

The Week That Was: 2011-02-05 (February 5, 2011)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

PLEASE NOTE: The complete TWTW, including the articles, can be downloaded in an easily printable form at the SEPP web site: www.sepp.org.

Quote of the Week:

“Climate change deniers cloak themselves in scientific language, selectively critiquing aspects of mainstream climate science.” “... no research results have produced any evidence that challenges the overall scientific understanding of what is happening to our planet’s climate and why” ... “The assertions of climate deniers therefore should not be given scientific weight equal to the comprehensive, peer-reviewed research presented by the vast majority of climate scientists.” From a January 28, 2011 letter from 18 climate alarmists to members of Congress as reported in *The Hill*.

Number of the Week: 42%

THIS WEEK:

By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)

The above quote is from a January 28, 2011, letter signed by eighteen scientists to members of Congress. Lest TWTW be accused of “cherry picking” its quotes, the article presenting the letter and the entire letter is referenced and reproduced as Article #1. This letter illustrates an important question: What constitutes a “climate change denier”?

To appropriately address what is a “climate change denier”, one must first address the position taken by those accusing others of being “climate change deniers.” Second, one must address the position of the accused “deniers.” Third, one must examine the physical, scientific evidence. From this, finally, one may conclude what constitutes a “climate change denier.”

Based upon the assertions in the letter, the writings, and presentations to public audiences by many who signed the letter, one may reasonably conclude that the position of the signees (accusers) is that human emissions of carbon dioxide are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming. The authors of the letter invoke many of the familiar assertions of future disasters projected by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its followers. As stated in the NIPCC reports, many of these assertions, such as, water vapor amplifying atmospheric warming over the tropics, have been demonstrated as contrary to the physical, scientific evidence.

Most “climate change deniers” believe that human emissions of carbon dioxide may cause slight global warming, but not a warming that is unprecedented or dangerous to humanity. Further, many of these “deniers” assert that climate change is naturally occurring. Warming and cooling of this planet will continue to occur regardless of governmental policy concerning human emissions of carbon dioxide. This is not to say that human activity, such as, land use change, does not change local and regional climate. Many “climate change deniers” assert it does. The major difference in the opinions between the “deniers” and the “alarmists” is that “deniers” assert carbon dioxide emissions will not cause significant world-wide warming.

For the physical evidence supporting the views of the alarmists and the “climate change deniers,” one needs to look no further than the record from the Greenland GISP2 ice cores as reported by Don Easterbrook and referenced in the January 29, 2011, TWTW.

“Temperature changes recorded in the GISP2 ice core from the Greenland Ice Sheet show that the global warming experienced during the past century pales into insignificance when compared to the magnitude of profound climate reversals over the past 25,000 years.”

About 25,000 years ago, the measured temperatures were about -55 deg. C, today they are about -32 deg. C. As stated by Easterbrook, these data were reported in 1997, ten years before the latest IPCC report. Further, for over 80% of the past 10,500 years, the calculated temperatures have been warmer than today. These temperature changes, unrelated to carbon dioxide concentrations, were also shown in the 2008 NIPCC report. Based upon this research and other supporting research, Greenland ice cores are a good approximation of temperature changes in the mid-to-upper latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere.

Such data showing frequent, naturally caused climate change unrelated to carbon dioxide are extensive. Yet the accusers claim “... *no research results have produced any evidence that challenges the overall scientific understanding of what is happening to our planet’s climate and why.*”

Such statements are contrary to the physical evidence and prompt the question: who are the true climate change deniers: (a) those who recognize that the physical evidence demonstrates climate change is natural, normal, and cyclical; or (b) those who ignore the physical evidence of natural climate change that contradicts their beliefs?

Needless to say, a letter challenging the assertions of the 18 deniers of natural climate change is being prepared.

The failure by advocates of human-caused climate change to correctly understand the position of those who challenge their views apparently led to the failure of a meeting in Lisbon to reach a middle ground. This meeting was organized by Oxford science philosopher Jerry Ravetz. Titles of articles reporting the effort are clear: “Climate skeptics and scientists attempt peace deal.” Apparently, those who assert climate change is normal and natural are not considered scientists. Please see articles under “Seeking a Common Ground.”

The intense cold through the mid-West caused rolling black-outs in Texas. According to reports, at least three coal-fired power plants were off-line for scheduled maintenance – to prepare for a hot summer – in retrospect, a poor decision. Many other plants were “tripped-off.” It is not clear how much of the problem was caused by wind-power failing to perform as needed due to the intense cold, still air. Apparently, a number of natural-gas-fired plants (perhaps in back-up) did not have the electrical power to receive the needed natural gas. Shortages of coal were also reported (which is strange). A realistic report from the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) would be beneficial for all considering wind power. Please see articles under “Extreme Weather.”

Roy Spencer reports that the global average temperatures for January, as calculated from satellites by the UAH, are rapidly dropping. The current temperatures are about the same as the calculated norm since 1979. We have received no dire reports from NOAA or NASA/GISS of another “hottest year,” or another ice age in the making. Please see www.drroyspencer.com.

