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PennFuture calls Commonwealth Foundation out for attacking integrity of Penn State, demands retraction and apology

Incident shows desperate lengths global warming deniers go to prop up their ideology

(Harrisburg, PA - February 16, 2010) - Jan Jarrett, president and CEO of Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture), called today for the Commonwealth Foundation to retract its attack on the integrity of Penn State University, and to apologize for its actions.

"The real scandal is the lengths to which the right-wing will go in order to twist climate change science to meet its ideological bent," said Jarrett. "From relying on material stolen by Russian criminals and selectively releasing some of the stolen emails, to reflexively attacking Penn State's investigation as biased, the Commonwealth Foundation has simply gone too far. This witch hunt against climate scientists, particularly PSU's Dr. Michael Mann and the University itself, must stop.

"The Commonwealth Foundation claims the PSU investigation that cleared Dr. Mann is a 'whitewash.' The foundation has produced no evidence to document that conclusion, but levels the charge because it does not like the outcome. That charge slanders Penn State University and the distinguished panel of experts pulled together to review the matter, and for that the Commonwealth Foundation owes Penn State and the people of Pennsylvania an apology."

In the wake of the hacking of the computers at East Anglia and the selective release of email exchanges that purported to show that Dr. Mann had manipulated and destroyed data, Penn State announced that it would conduct an investigation into accusations of alleged research misconduct.

The committee went through about 1075 of the stolen emails, requested that Dr. Mann hand over all emails relating to his work on the fourth International Panel on Climate Change Report. Dr. Mann complied with the request. The committee also conducted two interviews with Mann and reviewed Mann's responses with other scientists including Dr. Donald Kennedy of Stanford University and former editor of *Science Magazine*.

The committee concluded that there was no substance to the allegations that Dr. Mann attempted to falsify data, delete data or misuse confidential information. Several additional investigations, by the Associated Press and the National Academy of Sciences, also found Dr. Mann innocent of any scientific misconduct. The PSU committee did not reach a definitive conclusion about whether or not Mann's research deviated from accepted academic practices and ordered a further investigation of that question to be conducted.

"The Commonwealth Foundation is entitled to ignore accepted science and form its own opinion," said Jarrett. "What it is not entitled to do is smear a respected researcher with disproven charges of scientific misconduct, or attack the integrity of Penn State and the scientists charged with overseeing the integrity of its faculty's work by labeling the results a 'whitewash.'

"The Commonwealth Foundation should retract its claims and apologize," concluded Jarrett.

PennFuture is a statewide public interest membership organization, founded in 1998. Working from the premise that "Every environmental victory grows the economy," PennFuture successfully advocated for landmark environmental legislation, including the largest ever environmental funding bond, the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act, funding for green energy and energy efficiency, the Clean Vehicles Program, the law requiring a statewide climate change action plan, and regulations to protect babies from mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants.