms. Hoffman to do and into the realm of substantively altering my Report without my approval. This was particularly inappropriate and shocking since Ms. Hoffman does not have a PhD or any formal training in climate change. It also seemed inconsistent with her previous actions, since she had already approved the text when we had originally planned to publish the Report in 2017. It is my belief that Ms. Hoffman was responding to pressure from the Administration to censor discussion of human-caused climate change within NPS. She initially tried to excuse the censorship of my work by saying that she was simply trying to eliminate the word "anthropogenic" because it was too confusing a term for park staff to understand. However, when I suggested simply replacing "anthropogenic" with "human-caused" she rebuffed me and

told me to delete any mention of the human role in the current climate crisis. It became inescapably clear that what was happening was not a normal editorial disagreement about word choice, but rather an attack on the scientific integrity of my work for political reasons.

Finally, Mr. Sauvajot subjected me to verbal and even physical intimidation. This took place during an in-person meeting with Mr. Sauvajot and several others in Fort Collins, Colorado on March 8, 2018. During this meeting, Mr. Sauvajot was extremely aggressive and threatening towards me as I attempted to explain why I believed it was so important that NPS not remove the references to anthropogenic climate change from my scientific Report. He became very agitated as I held to my position that it was inappropriate to remove the references at issue from the report. He raised his voice to me so much that I became alarmed, he turned red, and he smacked a stack of papers on a table. This behavior was very intimidating and unnerving to me. Mr. Sauvajot said during this meeting that it was now a verbal policy in NPS that the term “anthropogenic climate change” should not be used in scientific reports, that he was simply following orders, and that “this is just the way it is right now.” He also said that he believed that he might be reassigned and replaced with someone who “would not be as nice to me” as he was if the Report was published with the references to anthropogenic climate change in it. Ms. Hoffman followed this statement by suggesting that publication of my Report with those references could result in the entire Climate Change Response Program being terminated. The implication that a scientific report funded by a federal agency for the purpose of informing that agency’s stewardship of important natural resources should be altered in order to conform to the political whims of the current presidential administration is deeply concerning.

Crucially, I was not alone in believing that the references in the Report to the anthropogenic or human-caused nature of climate change were scientifically relevant and important context for understanding the different future emissions scenarios the Report set out. Patrick Gonzalez, who was initially a co-author on the Report, shared this belief and willingly expressed it throughout this process. Mr. Gonzalez argued strenuously that the attempts described above to pressure me into removing those references or to remove them without my authorization constituted a violation of scientific integrity. Mr. Gonzalez eventually removed himself as a co-author on the Report – even though the references were ultimately kept in – because he did not wish to have his name associated with what he saw as a violation of scientific integrity.

Disclosures

Internal Reporting

As the situation continued to escalate through the spring of 2018, my unpaid affiliation with the University of Colorado Boulder resulted in me being asked to respond to requests under the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) relating to my work on the Report. At this point I became

concerned that if the references to anthropogenic climate change were removed I could potentially appear to be complicit in an attempt to censor the Report and omit important scientific information. Therefore, on April 2, 2018, I contacted the University of Colorado Boulder's Office of Research Integrity and Compliance and described to them what I had been experiencing. Two of their employees – Joe Rosse, the Associate Vice Chancellor of Research Integrity and Compliance, and Denitta Ward, the Assistant Vice Chancellor – subsequently participated in some of the discussions about the Report led by NPS staff, although they did not play any substantive role in the decision-making around what was ultimately an NPS report.

I also contacted the NPS Scientific Integrity Officer, Sara Newman, and on June 1, 2018, I filed a scientific integrity complaint with DOI's scientific integrity office in which I described in detail the coercion, manipulation and attempted censorship of my scientific research in what I continue to believe to be clear violation of the NPS and DOI scientific integrity policies. Under established DOI and NPS procedures, the subjects of my scientific integrity complaint – specifically Ray Sauvajot, Cat Hoffman, Rebecca Beavers, and Brendan Moynahan – would have been notified that I had filed the complaint. As a result, I believe that the fact of my having filed the complaint likely became common knowledge in my branch at NPS.

