

remember that the committee was advisory and not an oversight or policy-setting group. It was simply no longer needed, he said.

Jim Dawson

Bush Team Unveils 10-Year Climate Change Research Plan

With political leaders describing it as “historic” and government scientists defending it as “intellectually sound,” the Bush administration released its 356-page “Strategic Plan for the Climate Change Science Program” at a lengthy press conference in late July. The report, presented specifically as a 10-year research plan and not a policy document, will coordinate and amplify climate change research now conducted in 13 federal agencies.

Noting that the federal government already spends \$4.5 billion a year on “climate change-related work,” Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham said that the new program “will find the answers to many unanswered questions [about global warming] and lead to better technology [to deal with the warming].” To bolster the scientific credibility of the report, Abraham cited a letter from the directors of 11 Department of Energy (DOE) research labs; those officials endorsed the report as a “much needed science-based vision.”

John Marburger, director of the administration’s Office of Science and Technology Policy, said the report represented “a determined effort to outline the way forward from the present state of knowledge to find answers about why our climate continually changes, how much the climate is expected to change during the next year, next several years, next decades, and next 100 years, and how much climate change is predictable, including abrupt climate change.”

Several environmental groups and skeptical Democrats on Capitol Hill criticized the report not so much for what it contained as for what it lacked. Daniel Lashof, a scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the report was a “distraction” from the failure of the administration to take steps to curb greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide.

Representative Mark Udall (D-Colo.) accused the administration of trying to avoid the problems caused by global warming with a plan that “doesn’t help us reduce our vulnerability to present and future global changes. Basic research alone isn’t

enough. Going back to the drawing board is only a stalling tactic.”

Government scientists involved in the report acknowledged the divisiveness of the global warming issue, and pointed out several times during a press briefing at the Commerce Department that the program is designed to give understandable scientific “products” to policymakers. “We will not be dabbling into policy,” said Ari Patrinos, who directs the Office of Science’s biological and environmental research division at DOE. “At the same time, we’re not just throwing information over the wall and hoping it will stick somewhere useful. It will be more of a dialogue that may translate into useful policy.”

The plan has four goals: to extend knowledge of Earth’s past and present climate, improve understanding of what is causing changes in Earth’s climate, reduce uncertainty in projections of future climate change, and understand the sensitivity and adaptability of natural and managed systems to climate change. The plan also incorporates a recommendation by officials from the American Physical Society, the American Geophysical Union, and several other scientific societies that research be done on the potential effects of climate variability and change on human health and welfare.

The report is available online at <http://www.climate-science.gov/Library/stratplan2003>.

Jim Dawson

Wadsworth Takes ORNL Helm

As the new director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on 1 August Jeff Wadsworth became responsible for a \$1 billion annual budget and 3800 researchers. He succeeded William Madia, who is now executive vice president for laboratory operations at Battelle, which, jointly with the University of Tennessee, oversees ORNL for the US Department of Energy (DOE).

A materials scientist from the UK, Wadsworth came to the US in 1976 and has racked up experience in both research and management. He spent 12 years at Lockheed Missiles and Space Co (now Lockheed Martin Corp), until he was lured to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which, he says, was seeking people from industry to help with technology transfer of “what was behind the fences” of the weapons lab. At LLNL, Wadsworth researched metals deformation at high temperatures and low stresses and superelastic behavior of



metals and ceramics. He also pursued his hobby of “swords and steels”—through which he studies the origins of the Iron Age—and served for seven years as the lab’s deputy director for science and technology.

From August 2002 until his move to ORNL, Wadsworth was at Battelle headquarters in Columbus, Ohio. There, among other things, he was part of the White House transition planning office that helped design the S&T section of the emerging Homeland Security Department.

“Jeff is an internationally respected scientist, outstanding leader, and innovator in such fields as materials science and homeland security,” Raymond Orbach, director of DOE’s Office of Science, said in a statement. “He is a superb choice for ORNL, the local community and the nation.”

At ORNL, says Wadsworth, “the first order of business is to deliver on the things we have promised to do—build the Spallation Neutron Source and the neutron science program, develop the next generation of supercomputer architecture, build the center for nanophase materials, and grow the biology and homeland security programs. That’s a tall order.” In parallel, he adds, he will work with others on a long-range vision for the lab. One tricky area “is to have a balance between investing in new facilities, equipment, and programs and at the same time eliminate legacy problems,” Wadsworth says, referring to radioactive and chemical contamination at the lab.

ORNL, says Wadsworth, “has a feel of vitality and growth. It has such a