NUMBER OF THE WEEK: 42%. According to the latest data just released by the US Energy Information Administration, in 2009 carbon dioxide emissions from China exceed emissions from the US by 42%. Please alert your representative in Congress! We are losing the carbon emissions race to China! See referenced article under “Energy Issues.”

TWTW Corrections and Amplifications:

Last week, we quoted Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Academy, in a statement to their Lordships of the Admiralty on November 20, 1817, in which he commented on the disappearance of the circumpolar ice (ice around the North Pole.). As astute readers pointed out, we failed to state the influence of the intense volcanic event of Tambora in Indonesia in 1815 that no doubt greatly influenced global weather. The volcanic event was not realized in the contemporary science writings. TWTW should have referenced the event.

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see: www.sepp.org.

1. Scientists ask Congress to put aside politics, take ‘fresh look’ at climate data

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Feb 1, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/141453-scientists-put-aside-politics-and-focus-on-climate-science>

2. Climate Change Claims Melt Away

Editorial, IBD, Jan 28, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/561422/201101281901/Climate-Change-Claims-Melt-Away.aspx>

3. Let’s Vote on It

Editorial, National Review, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/258776/let-s-vote-it-editors>

[“For the United States to shoot itself in the economic foot as a feel-good act of environmental symbolism would be entirely pointless and unfathomably stupid — which is to say, it’s a job for Congress.”]

4. New Fight Breaks Out on Nuclear Dump Site

By Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Jan 31, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704680604576110343474332036.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1

[SEPP Comment: Note the use of the prejudicial term “waste dump.” It should be “engineered disposal of spent fuel.”]

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

The Met Office winter forecast lie is finally nailed

Autonomous Mind, Jan 28, 2011 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://autonomousmind.wordpress.com/2011/01/28/the-met-office-winter-forecast-lie-is-finally-nailed/>

[SEPP Comment: If government agencies have not consequences for falsehood, why bother with integrity?]

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Carbon Dioxide and Earth’s Future

Pursuing the Prudent Path

Craig D. Idso and Sherwood B. Idso, Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change, Feb, 2011

<http://www.co2science.org/education/reports/prudentpath/prudentpath.pdf>

[SEPP COMMENT: An 110 plus page report summarizing the benefits and risks involved increasing concentrations of atmospheric carbon dioxide based on physical observations and experiments rather

than computer simulations. The report specifically addresses the 10 most popular, and false, claims of the alarmists.]

The oceans, clouds and cosmic rays drive the climate, not CO2

By Jo Anne Nova, Feb 1, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/02/the-oceans-clouds-and-cosmic-rays-drive-the-climate-not-co2/>

[SEPP Comment: A summary of a speech to the Dutch Meteorological Institute by Dr. Noor van Andel]

Self Regulation Of The Climate System By Deep Cumulus Convection

R.A. Pielke, Sr. Pielke Research Group, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/02/03/self-regulation-of-the-climate-system-by-deep-cumulus-convection/>

Dust levels in Earth's atmosphere contribute to climate change

By ENN, Science and Environmental News, From India, Jan 28, 2011

<http://www.mygreenchannel.org/index.php/my-green-channel/12-green-editorials/2823-dust-levels-in-earths-atmosphere-contribute-to-climate-change.html>

Defending Harrison Schmitt, Nominee for Energy Secretary of New Mexico

By Jim Lakely, Somewhat Reasonable, Feb 3, 2011

<http://blog.heartland.org/2011/02/defending-harrison-schmitt-nominee-for-energy-secretary-of-new-mexico/>

[SEPP Comment: Harrison Schmitt has graced TWTW with his guest science editorials.]

Global Warming Is Modest And No Threat To Humanity'

By Madhav Khandkar, GWPF, Feb 2, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://www.thegwpf.org/the-climate-record/2363-madhav-khandekar-global-warming-is-modest-and-no-threat-to-humanity.html>

Greenland Is Going to Be OK

By Norman Rogers, American Thinker, Jan 29, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/greenland_is_going_to_be_ok.html

Defenders of the Orthodoxy

Gore: Global Warming Causing Record Cold, Snow

By Jim Meyers, Newsmax, Feb 2, 2011

<http://www.newsmax.com/InsideCover/Gore-Record-Cold-Global/2011/02/02/id/384729>

Al Gore is right about snow and climate change

By Cynthia Tucker, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t Real Clear Politics]

<http://blogs.ajc.com/cynthia-tucker/2011/02/03/al-gore-is-right-about-snow-and-climate-change/>

Climate change emerges as disease-related security threat

By Jessica Chen, Washington Post, Jan 30, 2011 [H/t William Readdy]

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/28/AR2011012807373.html>

[SEPP Comment: Years ago many joked that military intelligence was a contradiction in terms.]

