

**Summary of Testimony of Richard S. Lindzen
before the Senate Commerce Committee on 1 May 2001.**

The public presentation of the issue of global warming over the past 12 years, has, by the very nature of the presentation, forced confusion and irrationality to dominate the discussion. On the one hand, the issue is presented as a complex, multifaceted problem involving atmospheric composition, heat transfer, weather, temperature, ocean dynamics, hydrology, sea level, glaciology, ecology and even epidemiology – all topics that are individually filled with uncertainty. On the other hand, we are assured that ‘the science is settled.’ What exactly this ‘settled science’ is, is never explained, but whatever it may be, it is claimed to be supported by the thousands of ‘outstanding’ scientists involved in the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and is presumed to imply a wide array of catastrophic scenarios endangering the very existence of future generations. Finally, solutions like those envisaged in the Kyoto Protocol are proposed that have almost no practical connection to the putative problem. To question this situation is to be marginalized as a ‘skeptic,’ while no degree of counterfactual exaggeration is held to be out of the ‘mainstream.’ The testimony explains that facts that are universally agreed upon in this field are usually qualitative, trivial, and without policy implications, that numerous other areas of widespread agreement are not supportive of catastrophic scenarios, and that large computer models of the climate are broadly unsuccessful and unreliable. However, in the world of the ‘precautionary principle,’ it is only required that catastrophic computer simulations be ‘possible’ in some ill-defined sense in order to call for action. This situation is abetted, implicitly and explicitly by the self-serving IPCC procedure, where the biased but unspectacular contents of the full reports are selectively summarized in such a manner as to encourage popular misuse, and the misuse need only be defended by the claim of support by thousands of scientists whose support was never, in fact, solicited or given. That this can lead to policies that are detrimental to the economy and even the environment has often been noted. Less frequently noted, but perhaps more important, is the fact that the present situation is also detrimental to science and its ability to soundly answer important questions to the benefit of society.