



WASTE REPORT for April 25, 2016

Modeling Waste, Over and Over Again

Earlier this month the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued its sixth report on government duplication and fragmentation. **Most can agree that doing the same thing twice - or 200 times as is the case for federal Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education programs – leads to waste.**¹ But one area that seems to have missed the duplication monitors at GAO is climate change research.²

The FSO subcommittee did not have to dig too hard to find that there are **at least thirteen federal agencies spending over \$2.7 billion to research global climate change**; it is all laid out neatly in a 2013 White House report.³ Let's be clear, this is just for research on what some call settled science, and that figure does not include the over \$18 billion in additional money going to efforts to mitigate climate change.

One would think this kind of research would be limited to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA - of which the National Weather Service is a component), as they are the agency, you know, charged with studying weather and the atmosphere. As it turns out, at over \$360 million, NOAA is not even the largest researcher of climate change in the federal government. That title goes to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) which spends a whopping \$1.5 billion. Wonder why we haven't gone back to the moon? Perhaps an argument could be made for one of these agencies to do this research, but both? And what of the other eleven?

Well, the National Science Foundation chips in \$326 million while the Department of Energy spends \$220 million. In fact, just last month DOE was accepting applications for a \$5.5 million grant for "climate model development and validation."⁴ One would think perhaps they could just use data, research and models from NOAA or NASA's instead of reinventing the wheel in-house.

Even more shocking is the Federal Highway Administration, the agency in charge of building and maintaining our crumbling roads, is chipping in on climate research. We do not know the exact amount because it is less than \$500,000, but we do know it is something.

Other climate research contributors include The Smithsonian (\$8 million), U.S. Agency for International Development (\$14 million), the Department of State (\$3 million), Health and Human Services (\$15 million), the EPA (\$20 million) and the Department of the Interior (\$72 million).

No matter where you fall in the climate debate, one thing everyone should be able to agree on is paying 13 different agencies to do the same thing is pretty darn wasteful.

¹ [http://www.gao.gov/duplication/action_tracker/Science%2C Technology%2C Engineering%2C and Mathematics Education/action1](http://www.gao.gov/duplication/action_tracker/Science%2C%20Technology%2C%20Engineering%2C%20and%20Mathematics%20Education/action1)

² GAO has issued a report on the federal government's climate change research activities, but has not formally included this area in their duplication report. http://www.gao.gov/key_issues/climate_change_funding_management/issue_summary#t=0

³ *Federal Climate Change Expenditures Report to Congress*, Office of Management and Budget; Washington, DC. August, 2013

⁴ *Climate Model Development and Validation*, Department of Energy-Office of Science; Washington, DC. February 2016. Opportunity number: DE-FOA-0001530