How BBC warmists abuse the science

Sir Paul Nurse, president of the Royal Society, is an expert in genetics, not climatology

By Christopher Booker, Telegraph, UK, Jan 29, 2011 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/8290469/How-BBC-warmists-abuse-the-science.html>

Seeking a Common Ground

Climate skeptics and scientists attempt peace deal

By Fred Pearce, *New Scientist*, Feb 2, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, *Climate Depot*]

<http://www.newscientist.com/blogs/shortsharpsscience/2011/02/climate-sceptics-scientists-at.html>

Climate skeptics and scientists attempt peace deal? As if.

By JoNova, Joannenova.com, Feb 4, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/02/climate-sceptics-and-scientists-attempt-peace-deal-as-if/#more-13153>

How Climate Sanity Has Been Gored

By Larry Bell, *Forbes*, Feb 3, 2011

<http://blogs.forbes.com/larrybell/2011/02/03/how-climate-sanity-has-been-gored/>

Extreme Weather

The Westerlies Explain The Recent Extreme winter Weather, Not “Global Warming”

By R.A. Pielke, Sr. Pielke Research Group, Jan 28, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/01/28/the-westerlies-explain-the-recent-extreme-winter-weather-not-global-warming/>

Reliable forecast under the weather

By Michael Graham, *Boston Herald*, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

http://news.bostonherald.com/news/opinion/op_ed/view.bg?articleid=1314036&srvc=home&position=emailed

A storm bigger than Hurricane Katrina

By Andrew Fraser, *The Australian*, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t JoNova]

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/a-storm-bigger-than-hurricane-katrina/story-e6frg6nf-1225999044073>

[SEPP Comment: One must remember that much of New Orleans was built below sea level.]

BP Oil Spill and Aftermath

Report Foresees Quick Gulf of Mexico Recovery

By John Schwartz, *NYT*, Feb 1, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/02/us/02spill.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha23

U.S. Administration In Contempt Over Drilling Moratorium, Judge Rules

By Laurel Brubaker Calkins, *Bloomberg*, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-03/u-s-administration-in-contempt-over-gulf-drill-ban-judge-rules.html>

Would We Drill For \$200 Oil?

Editorial, *IBD*, Feb 1, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=561720&p=1>

Energy panel leader expects push for production of more U.S. oil

By Joseph Weber, *Washington Times*, Jan 31, 2011

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jan/31/energy-panel-leader-expects-push-for-production-of/>

Cap-and-Trade and Clean Energy Standards

Calif. cap-trade plan dealt blow by S.F. judge

By Wyatt Buchanan, San Francisco Chronicle, Feb 4, 2011

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/02/03/BAOO1HIDT2.DTL#ixzz1D1eTmJMa>

[SEPP Comment: *The environmental industry sued to close the CA cap-and-trade plan?*]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

EPA's Jackson is short, sweet & precautionary

By Lana Spivak, ACSH Facts and Fears, Feb 2, 2011

http://www.acsh.org/factsfears/newsID.2303/news_detail.asp

[SEPP Comment: *With a sufficient dose, any natural chemical is toxic. By declaring concentrations of parts per billion or trillion, with no known public health threat, as a public health threat, EPA continues abandoning science. The precautionary principle belongs to the age of witches, hobgoblins and things that go bump in the night.*]

The EPA's Mess with Texas

By Ben Voth, American Thinker, Jan 30, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/the_epas_mess_with_texas.html

TCEQ Approves Air Permit for Texas Coke-Fired Project, Despite EPA Objections

Power News, Feb 2, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3418.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2134515&hq_l=7&hq_v=5e66050d0

[SEPP Comment: *A few dare to stand up to the EPA.*]

With energy czar gone, Michigan wins

By Henry Payne, Detroit News, Feb 3, 2011

<http://detnews.com/article/20110203/OPINION03/102030334/1008/opinion01/With-energy-czar-gone--Michigan-wins>

EPA Facing Opposition to GHG Regulation on Multiple Fronts

Power News, Feb 2, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3423.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2134515&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e66050d0

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Section 1603 Extension: The Renewable Energy Bailout of 2011

By Lisa Linowes and Bill Short, Master Resource, Jan 31, 2011 [H/t Randy Randol]

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/01/section-1603-windfall/#more-13908>

[SEPP Comment: *According to this analysis, replacing a long term tax credit with an upfront cash subsidy is resulting in less productive assets at a higher cost. Could it be that wind promoters are learning from subsidized real estate promoters, or is it the natural order of things?*]

Energy Firms Aided by U.S. Find Backers

By Matthew Wald, NYT, Feb 2, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/business/energy-environment/03energy.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha25>

[SEPP Comment: *Did the Rockefellers need government backing?*]

Energy Issues

World carbon dioxide emissions data by country: China speeds ahead of the rest

By Simon Rogers and Lisa Evans, Guardian, UK, Jan 31, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/jan/31/world-carbon-dioxide-emissions-country-data-co2>

[SEPP Comment: According to 2009 Data from the US Energy Information Administration, China emissions exceed US by over 40%. This contradicts the argument China is racing us for alternative energy.]

