

But as other economists have convincingly demonstrated (Mendelsohn et al, *The Impact of Climate Change on the US Economy*, 1994), a modest 2-3 degC greenhouse warming would lead to overall benefits rather than damages. Pray then, what happens to cost-benefit analysis?

Well, they found a new wrinkle: "Catastrophic" warming. As Ron Bailey of *Reason* magazine tells the story [Reason Online, 10 Feb 2009 <http://www.reason.com/news/show/131604.html>]: How much should we pay to avoid the tiny risk of total destruction? Harvard University economist Martin Weitzman raised the issue by putting forth a Dismal Theorem -- arguing that some consequences, however unlikely, would be so disastrous that conventional cost-benefit analysis should not apply.

The IPCC-AR4 finds that climate sensitivity is "likely to be in the range 2 to 4.5 degrees Celsius, with a best estimate of 3 degrees, and is very unlikely to be less than 1.5 degrees. Values substantially higher than 4.5 degrees Celsius cannot be excluded." Without going into detail, Weitzman assumes that uncertainties over values higher than 4.5 degrees Celsius can yield catastrophic climate change.

Then again, Bailey continues, perhaps Weitzman is premature in declaring the death of cost-benefit analysis. Yale University economist William Nordhaus certainly thinks so and has written a persuasive critique of Weitzman's dismal conclusions. First, Nordhaus notes that Weitzman assumes that societies are so risk-averse that they would be willing to spend unlimited amounts of money to avert the infinitesimal probability that civilization will be destroyed. Nordhaus then shows that Weitzman's dismal theorem implies that the world would be willing to spend \$10 trillion to prevent a one-in-100 billion chance of being hit by an asteroid. But people do not spend such vast sums in order to avoid low-probability catastrophic risks. For example, humanity spends perhaps \$4 million annually to find and track possibly dangerous asteroids.

Nordhaus also notes that catastrophic climate change is not the only thing we might worry about. Other low-probability civilization-destroying risks include "biotechnology, strangelets, runaway computer systems, nuclear proliferation, rogue weeds and bugs, nano-technology, emerging tropical diseases, alien invaders, asteroids, enslavement by advanced robots, and so on." If we applied Weitzman's analysis to our individual lives, none of us would ever get out of bed for fear of dying from a slip in the shower or a car accident on the way to work.

Weitzman's analysis also assumes that humanity will not have the time to learn about any impending catastrophic impacts from global warming. But mid-course corrections are possible with climate change. People would notice if the average temperature began to increase rapidly, for example, and would try to counteract it by cutting emissions, deploying low-carbon technologies, or even engaging in geo-engineering.

SEPP: Only one thing might save Weitzman's bleak assessment from Nordhaus' devastating analysis: the "Bern formula." BF deals with the 'lifetime' of CO2 emitted into the atmosphere and considers its removal by various natural processes. As opposed to calculations that postulate a decay using a simple 'half-life' of around 50 to 100 years, the BF leads to the conclusion that about half of emitted CO2 will survive for centuries and even millennia. The BF has been enshrined into 'truth' not only by the Bern group (Joos et al), but also by IPCC, James Hansen, David Archer (U of Chicago), and (most recently) by Susan Solomon et al in PNAS [2009] *Irreversible climate change due to carbon dioxide emissions*. Susan Solomon, Gian-Kasper Plattner, Reto Knutti, and Pierre Friedlingstein. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*. 2009; 106:1704-1709.

If the Bern formula were really correct, then the 'peak value' of CO2 would govern the fate of the climate. 'Mid-course' corrections would be ineffective if a substantial fraction of emitted CO2 really had – for all practical purposes – an infinite lifetime. The Nordhaus analysis would have to be modified. One thing can save it though. The BF could be all wrong -- as I once claimed in an impromptu debate with Eric Sundquist (USGS-WHOI) at an AGU Council meeting a few years ago.

1. The Stimulus Will Not Work: A skeptical view -- Cliff Bamford

2. Irish Environment Minister rejects climate change ad as 'patent nonsense'

3. The Nixon-era 'solar power tower' may come back – *Andrew Revkin*

4. Clean coal waste vs. nuclear

5. Columnist converts from 'believer to being a global-warming agnostic'

6. Teresa Heinz Kerry seeks help – *Colin McNickle*

7. Education or indoctrination?

NEWS YOU CAN USE

“When scientists are silenced by colleagues, administrators, editors and funders who think that simply asking certain questions is inappropriate, the process begins to resemble religion rather than science. Under such a regime, we risk losing a generation of desperately needed research.” [Nature 457, p, 789, 12 Feb 2009] Stephen Ceci and Wendy M. Williams are in the Department of Human Development at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA. e-mails: sjc9@cornell.edu; wmw5@cornell.edu

It also applies to climate science; we checked with both authors

A spirited debate on GW includes this contribution from an 'Al Gore' (Feb 8, 2009 3:14 PM☺):
<http://www.theotherpaper.com/articles/2009/02/10/front/doc498b07c3e889d326202045.txt>

" I just find it amazing that you slob out there don't listen to me any more. I am a Nobel Peace Prize winner, for God's sake. Just do as I say and not as I do. And I can't understand why you people are still debating this issue after I explicitly told you that there is no more debate! You people are STUPID!

