

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters

Washington, DC 20546-0001



May 7, 2012

Reply to Attn of:

Office of the Chief Scientist

Colonel Walter Cunningham, USMC (Ret.)

5110 San Felipe

162W

Houston, TX 77056

Dear Colonel Cunningham:

Thank you for your letter dated March 28th, addressed to the NASA Administrator, who has asked me to respond on behalf of the agency. First let me recognize and express my appreciation for the contributions to our Nation's space program that you and your fellow signers have made. NASA has a tremendous record of achievement based on these contributions. We also have many challenges and opportunities today, and welcome all commentary on different subjects.

NASA sponsors research into many areas of cutting-edge scientific inquiry, including the relationship between carbon dioxide and climate. As an agency, NASA does not draw conclusions and issue "claims" about research findings. We support open scientific inquiry and discussion. Our Earth science programs provide many unique space-based observations and research capabilities to the scientific community to inform investigations into climate change, and many NASA scientists are actively involved in these investigations, bringing their expertise to bear on the interpretation of this information.

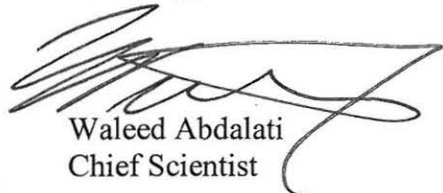
We encourage our scientists to subject these results and interpretations to scrutiny by the scientific community through the peer-review process. After these studies have met the appropriate standards of scientific peer-review, we strongly encourage scientists to communicate these results to the public.

Consistent with NASA statutory responsibility, the agency will "provide for the widest practicable and appropriate dissemination of information concerning its activities and the results thereof." This includes posting scientific findings on our websites, often in the form of press releases and feature stories. These materials are traditionally descriptive of peer-reviewed journal articles, and we strive to include a direct reference to the original article(s) wherever possible. Thus, NASA's websites reflect current scientific findings across the range of disciplines in which we conduct research.

I appreciate your concern for NASA's reputation. Public trust in NASA is dependent upon transparency and openness. Disagreement is part of scientific discourse, and it is NASA policy not to restrict such discourse. If you and your fellow authors disagree with specific scientific conclusions made public by NASA scientists on NASA's websites or elsewhere, I encourage you to join the debate in the scientific literature or public forums rather than restrict such discourse.

Thank you again for your contributions as well as commentary on this subject.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Waleed Abdalati', written over a light blue horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Waleed Abdalati
Chief Scientist

cc:

Associate Administrator for Science Mission Directorate/Dr. John Grunsfeld
Director, Goddard Space Flight Center/Mr. Chris Scolese