China's CNOOC inks U.S. shale gas deal

By Staff Writers, UPI, Jan 31, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2011/01/31/Chinas-CNOOC-inks-US-shale-gas-deal/UPI-64021296507650/

[SEPP Comment: Another indication that China is not in an all out push for alternative energy.]

80% "Clean" Energy by 2035: What Does This Mean?

By Ken Kok, Master Resource, Feb 3, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/02/80-clean-energy-2035/>

[SEPP Comment: Putting a price on a dream!]

Energy panel leader expects push for production of more U.S. oil

By Joseph Weber, Washington Times, Jan 31, 2011

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jan/31/energy-panel-leader-expects-push-for-production-of/>

Oil sands in focus as Canadian leader visits

By Ben Geman and Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Feb 3, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/142049-overnight-energy>

[SEPP Comment: Does the Administration really seek energy independence from the Mid-East?]

EU wants more money for clean energy

By Staff Writers, UPI, Jan 31, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2011/01/31/EU-wants-more-money-for-clean-energy/UPI-16911296505534/

[SEPP Comment: The wheels of clean must be greased with green.]

"Green Jobs" Cronyism and Cannibalism

By Ernest Istook, Huffington Post, Feb 3, 2011

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ernest-istook/green-jobs-cronyism-and-c_b_817067.html

Whistling in the Wind

The Dutch lose faith in windmills

By Karel Beckman and Alexander Haje, European Energy Review, Jan 13, 2011, [H/t John Droz, Jr]

<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/index.php?id=2656>

Over-dependence on Wind Power Causes Energy Emergency in Texas

By Robert Snyder, KFYO Radio, Feb 2, 2011

<http://kfyo.com/overdependence-on-wind-power-causes-energy-emergency-in-texas/>

California Dreaming

A small fish caught in a big fuss

The tiny delta smelt has a big effect on the amount of water sent to 25 million people and 2 million acres of Central Valley farmland. Scientists are trying to save the creature, but politicians look to gut protections

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times, Feb 2, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-delta-smelt-20110202,0,527655.story>

[SEPP Comment: Oh My! The smelt have survived for decades under the current system, but now are endangered? What about the 25 million people and 2 million acres including extensive, dead fruit orchards?]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

Greenland's Outlet Glaciers

Reference: Nick, F.M., Vieli, A., Howat, I.M. and Joughin, I. 2009. Large-scale changes in Greenland outlet glacier dynamics triggered at the terminus. *Nature Geoscience* 2: 10.1038/NGEO394.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/1feb2011a1.html>

Elevated CO2 Leads to More Nutritious Spinach ... and More of It!

Reference: Jin, C.W., Du, S.T., Zhang, Y.S., Tang, C. and Lin, X.Y. 2009. Atmospheric nitric oxide stimulates plant growth and improves the quality of spinach (*Spinacia oleracea*). *Annals of Applied Biology* 155: 113-120.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/1feb2011a2.html>

Ocean Acidification and Marine Coccolithophores

Reference: Halloran, P.R., Hall, I.R., Colmenero-Hidalgo, E. and Rickaby, R.E.M. 2008. Evidence for a multi-species coccolith volume change over the past two centuries: understanding a potential ocean acidification response. *Biogeosciences* 5: 1651-1655.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/1feb2011a3.html>

Summer Ice Melt on Eurasian Arctic Ice Caps

Reference: Sharp, M. and Wang, L. 2009. A five-year record of summer melt on Eurasian Arctic ice caps. *Journal of Climate* 22: 133-145.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/1feb2011a5.html>

Other Scientific Issues

The United Nation's Scientific Fraud against DDT

By Roger Bate, AEI, Jan, 2011 [H/t ASCH]

<http://www.aei.org/outlook/101019>

Nonfiction: Nabokov Theory on butterfly Evolution Vindicated

By Carl Zimmer, NYT, Jan 25, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/01/science/01butterfly.html?ref=science>

Kepler Planet Hunter Finds 1,200 Possibilities

By Dennis Overbye, NYT, Feb 2, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/science/03planet.html?ref=science>

Other Issues that May Be Of Interest

Nutty Professors and Nutty New Taxes

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Feb 1, 2011

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/>

In China, the true cost of Britain’s clean, green wind power experiment. Pollution on a disastrous scale

By Simon Parry in China and Ed Douglas in Scotland, Mail Online, Jan 29, 2011 [H/t Rupert Wyndham]
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/moslive/article-1350811/In-China-true-cost-Britains-clean-green-wind-power-experiment-Pollution-disastrous-scale.html>

[“This toxic lake poisons Chinese farmers, their children and their land. It is what's left behind after making the magnets for Britain's latest wind turbines... and, as a special Live investigation reveals, is merely one of a multitude of environmental sins committed in the name of our new green Jerusalem.”]

