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**From:** [Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., USN \(Ret.\)](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2006 1:44 PM

**Subject:** Message From the Under Secretary -- Encouragement of Scientific Debate and Transparency Within NOAA

## Message From the Under Secretary

Feb 14, 2006

**There have been several print and internet articles recently** that have tried to make a case that NOAA scientists are being muzzled. For example, a few recent media reports have (incorrectly) asserted that some NOAA scientists have been discouraged from commenting on the question of whether human caused global warming may be influencing the number or intensity of hurricanes. Let me state in the most direct terms that I am a strong believer in open, peer reviewed science as well as the right and duty of scientists to seek the truth and to provide the best scientific advice possible. When I answer questions on NOAA missions, my answers are formed on the basis of the scientific papers that I have personally read, or have been informed by you in the course of NOAA business.

Peer reviewed science speaks for itself and doesn't need me or anyone else to interpret or modify the results. For those of you who know me personally, you realize that I encourage and actively pursue vigorous debate on all topics, particularly including science related to NOAA's mission. The purpose is to get as close to the truth and the facts as possible. I expect my management team to adhere to this policy of scientific openness as well.

Our media standards also reflect an open policy. We encourage our public affairs staff to keep abreast of media interests. I encourage our scientists to speak freely and openly. Dozens of you every day are talking to the media and providing the results of peer reviewed science across a wide variety of NOAA topics. We ask only that you specify when you are communicating personal views and when you are characterizing your work as part of your specific contribution to NOAA's mission. Also, I ask that you respect, and seek to understand, each other's work within NOAA. We have many disciplines and centers of excellence within NOAA, all contributing substantially to the body of earth science knowledge. Be tolerant of each other as would your colleagues around the nation and the world. "One NOAA" should apply to our work as scientists as well as our management structure!



Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.  
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Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator

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