Finally, I contacted DOI's Office of the Inspector General (OIG). I spoke with Agent William (Bill) Wisner of that office on April 30 about the situation surrounding my Report. Based on my conversation with Agent Wisner I understood that at this point OIG had already begun an investigation into the handling of my Report. I provided Agent Wisner with various pertinent documents as well as a copy of my scientific integrity complaint once I filed it.

External Reporting

I also discussed the events described above with a journalist, Elizabeth Shogren of NPR's *Reveal*, with whom I had worked for an unrelated article in 2013, and who contacted me on February 1, 2018 to inquire about the status of my Report. She also filed multiple Freedom of Information Act and CORA requests for my records. *Reveal* published stories by Ms. Shogren on my situation on April 2, 2018⁴ and May 18, 2018.⁵ *Reveal* also released a podcast episode on this topic on January 5, 2019.⁶ *Reveal*'s reporting brought some external attention to the situation surrounding my Report; in particular, on April 5, 2018, five members of the House Committee on Natural Resources sent a letter to the Inspector General for the Department of the Interior, Mary Kendall, requesting an investigation into whether the scientific integrity policy at the National Park Service was being adequately enforced, specifically citing Ms. Shogren's article. The next day five U.S. Senators did the same thing.

⁴ <https://www.revealnews.org/article/wipeout-human-role-in-climate-change-removed-from-science-report/>

⁵ <https://www.revealnews.org/blog/national-parks-report-finally-released-uncensored/>

⁶ <https://www.revealnews.org/episodes/silencing-science/>

I believe that it was only because of Ms. Shogren's reporting and the attention it generated that my Report was ultimately published in May 2018 with references to anthropogenic climate change included in it, and with me appropriately credited as the lead author.

Unfortunately, despite calls from Congress for a rigorous investigation, neither my scientific integrity complaint nor my disclosure to the OIG's office were taken seriously. A little over a month after I filed my scientific integrity complaint, I received a letter from the NPS Scientific Integrity Officer, Sara Newman, closing it. The letter stated simply that "[b]ecause the report was published with references to anthropogenic climate change, there was no loss of scientific integrity." Ms. Newman and her office completely failed to address the serious instances of attempted coercion, censorship, and manipulation by NPS staff in relation to my Report detailed in my complaint. More than that, Ms. Newman told me over the phone on December 12, 2018 – after her office had already closed my complaint – that she was unaware of many important details contained in it, particularly those related to the meeting with Mr. Sauvajot in March 2018 in which he was extremely aggressive and threatening.

Ms. Newman further told me that, while she knew about the incident from phone calls we had before I filed my scientific integrity complaint, she had never officially seen or heard my description of this incident (which I described in detail in my scientific integrity complaint) and she had read only a three-page summary that she had received from the OIG. She suggested that what I was describing should have been treated quite seriously. Thus, Ms. Newman apparently signed off on closing my complaint, which her office was responsible for handling, without having actually read it, much less having fully investigated it. This is extremely troubling.

The investigation conducted by the DOI's OIG similarly lacked any rigor or seriousness. I had only one brief phone conversation with Agent Wiser in which we discussed the substance of my complaint. On that phone call, which took place on April 30, 2018, I began to relay to Agent Wiser the circumstances of my case and to attempt to explain to him why I believed I had been subjected to various forms of coercion, intimidation and harassment by NPS personnel in an attempt to make me alter the content of my scientific Report. However, I was only able to relay a few sentences before Agent Wiser cut me off, telling me that he had "heard enough." Agent Wiser never contacted me to request any additional information. We exchanged a few more emails, in which he repeatedly emailed me a complaint form that did not work and that I could not use, but in which he did not seek any additional information. In August of 2018 the OIG publicly posted a summary of the statement it ultimately provided to NPS, which simply said that "because the report was published without edits, we closed our investigation."

Retaliation

After I made my disclosures, I experienced reprisal from multiple NPS supervisors at NPS, ultimately ending in my termination.