Mr. Chairman, Your Carriage Awaits

By Donna Laframboise, Jan 28, 2011 [H/t Bob Ferguson, SPPI]
<http://climatechange.mensnewsdaily.com/2011/01/28/mr-chairman-your-carriage-awaits/>
[SEPP Comment: Yet another IPCC – for nature.]

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Agave fuels global excitement as a bioenergy crop

Press Release, Sarah Davis, Jan 26, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]
http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2011-01/w-afg012611.php
[SEPP Comment: For freedom from foreign oil, drink more tequila.]

Cheap solar energy set to displace n-power

By Staff Writers, Solar Daily, Jan 28, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]
http://www.solardaily.com/reports/Cheap_solar_energy_set_to_displace_n-power_999.html

CO2-molecule lobby plans to clear air about global warming

By Kirk Myers, Seminole County Examiner, Jan 15, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]
<http://www.examiner.com/seminole-county-environmental-news-in-orlando/co2-molecule-lobby-plans-to-clear-air-about-global-warming>
[SEPP Comment: A new pressure group defending the despised.]

Government Backs \$1 Billion Plan to Make Gasoline from Wood

By Matthew Wald, NYT, Feb 3, 2011
<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/government-backs-1-billion-plan-to-make-gas-from-wood-chips/?ref=science>
[SEPP Comment: In the 19th Century the eastern forests were logged out for fuel and other uses. Let us do it again!]

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ARTICLES:

1. Scientists ask Congress to put aside politics, take ‘fresh look’ at climate data

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Feb 1, 2011
<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/141453-scientists-put-aside-politics-and-focus-on-climate-science>

More than a dozen scientists took aim at climate skeptics in a letter to members of Congress late last week, calling on lawmakers to put aside politics and focus on the science behind climate change.

In the Jan. 28 letter, 18 scientists from various universities and research centers called on lawmakers to take a "fresh look" at climate change.

"Political philosophy has a legitimate role in policy debates, but not in the underlying climate science," the scientists said in the letter. "There are no Democratic or Republican carbon dioxide molecules; they are all invisible and they all trap heat."

The letter comes as cap-and-trade is all but dead on Capitol Hill and Republicans, bolstered by their new majority in the House, have promised to hold hearings on climate science and the administration's climate policies. Republicans and [some Democrats](#) are also hoping to block or delay the Environmental Protection Agency's pending climate regulations.

The scientists took aim at climate skeptics. "Climate change deniers cloak themselves in scientific language, selectively critiquing aspects of mainstream climate science," the scientists said. "Sometimes they present alternative hypotheses as an explanation of a particular point, as if the body of evidence were a house of cards standing or falling on one detail; but the edifice of climate science instead rests on a concrete foundation."

They also urged on Congress to hold hearings on climate science in order to form a better understanding of the latest research.

"Congress should, we believe, hold hearings to understand climate science and what it says about the likely costs and benefits of action and inaction," the scientists wrote. "It should not hold hearings to attempt to intimidate scientists or to substitute ideological judgments for scientific ones."

Here is the full letter:

January 28, 2011

To the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate:

The Importance of Science in Addressing Climate Change

As you begin your deliberations in the new 112th Congress, we urge you to take a fresh look at climate change. Climate change is not just an environmental threat but, as we describe below, also poses challenges to the U.S. economy, national security and public health.

Some view climate change as a futuristic abstraction. Others are unsure about the science, or uncertain about the policy responses. We want to assure you that the science is strong and that there is nothing abstract about the risks facing our Nation. Our coastal areas are now facing increasing dangers from rising sea levels and storm surges; the southwest and southeast are increasingly vulnerable to drought; other regions will need to prepare for massive flooding from the extreme storms of the sort being experienced with increasing frequency. These and other consequences of climate change all require that we plan and prepare. Our military recognizes that the consequences of climate change have direct security implications for the country that will only become more acute with time, and it has begun the sort of planning required across the board.

The health of Americans is also at risk. The U.S. Climate Impacts Report, commissioned by the George W. Bush administration, states: "Climate change poses unique challenges to human health. Unlike health threats caused by a particular toxin or disease pathogen, there are many ways that climate change can lead to potentially harmful health effects. There are direct health impacts from heat waves and severe storms, ailments caused or exacerbated by air pollution and airborne allergens, and many climate-sensitive infectious diseases."

As with the fiscal deficit, the changing climate is the kind of daunting problem that we, as a nation, would like to wish away. However, as with our growing debt, the longer we wait to address climate change, the worse it gets. Heat-trapping carbon dioxide is building up in the atmosphere because burning coal, oil, and natural gas produces far more carbon dioxide than is absorbed by oceans and forests. No scientist disagrees with that. Our carbon debt increases each year, just as our national debt increases each year that spending exceeds revenue. And our carbon debt is even longer-lasting; carbon dioxide molecules can last hundreds of years in the atmosphere.

