

Flaherty, Christopher J. (HQ-IA000)

From: Farrell, Kelly J. (GSFC-100.0)
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2007 2:57 PM
To: Flaherty, Christopher J. (HQ-IA000)
Cc: Hollebeke, Debbie (HQ-NC000)
Subject: FW: Fwd: FW: Incoming records request from HSTC Investigations and Oversight

And one more email for inclusion, per our conversation.

From: Waleed Abdalati [mailto:waleed@icesat2.gsfc.nasa.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2007 6:47 AM
To: Einaudi, Franco (GSFC-610.0); Farrell, Kelly J. (GSFC-100.0)
Cc: Kaye_Jack
Subject: Re: Fwd: FW: Incoming records request from HSTC Investigations and Oversight

Franco and Kelly (I am cc'ing Jack, since this involves him as well)

In my role as acting Cryospheric Sciences Program Manager, I was the NASA official who reviewed and commented on the material and overall content of the exhibit. Later in the process, Jack Kaye's input was sought. Ming-Ying Wei provided some support to the people who put the exhibit together.

Here is the short version of the story. The Smithsonian put together an exhibit on the changing Arctic, based on input from a number of scientists. The exhibit was pretty straightforward in its presentation of ARctic change, which - because of what is going on there - was probably of a nature that would make some people with particular views of climate change unhappy. In my HQ program manager capacity, I spoke a few times with Barbara Stauffer at the Smithsonian about its content, and I reviewed the near-final script of the exhibit and offered some comments. I also went to a meeting with the relevant people from different agencies (my counterparts from NOAA, NSF, etc.) at the Smithsonian. Then-Interior Secretary Gail Norton's science advisor was there too. We talked through the script and recommended changes. At the time, there was some discussion of the political sensitivities of the exhibit, and the associate director (this person named Sullivan, who has been at the Center of the controversy over this exhibit, and who has resigned after something like 17 years that the Smithsonian) said that as long as the exhibit is factual and accurate, that as a museum, they were prepared to defend it.

The exhibit was set to open shortly after that meeting (my recollection is that it was a few weeks), and this meeting was to get approval of all the agency representatives. Then something strange happened. The opening was postponed a number of months, and we were told that our approval of the content was not sufficient, and that higher-level approval was required. So the script was eventually sent to Jack Kaye, who made some minor comments, and that was the end of it from the NASA perspective, as far as I know.

I do remember there was a lot of frustration at the Smithsonian by people we worked with over the delays. I as acting program manager with by far the most knowledge of the topic at NASA HQ, was annoyed that they sought additional approval, because that suggested to me that there was a concern over political sensitivities as opposed to content. Don't get me wrong, I was glad to have a guy like Jack offer his perspective, but his changes were minor, and on technical issues related to the Arctic ice, he deferred to me. Those of us in the trenches have the most direct and comprehensive knowledge, and we put forward an honest perspective on Arctic change. For the focus to be shifted from scientific content

to political content, I found disturbing for a museum. I also had the feeling that at the highest level, there was some fear that we irresponsible program managers were putting out alarming information, that needed to be checked by our superiors. I was a offended by this, as I am sure my colleagues were.

I never felt that as a scientist, I was pressured to change any of the input, nor - I am sure - did Jack. The real question is what happened at the highest level after that input came in. That I don't know.

I don't have much in the way of records, because the discussions were primarily verbal. I already sent to Jack Kaye a copy of his correspondence with the Smithsonian, in which he provided his feedback, but my feedback was more through mark-ups and discussions. I didn't take the time to write it out in emails. I also don't think I have any copies of my mark-ups, but I probably have a copy of the earlier version of the script. I can dig that stuff out later today.

You know that I am not an alarmist, but I will say that a museum can't do an honest exhibit about what is happening in the Arctic without causing people some serious concern.

-Waleed

Franco Einaudi wrote:

Waleed,

What is the story here?

Thank you.

Cheers

Franco

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d="pdf?scan'208,217"; a="33569008:sNHT71290396"

Date: Tue, 5 Jun 2007 16:37:59 -0400

To: franco.einaudi@nasa.gov

From: "Farrell, Kelly J. (GSFC-100.0)" <Kelly.J.Farrell@nasa.gov> (by way of Franco Einaudi)

Subject: FW: Incoming records request from HSTC Investigations and Oversight

Waleed/Franco -

Can you help us with this request from HQ? HQ received an inquiry from Congress soliciting records concerning the Smithsonian's Arctic exhibit - are you all the right people to go to for this and any role Goddard/Giss might have had? Can you let me know? Thanks!

Kelly

6/12/2007