

SUMMARY

GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH AND DATA MANAGEMENT ACT

Early in the 110th Congress, Rep. Udall and Rep. Inglis introduced *the Global Change Research and Data Management Act*. Rep. Udall has previously introduced this bill in late in the 107th and the 108th Congresses. The bill essentially updates and reorients the current U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), which was established by law in 1990.

In a 2003 review of the Administration's draft strategic plan for the USGCRP, the National Academy of Sciences acknowledged the need for research to evaluate strategies to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of global change. The Academy recommended that the plan be revised to enhance efforts to support decision-making, recognizing that policymakers at all levels and others in the user community responsible for managing resources, fostering economic development, and responding to natural disasters need information to guide their decisions.

The *Global Change Research and Data Management Act* would reorient the program along these lines, requiring the Administration to identify and consult with members of the user community in developing the USGCRP research plan. The bill would also mandate the involvement of the National Governors Association in evaluating the program plan from the perspective of the user community.

The 1990 law outlined a highly specific organizational structure for the USGCRP. This bill would eliminate this detailed organizational structure and provide the President with the flexibility to assemble an Interagency Committee and organizational structure that will best deliver the products Congress is requesting. It would, however, retain many of the key features of current law – the requirements for a ten-year strategic plan, for periodic assessments of the effects of global change on the natural, social, and economic systems upon which we depend, and for increased international cooperation in global change science.

The bill also includes a new title that would establish a new interagency working group to coordinate federal policies on data management and archiving. Along with advances in computer, monitoring, and satellite technologies that have expanded our ability to collect and analyze data, we need to do better at managing and archiving these data resources to support the work of scientists and policymakers.

The bill does not offer specific policy direction, but it does affirm the need for the continued strong federal support for global change research, and it does map out a new emphasis on production of information needed to inform these important policy debates.