The Science of Climate Change

It is not our role as scientists to determine how to deal with problems like climate change. That is a policy matter and rightly must be left to our elected leaders in discussion with all Americans. But, as scientists, we have an obligation to evaluate, report, and explain the science behind climate change.

The debate about climate change has become increasingly ideological and partisan. But climate change is not the product of a belief system or ideology. Instead, it is based on scientific fact, and no amount of argument, coercion, or debate among talking heads in the media can alter the physics of climate change.

Political philosophy has a legitimate role in policy debates, but not in the underlying climate science. There are no Democratic or Republican carbon dioxide molecules; they are all invisible and they all trap heat.

The fruits of the scientific process are worthy of your trust. This was perhaps best summed up in recent testimony before Congress by Dr. Peter Gleick, co-founder and director of the Pacific Institute and member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. He testified that the scientific process “is inherently adversarial – scientists build reputations and gain recognition not only for supporting conventional wisdom, but even more so for demonstrating that the scientific consensus is wrong and that there is a better explanation. That’s what Galileo, Pasteur, Darwin, and Einstein did. But no one who argues against the science of climate change has ever provided an alternative scientific theory that adequately satisfies the observable evidence or conforms to our understanding of physics, chemistry, and climate dynamics.”

National Academy of Sciences

What we know today about human-induced climate change is the result of painstaking research and analysis, some of it going back more than a century. Major international scientific organizations in disciplines ranging from geophysics to geology, atmospheric sciences to biology, and physics to human health – as well as every one of the leading national scientific academies worldwide – have concluded that human activity is changing the climate. This is not a “belief.” Instead, it is an objective evaluation of the scientific evidence.

The U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) was created by Abraham Lincoln and chartered by Congress in 1863 for the express purpose of obtaining objective expert advice on a range of complex scientific and technological issues. Its international reputation for integrity is unparalleled. This spring, at the request of Congress, the NAS issued a series of comprehensive reports on climate change that were unambiguous.

The NAS stated, “Climate change is occurring, is caused largely by human activities . . . and in many cases is already affecting a broad range of human and natural systems.” This conclusion comes as no surprise to the overwhelming majority of working climate scientists.

Climate Change Deniers

Climate change deniers cloak themselves in scientific language, selectively critiquing aspects of mainstream climate science. Sometimes they present alternative hypotheses as an explanation of a

particular point, as if the body of evidence were a house of cards standing or falling on one detail; but the edifice of climate science instead rests on a concrete foundation. As an open letter from 255 NAS members noted in the May 2010 Science magazine, no research results have produced any evidence that challenges the overall scientific understanding of what is happening to our planet's climate and why.

The assertions of climate deniers therefore should not be given scientific weight equal to the comprehensive, peer-reviewed research presented by the vast majority of climate scientists.

The determination of policy sits with you, the elected representatives of the people. But we urge you, as our elected representatives, to base your policy decisions on sound science, not sound bites. Congress needs to understand that scientists have concluded, based on a systematic review of all of the evidence, that climate change caused by human activities raises serious risks to our national and economic security and our health both here and around the world. It's time for Congress to move on to the policy debate.

How Can We Move Forward?

Congress should, we believe, hold hearings to understand climate science and what it says about the likely costs and benefits of action and inaction. It should not hold hearings to attempt to intimidate scientists or to substitute ideological judgments for scientific ones. We urge our elected leaders to work together to focus the nation on what the science is telling us, particularly with respect to impacts now occurring around the country.

Already, there is far more carbon in the air than at any time in human history, with more being generated every day. Climate change is underway and the severity of the risks we face is compounded by delay.

We look to you, our representatives, to address the challenge of climate change, and lead the national response. We and our colleagues are prepared to assist you as you work to develop a rational and practical national policy to address this important issue.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

John Abraham, University of St. Thomas
Barry Bickmore, Brigham Young University
Gretchen Daily,* Stanford University
G. Brent Dalrymple,* Oregon State University
Andrew Dessler, Texas A&M University
Peter Gleick,* Pacific Institute
John Kutzbach,* University of Wisconsin-Madison
Syukuro Manabe,* Princeton University
Michael Mann, Penn State University Pamela Matson,* Stanford University
Harold Mooney,* Stanford University
Michael Oppenheimer, Princeton University
Ben Santer, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Richard Somerville, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Kevin Trenberth, National Center for Atmospheric Research
Warren Washington, National Center for Atmospheric Research
Gary Yohe, Wesleyan University
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2. Climate Change Claims Melt Away

Editorial, IBD, Jan 28, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/561422/201101281901/Climate-Change-Claims-Melt-Away.aspx>

Environment: In 2007, the U.N. said the Himalayan glaciers will be gone by 2035 due to man-made global warming. Yet four years later, some are advancing. What's retreating is the global warming narrative.

Global warming alarmists felt a tingle in their legs when the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a report claiming "Glaciers in the Himalayas are receding faster than in any other part of the world and, if the present rate continues, the likelihood of their disappearing by the year 2035 and perhaps sooner is very high if the earth keeps warming at the current rate."

The announcement was enough to set off celebrations by greenshirts everywhere.

Turns out, though, that the claim was nonsense. It was not based on scientific research but on one scientist's guesswork, which was lifted from a telephone interview. It was carelessly — or intentionally? — included in the report.

Despite its mistakes and clear political bias, the IPCC survives.

But its credibility is, at best, shaky — and getting shakier. New research indicates that half of the glaciers in the Himalaya's Karakoram range are advancing. Scientists from the University of California Santa Barbara and the University of Potsdam, who cited "erroneous reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change," strongly suggest that the "settled" science is not so clear.

"Our study shows that there is no uniform response of Himalayan glaciers to climate change and highlights the importance of debris cover for understanding glacier retreat, an effect that has so far been neglected in predictions of future water availability or global sea level," write researchers Bodo Bookhagen, Dirk Scherler and Manfred Strecker.

The alarmists, who refuse to give up on their goal of controlling energy and wealth distribution, say that the study does not refute the man-made global warming claims. They argue the glaciers that are advancing are protected from warming by the debris cover.

But that's a stretch that ignores this from the report: "Some glaciers that were stable in length were covered by a thick layer of rocky debris."

Note the word "some." If the report said "all" stable glaciers were shielded by debris, the global warming dead-enders might have a point.

But then they would have to ignore the fact that the researchers found "there is no uniform response of Himalayan glaciers to climate change."

Environmental activists have long used glaciers as a measure for global warming — and as a scare tactic by claiming that melting glaciers will flood coastal cities.

But human understanding of glaciers isn't quite there yet. A team of United Kingdom scientists looking at glaciers in Greenland over five years has found that the six glaciers they monitored melted more during cool summers than in warm summers.

Be careful, though, in interpreting this fact, because Ed Josberger, a researcher for the U.S. Geological Survey, told a local reporter writing about glacier growth on Mount Shasta that glacial expansion is proof of global warming.

Science has advanced at a spectacular pace in the last 100 years. But it's almost staggering how much we don't know about glaciers.

There are by some counts 160,000 of them across the world, yet only a small portion has been monitored over the long term. A reading of the work of Roger J. Braithwaite of the School of Environment and Development at the University of Manchester makes it clear that the "sparse datasets" researchers have to work with are not enough to make sound judgments about global warming.

Facts and reasonable doubt, however, have slowed, though not stopped, the environmental left from carrying on its narrative. They keep ringing the alarms.

But as the prophecies of impending doom fail to materialize, the narrative loses traction among the public. Americans understand they've been deceived. That healthy skepticism will only grow as this realization spreads.

3. Let's Vote on It

Editorial, National Review, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/258776/let-s-vote-it-editors>

[*“For the United States to shoot itself in the economic foot as a feel-good act of environmental symbolism would be entirely pointless and unfathomably stupid — which is to say, it’s a job for Congress.”*]

One of the many troubling aspects of the Obama administration is its eagerness to use the federal regulatory apparatus to achieve its political goals when it cannot advance them through the democratic process in Congress. The sterling example of this is the EPA's push to enact, on self-asserted authority, new limitations on the emission of carbon dioxide and other so-called greenhouse gases. The EPA's decision to do so was explicitly political: It telegraphed its intention to act unilaterally should Congress fail to enact the package of taxes and restrictions known as “cap and trade.” Mindful that the legislation would impose real costs in the here and now but offer only theoretical benefits, and those at some far remove in the future, Congress wisely rejected the bill. And so EPA's bureaucrats went to their battle stations. Put another way, our elected representatives have failed to comply with the desires of our unelected masters, and the unelected government proposes to assert its supremacy.

Congressional Republicans on Wednesday pushed back, as it was necessary to do, with Sen. Jim Inhofe and Rep. Fred Upton introducing legislation curtailing the EPA's unilateral ambitions.

There is a good deal at stake here, and the heavy economic burden that would accompany this regulation is the least of it. We are reminded, unnecessarily, that the Democratic party is comically misnamed, inasmuch as its members habitually seek to impose their agenda through such undemocratic or even antidemocratic means as judicial fiats and regulatory overrides of democratic decisions. Both of those are a feature of the present dispute, the EPA's arrogant regulatory overreach having been unleashed by Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens's opinion in *Massachusetts v. EPA*, the result of a finding that Chief Justice John Roberts rightly denounced as a transgression of the Court's constitutional limits.

After losing the cap-and-trade fight in Congress, the Obama administration insists that it enjoys the power to set aside the will of the people as expressed through their elected representatives. There is a natural rivalry between the executive and legislative branches, and friction is to be expected, but the EPA here is acting indefensibly: It claims authority to regulate greenhouse-gas emissions as pollution under the Clean Air Act, which does not specify carbon dioxide as a pollutant, nor establish a framework under which it

reasonably could be found to be one. And a good thing it doesn't, since that so-called pollutant is what human beings and other mammals exhale. (God help us if the EPA ever sets its beady gaze upon a more potent greenhouse gas, such as water vapor.) To whatever extent carbon dioxide may be a problem, it is a *global* problem, beyond the scope of the Clean Air Act and beyond the jurisdiction of the EPA.

Carbon dioxide produced by human activity may or may not be a determining factor in the planet's climate a century hence. That is much relevant to the question at hand, since it is absolutely beyond dispute that marginal reductions in U.S. carbon-dioxide emissions, or even radical ones, would have negligible impact on the Earth's climate in the context of a rising Asia whose largest economies already produce a third of the world's carbon-dioxide emissions and whose future emissions surely will dwarf those of the United States.

Carbon dioxide is not very much like pollution as commonly understood, which is what the Clean Air Act was created to control. Smog, industrial waste, diesel smoke — it matters when and where these are found. The level of ambient carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere is by definition a *global* question, one that EPA restrictions are insufficient to address. There has been an effort to tackle that issue globally, under the Kyoto framework, and that effort failed as various countries and institutions calculated that the economic tradeoffs involved were a poor swap. The EPA, insulated from such quotidian concerns as the economy or the American standard of living, and led by ideologues who privilege their own religious commitment to restricting U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions over the scientific and economic certainty that doing so is futile, nonetheless proposes to ride roughshod over our democratic processes and constitutional order, and impose severe costs on the U.S. economy, in order to accomplish — approximately nothing.

But empty gestures are attractive to a certain kind of green true-believer, and the Obama administration, especially its EPA, is crawling with them. Putting a check on the ideological monomania of such crusaders is one of the virtues of the democratic model of government, which is why it is essential that Congress act now to check the EPA's ambitions and the Supreme Court's furthering of them. For the United States to shoot itself in the economic foot as a feel-good act of environmental symbolism would be entirely pointless and unfathomably stupid — which is to say, it's a job for Congress.

4. New Fight Breaks Out on Nuclear Dump Site

By Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Jan 31, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704680604576110343474332036.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1

[SEPP Comment: Note the use of the prejudicial term "waste dump." It should be "engineered disposal of spent fuel."]

WASHINGTON—Republican lawmakers are trying to revive plans for a nuclear-waste dump at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, setting up a showdown with the Obama administration over its efforts to abandon the site last year.

In a separate effort, also aimed at re-starting the Yucca Mountain project, state officials in South Carolina and Washington are preparing to go to court in March to challenge the administration's actions.

The moves highlight an energy-policy dilemma for the Obama administration. President Barack Obama in his State of the Union address listed nuclear power among the "clean energy" technologies the government should promote. But the proposal to develop a permanent nuclear-waste storage facility at Yucca Mountain, about 100 miles from Las Vegas, faces strong opposition from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat.

The nuclear-power industry, meanwhile, supports the Yucca project. Radioactive waste is currently stored at dozens of locations around the country for lack of a permanent repository.

Both South Carolina and Washington are home to large collections of Cold War-era nuclear waste, and members of Congress representing these radioactive sites, including Rep. Doc Hastings (R., Wash.) are leading the effort to revive the Yucca Mountain facility. They argue that a 1982 law prohibits the administration from abandoning the Yucca Mountain project, which Congress designated as the nation's first nuclear-waste repository.

Mr. Hastings, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, says the administration "has zero authority to withdraw the [Yucca Mountain] license application."

The Energy Department "is confident that we have the legal authority to withdraw the application for the Yucca Mountain repository," a spokeswoman said.

The Energy Department moved to terminate Yucca Mountain in March 2010 when it asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to withdraw a two-year-old application to build a repository. Calling Yucca Mountain "not a workable option," the Energy Department said the science on nuclear-waste storage had evolved since the project was first proposed.

A few months later, in June, a quasi-independent NRC panel dealt a blow to the administration and denied its request, saying the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act "does not give the secretary the discretion to substitute his policy for the one established by Congress."

The NRC's five commissioners were then asked to consider an appeal of the panel's decision. They submitted preliminary votes on that issue in August and September but have not yet issued a decision.

Republicans are pressing the NRC to conclude its review, and are keeping pressure on NRC Chairman Gregory Jaczko, a former aide to Mr. Reid. In a Nov. 19 letter to Mr. Jaczko, Mr. Hastings and two other House Republicans said it was "clear you delayed the resolution of this matter" and pressed the chairman to issue a final ruling.

Mr. Hastings and other lawmakers say Mr. Jaczko and the NRC lack the authority to suspend a safety review of Yucca Mountain. Mr. Jaczko halted this review last year.

An NRC spokesman defended the chairman's decision. "It is the chairman's responsibility and authority to ensure that agency resources are used properly. He acted properly, and not unilaterally, after consulting with the chief financial officer, the executive director for operations, and the general counsel."

None of NRC commissioners has disclosed their votes on Yucca Mountain, so it's unclear how many would support or oppose the project.