



July 29, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Via email

Dear Madam Speaker:

I am writing to express my concern over my interaction with members of the Democratic caucus during yesterday's hearing on "Solving the Climate Crisis" by the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. I was called to testify as an expert witness. Two members of your caucus, Congressman Jared Huffman and Congressman Sean Casten, publicly impugned my motives. Chairwoman Castor then denied me an opportunity to defend myself and instead gaveled the hearing to a close.

I understand that Congressional hearings involve some political theater. I am told that Members from both sides sometimes act this way. That may be the case. However, I am not a political appointee. I do not represent a large trade association. I am merely the head of a small nonprofit dedicated to defending the environment. I did not expect to be drawn into political theatre that violates basic civility. I did not expect to have my motives and integrity attacked.

The attacks on me appear designed to distract attention from the concerns I am raising with renewables and nuclear energy. I have advocated for renewables in the past, but 20 years of experience and research have led me to conclude that renewable energy sources cannot power our high-energy civilization. Worse, in trying to do so we are expanding humankind's negative environmental impact. As for nuclear energy, both Republicans and Democrats have for 60 years recognized it to be the world's most important dual-use technology. And yet the U.S. is in the process of

ceding the entire global market for nuclear power plant construction to our geopolitical rivals, China and Russia.

In their attacks on me, Rep. Huffman and Rep. Casten alleged that I am not a qualified expert, motivated by money, and not a real environmentalist. They falsely claimed that my entire testimony had been debunked by scientists. The personal insults, though regrettable, are not nearly as important as the final false claim. Scientists have not debunked my testimony, because my testimony is based on the best available scientific evidence.

Had Rep. Castor granted me the chance to respond, I would have said as much. I have been a climate activist for 20 years. My new book, *Apocalypse Never*, has received strong praise from leading environmental scientists and scholars. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently invited me to serve as an expert reviewer. I have always been financially independent of industry interests.

I mention all of this as a way of saying that, not only am I a lifelong progressive and Democrat, I have dedicated my entire life to the mission of ending poverty and protecting the natural environment. That has included advocating for renewables, energy innovation, and nuclear energy, and working with the world's leading climate and conservation scientists to advocate measures to reduce pollution and protect nature. Beyond party politics, I am an American who loves his country, a Californian who loves his state, and a resident of the San Francisco Bay Area who loves his community. We have all of these things in common.

I know that you care about these important issues. While there is no reason you would remember me, we have met on two occasions. In February 2013, I gave a keynote address to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's meeting in Maryland describing why renewable energy cannot solve the climate change challenge.

Directly after my speech, as I was standing by the dais greeting people, you approached me directly and introduced yourself. You told me that you appreciated my remarks and that you had fought within the Democratic caucus to include tax incentives for nuclear energy in the 2005

energy bill. You indicated to me that you understand the importance of nuclear energy. I appreciated very much what you said to me then, and I still appreciate those words now.

I feel the need to be blunt. Russian and Chinese nuclear development abroad poses a clear and present danger to American security interests. The line between soft power and hard power runs through nuclear energy. On one side of that line, countries get zero-emissions electricity with the smallest environmental footprint and the only scalable alternative to fossil fuels. On the other side of that line lies the pathway to nuclear weapons.

I know you agree that Americans are stronger when we listen to ideas we don't agree with, and openly debate them. We are weaker when we demonize people and deny them the chance to defend their ideas. For my entire life, these have been values championed by Democrats. I hope they still are.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Shellenberger". The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with several loops and a long tail extending to the right.

Michael Shellenberger
President

Cc: Rep. Garret Graves,

Rep. Kathy Castor

Rep. Jared Huffman

Rep. Sean Casten