



**Position Statement Concerning
Recent Letters from the House Committee on Energy and Commerce**

August 22, 2005

The Tree-Ring Society, the world's largest scientific society dedicated to tree-ring research with over 350 members in over 30 countries, expresses its deep respect and support for three paleoclimate scientists - including Dr. Malcom K. Hughes, a long-standing member of the Society - who have recently been the target of an inquisition into their research regarding the so-called "hockey stick" reconstruction of northern hemisphere temperatures over the past 1000 years.

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce and its Chairmen recently raised "questions about the federally funded work upon which climate studies rely and the quality and transparency of analyses used to support the IPCC [United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] assessment process". However, we - along with numerous other scientific organizations and individual scientists - were surprised and concerned about the approach the Committee took to "review" the scientific basis for the paleoclimate science contained in the IPCC Third Assessment Report by sending letters to only three individual researchers - Drs. Michael Mann, Raymond Bradley, and Malcolm Hughes - because of their work on what has been called an "iconic" figure of global climate change. These letters required them to provide within three weeks detailed and burdensome information about "all financial support" and "all data archives" related to research performed throughout their careers, much of which appears to not have any bearing on the global warming question at hand.

This approach strongly suggests intimidation rather than a true search for better understanding of the science that underlies the Mann-Bradley-Hughes (MBH) reconstruction. Moreover, owing to the complexity of the research involved in the IPCC reports, it would appear that a letter targeted to only a few individuals is not a productive means to fully explore the question of global climate change, if that is the true goal of the Committee and its Chairman. The Tree-Ring Society fully supports the integrity of the scientific process in reviews and assessments of the MBH reconstruction, the high quality of work and generous data sharing of MBH, and the appropriateness of the use of tree-ring data in climate change studies in general.

The Tree-Ring Society appreciates the interest of the U.S. Congress in the critically important fields of paleoclimate research and global climate change, especially as they contribute to public policy decisions. The Tree-Ring Society represents a community with scientific expertise that has been and will continue to be critical to development of tree-ring data sets and their interpretation as paleoclimate proxy records useful in these efforts.