Thanks, AL

P.S. Be sure to buy some more carbon credits from my company so I can afford to run up a utility bill over 10 times that of the average American slob."

UNDER THE BOTTOM LINE

The planet will be in "huge trouble" unless Barack Obama makes strides in tackling climate change, says a leading scientist. Prof James **McCarthy** spoke on the eve of the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which he heads.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/science/nature/7885036.stm>

“The US president has just four years to save the planet”, said Prof McCarthy. "We have a moment right now of extraordinary opportunity, with a new president, positioned with scientific leadership that has known no equal in recent times," the AAAS president told BBC News. "The calibre of scientific advice that is close to this man is truly exceptional.” WOW!

(Strictly for the birds): Audubon Society Action Alert [Take Action on global warming](#) by signing our petition to let your Members of Congress know that we need to heed what the birds are telling us.

What are Purple Finches, Boreal Chickadees and Black Ducks trying to tell us about climate change? They are all telling us that **climate change is here, now**. They are telling us **we must act now** to address this urgent problem. They are showing us a **pattern of ecological disruption** that tells an alarming story.

"Global Warming Threatens Antarctic Sea Life" --ScienceDaily (Feb. 9, 2009) — Climate change is about to cause a major upheaval in the shallow marine waters of Antarctica. Predatory crabs are poised to return

to warming Antarctic waters and disrupt the primeval marine communities.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/02/090205083301.htm>

Perhaps a clue to the agenda-driven nature of this paper is the last line of the article. It reads: "Aronson and his colleagues published their results in the electronic journal PLoS ONE to coincide with the U.S. National Teach-In on Global Warming Solutions on Feb. 5."

Climate change takes a mental toll: Last year, an anxious, depressed 17-year-old boy was admitted to the psychiatric unit at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. He was refusing to drink water. Worried about drought related to climate change, the young man was convinced that if he drank, millions of people would die. The Australian doctors wrote the case up as the first known instance of "climate change delusion."

http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/green/articles/2009/02/09/climate_change_takes_a_mental_toll/?page=full

Also <http://www.ibdeditorials.com/IBDArticles.aspx?id=319074885373179>

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1. THE STIMULUS WILL NOT WORK: A SKEPTICAL VIEW

By Cliff Bamford

1a. It's been tried many times, and failed.

* A 2004 UCLA economic study revealed that FDR's New Deal prolonged the Great Depression by seven years.

* Japan in 1992 had a real estate market crash. They had 10 stimulus bills between 1992 and 2000, spending billions on infrastructure construction, building bridges, roads, and airports as well as pouring money into biotech and telecommunications. Today, Japan's unemployment is still double what it was in 1992.

* Bush's \$145 billion Economic Rebate and Stimulus plan failed in early 2008. Obama's stimulus is just a continuation/expansion of Bush policies.

* There are dozens of other examples.

1b. Americans can never receive as much in benefits as they pay in taxes. Waste and non-local spending each rake off some amount (15% in the numbers below).

We will see the jobs created by the government spending. What we won't see are the jobs lost because consumers have less money to spend because the government got the money it's spending from us, the only place it can get money. It's called the broken window fallacy.

1c. Only a small percentage of the Plan goes to actual infrastructure improvements or job creation. The rest is pork.

2. We cannot afford this plan

2a. We can't afford it as individual taxpayers. Even if the plan is only \$825 billion, that comes to over \$10,000 per American family. To put that into perspective, average family spending is:

* \$2,230 on apparel and services

* \$3,595 on health care

* \$4,322 on food at home

* \$11,657 on shelter

2b. The government can't afford it either -- because it is outspending its ability to borrow. The rest of the world has seriously slowed its lending to the USA.

3. There is no national emergency. Of course, there are millions of people worried sick about their jobs, health care, and mortgages. But this Stimulus Plan will not solve that problem. There are at least three other trillion-dollar plans TO BE ANNOUNCED THIS MONTH that may help, but this one won't --- it will only make things worse. This one is all about pork and political power plays.

