



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

MAY 6 1977

B-100063  
CED7-472

The Honorable Olin E. Teague, Chairman  
Committee on Science and Technology  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your letter of May 2, 1977, requested our views on H.R. 6669, 95th Congress, a bill which would establish a national climate program and, if enacted, would be cited as the "National Climate Act of 1977."

This bill essentially follows, with certain modifications and amplifications, the provisions of H.R. 783, 95th Congress, on which we submitted to you our comments by letter of March 21, 1977. We previously expressed our agreement with the thrust of H.R. 783 as it sought to establish a focal point in the executive branch for a coordinated climate program including all climate-related activities of Federal departments and agencies. Our same view applies to H.R. 6669.

A major difference from H.R. 783, which would have designated the Secretary of Commerce as the focal point for the program, is the approach in H.R. 6669 which would authorize the President to designate the Federal agency within which a new National Climate Program Office as the lead agency for the program would be administered. We believe that in making such designation the President should give due regard to other agencies already in the program and avoid duplication or overlapping functions. The Committee may wish to give such direction in the bill.

We are pleased to note that H.R. 6669 includes certain suggestions which we made in our comments of March 21, 1977, by (1) more specifically circumscribing the nature and functions of advisory committees to be established under the bill and (2) providing for access to records and audit authority by the administrative agency and the General Accounting Office with respect to recipients of grants and contracts authorized under the bill.

We offer one further suggestion regarding section 11(b)(2), which provides for reimbursement of travel expenses of advisory committee members by reference to 5703(b) of title 5, United States Code. In view of an amendment of section 5703 by Public Law 94-22 (May 19, 1975) and to provide customary limitations on the amount of expenses that are reimbursable, we suggest that the language following the word "subsistence" on line 6 of page 14 be revised to read as follows:

"\*\*\*not to exceed the rates prescribed in sections 5702 and 5704 of title 5, United States Code, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5."

We would be glad to be of further service to your Committee if you so desire.

Sincerely yours,

**PAUL G. DEMBLING**

~~Testing~~ Comptroller General  
of the United States