First, as part of the sea level rise project I was initially funded by NPS to do, in addition to the Report itself, I was tasked with developing an interactive website for nps.gov that would allow users to see what the scenarios described in the Report would look like. We referred to this website informally as “the viewer.” I worked closely with others at NPS over the course of approximately three years to develop the viewer, including writing the proposal for funding to be transferred from CCRP to the Denver Service Center that provided the web server for the viewer. Prior to the conflict over the inclusion of references to anthropogenic climate change in the written Report, Ms. Hoffman had repeatedly turned to me for updates on the viewer project. For all these reasons, my understanding was that I was the lead on the project. However, in spring 2018, Doug Wilder, a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Lead at NPS who was co-authoring the viewer with me, told me that he had been prohibited by his supervisor from sharing drafts of the project with me directly. Ms. Beavers essentially took control of the project, despite the fact that she had not attended any of the meetings on the project or contributed to it substantively. I was cut off from working on the project on which I had been the lead and eventually told that my input was no longer needed.

Much more crucially, my funding from NPS—and consequently my position there—has been eliminated, despite the fact that my most recent immediate supervisors have been very pleased with my work, sought to keep my position intact, and asked me to keep doing work for them even after my funding was eliminated because my work was essential to the projects I was on.

The funding for the sea level rise project itself ended in October of 2017. Under normal circumstances, Ms. Hoffman, as the head of the Climate Change Response Program under whose auspices I conducted the sea level rise research, would have allocated more funding for me. In the past I had requested, and received, extensions of the funding for the sea level rise viewer. The original Task Agreement authorizing and funding my project was modified repeatedly over several years to provide additional funding when the original term of the agreement ran out without any difficulty.

I had every reason to expect this to continue. For one thing, there was still work to do on the sea level rise viewer, another important part of the overall sea level rise project. The viewer project included a separate report that was to be released through the NPS’s Data Series, a series of non-scholarly reports intended to allow for the timely release of data sets and summaries.⁷ I had been

⁷ <https://www.nps.gov/im/reports-nrds.htm>.

successfully leading this Data Series project, but Ms. Beavers removed me from it and took it over. To this day Mr. Wilder, the GIS expert I worked on the viewer with, still periodically contacts me for assistance with the viewer because he needs my technical expertise to finish the edits on the project. In addition, I still had several outstanding requests for information and assistance from coastal parks. While this was not strictly part of my sea level rise project, it was something that I did in the regular course of my duties as a sea level rise expert for the NPS.

Nonetheless, and despite the obvious continued demand for my work and input, my funding dried up following my dispute with NPS over my scholarly Report that was the primary product of the sea level rise project. Instead, NPS pushed me onto a series of low-paying projects that were inappropriate for a scientist of my experience and did not make use of my sea level expertise. First, Ms. Beavers suggested I apply for a short-term project with a colleague in the Biological Resources Division that would pay me approximately \$5,000 for three months work on a project assessing the impact of climate change on turtle ecology. I accepted this project only because it would allow me to stay on at NPS for the time being, and it would pay me until I left for maternity leave.

I hoped that by the time I returned, the Report would be published and the situation would have blown over. As I have already described in detail, this was not to be. Ms. Hoffman told me that she could not provide me with any more funding from the Climate Change Response Program, and indeed I was essentially cut off from communication from that entire division. The only way I could stay at NPS at that point was to accept an internship position in another division at NPS, the Water Resources Division (WRD). I was able to secure a very limited amount of funding – approximately \$25,000 – from WRD. Under this new arrangement, I began work on projects related to wetlands mitigation banking, something which, like turtle ecology, was well outside my main area of scientific expertise. Taking this position also required me to accept an intern title that was not appropriate for a PhD scientist of my experience. Indeed the intern program I was receiving funds through was specifically intended for scientists ages 18–35, younger than I was at the time when NPS entered me into it. Finally, I had to accept a significant reduction in my annual salary, from approximately \$70,000 to approximately \$25,000. I was being retaliated against for speaking up.

Nonetheless, I was able to work successfully with my new colleagues and supervisors in WRD, and my efforts were essential to the advancement of the wetland mitigation banking project I led. In addition, I began working on a new grant proposal for \$130,000 for work on a project that would create a database of degraded wetlands within park lands that could be used as part of a wetland mitigation strategy.

The \$25,000 stipend in WRD ran out on February 15, 2019. Alan Ellsworth, Chief of WRD's Aquatic Systems Branch, very much wished to retain me and went to great lengths to find a way

to continue that funding. Moreover, it was common knowledge within the division that there is a significant amount of unused funding—I was told by a colleague, as of mid-February 2019, this was approximately \$300,000. This is such a well-known, recurring issue that employees often refer to the need to spend unused funds at the end of each fiscal year (in order to avoid losing them) on things like extra iPads and computer monitors as “Christmas.”

Nonetheless, the Chief of WRD, Forrest “Ed” Harvey, not only refused to sign off on the purchase order requested by my immediate supervisors that would have allowed them to retain me, he refused to provide any explanation as to why he would not provide the requested funding or even to acknowledge my supervisor’s inquiries about it. Although Mr. Harvey was not directly involved in my work on the sea level rise project, he would have been in frequent communication with those who were, particularly Mr. Sauvajot and Ms. Hoffman. Given that, as well as the fact that news of the controversy around my Report was widely known among my NPS colleagues, it is a virtual certainty that Mr. Harvey was well aware of what happened and had received the message that I was no longer welcome at NPS.

Mr. Harvey also prevented me from pursuing the new \$130,000 grant proposal I had developed and both my direct supervisor, Kevin Noon, and the Aquatic Systems Branch Manager, Alan Ellsworth had approved. In order to have a chance to have that proposal accepted, it would have had to be submitted to DOI for review no later than March 3, 2019. Before that could happen, however, Mr. Harvey himself would have had to review it and approve me sending it to DOI for consideration. He refused to do so, thus effectively preventing me from pursuing funding and terminating my position at NPS. It was therefore on March 3, when the deadline for DOI review passed, that I officially knew I would be unable to obtain any more funding to maintain my position at NPS. Again, Mr. Harvey refused to even acknowledge my repeated inquiries about the status of my proposal, much less provide any substantive explanation as to why he would not allow it to go forward. This all happened despite my having obtained good performance reviews.

Further evidence that the lack of interest by NPS management in retaining me was unrelated to budgetary constraints may be found in the fact that my immediate supervisor at WRD, Kevin Noon, a wetlands scientist, told me that he could not continue the wetlands mitigation banking project I had been working on without me and sought to keep me on as a volunteer after my position ended because he needed my services. At Mr. Noon’s request, I submitted a volunteer application he provided to me since I wished to help him out. Although it is common practice for NPS employees to arrange volunteers, and under normal circumstances I would have expected this request to be approved without issue, Ed Harvey apparently denied this request – I was told that there would be no need for my pro bono services without any further explanation, despite the fact that Mr. Noon had made it explicitly clear that he did indeed need my services in particular to finish the wetlands mitigation banking project.

Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that the management at NPS gradually cut off my access to funding and eventually terminated me—not because my supervisors were unhappy with the quality of my work, did not wish to work with me, or did not have a need for my work, and likewise not because funding was an issue (my services were mysteriously not needed even when I was willing to offer them for free in the face of an explicit need for them)—but rather as retribution for my having made disclosures about the attempted censoring of references to anthropogenic climate change in my Report on sea level rise.

Losing my position at NPS has been extremely difficult for me, both financially and emotionally. I have struggled to find other employment, despite months of considerable effort on my part to do so. I have only last week begun work in the first temporary position I have been able to obtain since I left NPS. I even had to contend with a challenge to my right to receive unemployment benefits. Although the challenge was withdrawn once I obtained counsel, this only added to the stress and difficulty of my situation. I have even had to begin considering whether to move my baby daughter away from her father so that I can go someplace where I can find permanent employment. I hope that this Committee will treat this situation with the seriousness it deserves and find a way to remedy it.