2. IRISH ENVIRO MINISTER REJECTS CLIMATE CHANGE AD AS 'PATENT NONSENSE' -- RAILS AGAINST 'INSIDIOUS PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN'

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7878399.stm

Environment Minister Sammy Wilson speaking about his decision

A Northern Ireland minister's decision to block a government advertisement campaign on climate change has led to a call for his removal from office. The advertisements urged people to reduce energy consumption and cut carbon dioxide output. But Environment Minister Sammy Wilson claimed the adverts were part of an "insidious propaganda campaign".

Calling for his removal, the Green Party said Mr Wilson made "a laughing stock out of Northern Ireland." He argued that they were "giving people the impression that by turning off the standby light on their TV they could save the world from melting glaciers and being submerged in 40ft of water". He said that was "patent nonsense."

Mr Wilson said he had written to the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to say that the advertising campaign Act on CO2 "was not welcome". He explained that he did not believe in its message that "man-made greenhouse gas emissions are the main cause of climate change" and that the campaign was contrary to his personal views.

3. CALIFORNIA UTILITY LOOKS TO MOJAVE DESERT PROJECT FOR SOLAR POWER

By *ANDREW C. REVKIN, NY Times, February 12, 2009*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/12/science/earth/12solar.html?ref=science>

The largest utility in California, squeezed by rising demand for electricity and looming state deadlines to curb fossil fuels, has signed a deal to buy solar power from seven immense arrays of mirrors, towers and turbines to be installed in the Mojave Desert.

The contracts amount to the worlds largest single deal for new solar energy capacity, said officials from the utility, Southern California Edison, and BrightSource Energy, the company that would build and run the plants. When fully built, the solar arrays on a sunny day would supply 1,300 megawatts of electricity, somewhat more than a modern nuclear power plant.

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SEPP comment: The 'solar power tower' of the Nixon era is back! It is an absolutely nutty scheme, driven only by politics and defying any kind of economic test. Never mind the initial cost; think of the maintenance problems.

Officials from the utility and plant builder said the cost of the plants and the electricity they will produce could not be disclosed under California law.

4. CLEAN COAL WASTE VS. NUCLEAR

The deluge of coal-ash slurry that broke through a retaining wall near the Kingston Fossil Plant, a power plant in eastern Tennessee, on Dec. 22, 2008, and inundated 300 acres with more than a billion gallons of sludge, points out the enormous amount of waste generated by conventional power plants. By contrast, the Tennessee Valley Authority also operates a nuclear power plant a few miles away at Watts Bar, which produces much less waste, says Robert C. Duncan, a research scientist with the University of Texas.

About 96 percent (by weight) of the Kingston plant's waste has vanished into the air through tall, twin smokestacks:

- o In 2007, Kingston emitted 11 million tons of carbon dioxide, 51,000 tons of sulfur dioxide, 12,500 tons of nitrogen oxides, 1,700 tons of hydrochloric acid aerosol, 330 tons of sulfuric acid aerosol, 230 tons of hydrogen fluoride, 11 tons of ammonia and 30 tons of toxic heavy metals in airborne particulates (smoke).
- o Except for the carbon dioxide, all these substances harm the respiratory systems of people and animals. Because Kingston uses "clean coal" technology, particles of smoke and ash, mostly in the 10-micron range, are captured and hauled off to storage.

At the nuclear power plant, by contrast:

- o In 2007, the Watts Bar nuclear reactor produced 26 tons of waste with a total volume of 3.5 cubic yards, stored (for now) in fuel rods that are immersed in water.
- o In a well-guarded building on the grounds of the Watts Bar plant, there is a concrete-lined pool smaller in area than an Olympic-sized swimming pool that holds all the plants used fuel rods.
- o Furthermore, 95 percent of nuclear "waste" can be burned as fuel in advanced fast-neutron reactors after reprocessing ("pyroprocessing"); this promises to wring about 20 times more energy out of "spent" fuel rods than they have produced so far.

The ultimate waste of nuclear power generation will likely consist only of fission products that decay after only 400 years to a level of radioactivity equal to the uranium ore from which the fuel originally came. Kingston produces 400,000 times more waste, all released into the environment. Watts Bar's waste stream is fully contained and minuscule, says Duncan.

Source: Robert C. Duncan, "Nuclear Power vs. Clean coal's dirty mess," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Feb. 8, 2009.

<http://www.star-telegram.com/245/story/1189872.html>

5. SIGN OF THE TIMES: COLUMNIST CONVERTS FROM 'BELIEVER TO BEING A GLOBAL-WARMING AGNOSTIC'

By Mike Thomas Orlando Sentinel February 10, 2009

Excerpt: The science of global warming has arrived at a conclusion, which all data must now accommodate. Unfortunately, it sometimes does not. [] There has been much alarm about Greenland melting and drowning Florida. Feeding this are images of rapidly melting glaciers. They were melting quickly between 2000 and 2005.

