

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

**Briefing on Climate Change:
Emerging Diseases and Financial Impacts**

June 5, 2003

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to encourage you and your staff to attend a Congressional brownbag briefing entitled "Climate Change: Emerging Diseases and Financial Impacts" sponsored by the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School. The briefing will take place on **Wednesday, June 18, 2003, 12:00-1:30pm in 406 Dirksen**. Cookies and drinks will be provided.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences say that temperatures have already risen by about 1 degree Fahrenheit in the last 100 years, and that they will continue to rise 5-9 degrees Fahrenheit this century. These scientists say that global warming poses a real threat to our public health, our economic infrastructure, and ecosystems. The Bush Administration's *Climate Action Report* states, "A few ecosystems...are likely to disappear entirely in some areas [while] other ecosystems...are likely to experience major species shifts or break up into a mosaic of grasslands, woodlands, and forests."

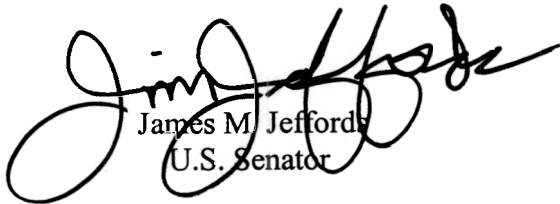
Already worldwide economic losses due to natural disasters are doubling about every ten years, and could reach almost \$150 billion per year in the next decade. Global warming is predicted to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events. According to the U.S. Global Research Program's National Assessment, heavy precipitation events and the intensity and frequency of hurricanes may increase, with serious implications for coastal infrastructure. The Environmental Protection Agency and IPCC also project that global warming may have wide-reaching and mostly negative impacts on human health, worsening air pollution-related illnesses and allergies, increasing heat-related deaths, and enhancing the spread of vector-borne diseases.

The session on June 18 will pay special attention to the health and financial impacts associated with climate change and emissions reductions. The briefing will also examine the various travel hazards and infrastructure damages associated with climate change as well as the insurance and reinsurance industry's rising costs and risks. The event will feature two speakers:

- **Paul R. Epstein, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Director, Center for Health and the Global Environment, *Emerging Diseases and Asthma: The Health Impacts of Rising CO₂ and Climate Change***
- **Christopher T. Walker, Managing Director, Greenhouse Gas Risk Solutions, Financial Services Business Group, Swiss Re, *Climate Change and the Financial Sector: Risks, Liabilities and Business Opportunities***

For further information, please contact Shannon Heyck-Williams with the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee at x47845 or Janine Benner with Rep. Blumenauer's office at x54884. Information is also available on the web: <http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge>. We hope you and your staff can attend.

Sincerely,



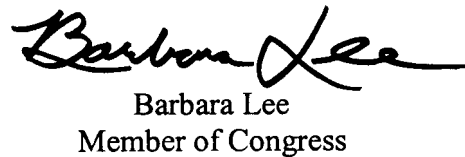
James M. Jeffords
U.S. Senator



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



John W. Olver
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress