

Congressmen clash over climate study

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Two GOP House committee chairmen are publicly arguing over the merits of a study of global temperature trends, The New York Times reported Monday.

The study, published in 1998 and 1999, combined modern temperature data with evidence of historic temperature trends as evidence by tree rings. The result, the Times said, showed little variation for nearly 1,000 years and then a sharp, recent temperature increase.

The inquiry was initiated by Rep. Joe Barton of Texas, chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, after two Canadians with no expertise in climate change challenged the study.

Critics of the inquiry have been joined by Rep. Sherwood Boehlert of New York, chairman of the House Science Committee, the Times reported. Last week Boehlert sent a letter to Barton calling the investigation "misguided and illegitimate."

Boehlert noted other recent analyses have supported the conclusion that the world's warming since the late 20th century appears to be statistically significantly.

Boehlert says Barton's criticism "raises the specter of politicians opening investigations against any scientist who reaches a conclusion that makes the political elite uncomfortable."

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