But since then the melting has slowed to what is considered a normal level. Researchers from the Los Alamos National Laboratory discovered that the rate of warming in Greenland between 1920 and 1930 was 50 percent higher than today. And the glaciers were smaller.

Ice cores taken from a Russian research site in the Antarctic reveal that when you go back in time, the theory of global warming seems to put the cart before the horse. We are told that greenhouse gases build up and cause temperatures to rise. But an analysis of the ice cores shows the temperature goes up first, followed by an increase in greenhouse gases. The heat is triggered by other natural phenomenon, such as solar radiation. This heats up the ocean, which releases carbon dioxide.

The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere right now actually is downright paltry compared with what it has been during Earth's history. I could go on and on. Most all scientists agree the world has gotten warmer. But many distinguished scientists think the evidence blaming humans is either bogus, incomplete or not overwhelming enough to think we are a significant part of a problem.

I have gone from being a believer to being a global-warming agnostic. I think we are having some impact but am not convinced how much of one. I remain receptive to arguments from both sides. [] If things are as dire as many predict, we are doomed regardless. It could well be that our money might be better spent on other ventures to save humanity

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/services/newspaper/printedition/tuesday/localandstate/orl-miket1009feb10.0.7016747.column>

Update: **Columnist under siege for renouncing warming alarmism!** Now I am one of the Evil Deniers! Excerpt: My column questioning the zeal of global-warming advocates noted that they inoculate themselves against dissent by attacking the dissenters as dimwitted deniers. True to form, many of those attacking the column accused me of everything from being a Bush stooge to pandering for web clicks to pandering for a job..

It's impossible, it seems, for anyone to even suggest we keep an open mind on this theory without being a fool or having evil intent. They are, in effect, proving one of the main points I was trying to make. Climate change has gone from being a science to being two competing political movements. This does not bode well for getting at the truth behind our impact on global warming

http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/news_columnist_mikethomas/2009/02/and-now-i-am-one-of-the-evil-deniers.html

6. TERESA SEEKS RIGHT KIND OF HELP.

We're guessing **Teresa Heinz** didn't thoroughly think things through.

From Pittsburgh TribLIVE Opinion 2/9/2009

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/s_610621.html

The Pittsburgh pickle heiress recently solicited people to be anonymous nominators for the Heinz Awards, distributed annually to a bunch of folks advancing the left-wing, tree-hugging causes Teresa holds dear.

So who does she ask to be among the nominators? None other than **Jake Haulk**, president of the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy. Ideologically, that's a bit like **Lex Luthor** asking **Superman** where his bronze bust should be located in the Villains Hall of Fame.

The Castle Shannon-based think tank is committed to advancing conservative, free-market principles that, charitably speaking, haven't exactly been embraced by your typical Heinz Awards winners.

We're uncertain if Haulk actually plans to nominate anyone, but we offer this suggestion for his consideration: atmospheric physicist **S. Fred Singer**, a veritable anti-**Al Gore** who was featured prominently in the 2007 documentary "The Great Global Warming Swindle."

It would be quite a hoot to see Heinz present Singer with an award.

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/s_610617.html Myth: "Global warming" is such an escalating trend that three of the last 10 years have been the warmest on record. That's a fact those Chicken Littles (whose feathers should be plucked for their own tarring and feathering) likely will employ as some kind of "proof" that their theology has some semblance of scientific basis.

But as S. Fred Singer and Dennis T. Avery reminded in their 2007 book on the subject, *four* of the Top 10 warmest years on record are from the 1930s. And never mind the growing body of evidence that it's not CO2 that causes planetary warming but that planetary warming causes CO2 levels to rise.

Facts are a pesky thing, aren't they?

- With "climate change" nuts now threatening even the sacred American hearth, it's refreshing to find neither horse manure nor cow patties -- in the words of Kent W. Peterson, chief engineer of P2S Engineering in Long Beach, Calif. In a Friday New York Times dispatch, he defends the family fireplace as an example of "biomass renewable energy."

Ah, such common sense in these nonsensical times.

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7. ENVIRONMENTAL LESSON PLANS DRAWING PRAISE, CONCERN

By Ruth Ravve, February 09, 2009

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,489591,00.html>

Could environmental education be crossing into environmental indoctrination? Some critics say yes, as schools boast that such curricula simply are teaching children ways of caring for the earth.

Being a "good" student at Western Avenue Elementary School in Flossmoor, Ill., means more than just doing reading, writing and arithmetic well. It also means trying to save the planet.

"It's really important to help the earth and save the polar bears," 9-year-old Duree Everett said, as she colored a "go green" sign at her desk.

The students are taking part in what's called "National Green Week," organized by the Green Education Foundation. Schools across the country are encouraged to teach children about recycling, global warming and carbon footprints.