

The Week That Was: 2018-08-18 (August 18, 2018)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

Quote of the Week: *“The greatest enemy of discovery is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge.”* – Daniel Joseph Boorstin [H/t Gordon Fulks]

Number of the Week: \$43 Billion

THIS WEEK:

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

Transparency in Regulatory Science: On August 16, the EPA comment period closed on proposed rules to ensure transparency in science used for regulations called “Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science.” Harvard University roared against the proposed rules claiming the rules would “drastically limit the scientific and medical knowledge that underlies a host of EPA regulations that protect human health.”

According to the Harvard Gazette the letter signed by 96 officials of the school included, *“Harvard President Larry Bacow, the deans of Harvard Medical School (HMS) and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and the presidents of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and Massachusetts Eye and Ear. It says that the EPA’s push to require studies to reveal the material that supports their conclusions would bar the best available science from being considered in the regulatory process.”* TWTW was unable to find the latest letter, but a June 4 letter from then Harvard President Drew Gilpin Faust highlighted the key issue.

“...The proposed rule, with its prohibition against EPA reliance on any study where personally identifiable data cannot be made public, effectively disqualifies the best available science from use in the regulatory process.

“The landmark Harvard Six Cities study is one such example. Published in 1993, Six Cities revealed a strong link between air pollution and life expectancy. The study, and others that followed, served as the basis for federal regulations that have reduced fine particulate matter in the air we breathe, and the long-term analyses published since these regulations were implemented indicate that the long-term health and economic benefits have been remarkable.

“Despite these demonstrated benefits, Six Cities has repeatedly been cited as an example of ‘secret science,’ a charge that its science cannot be trusted because some of the underlying data is not available for public scrutiny.”

The 1993 Harvard Six Cities study was used by the EPA during the Clinton Administration to impose regulations on small particulate matter – PM 2.5, soot with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less – narrower than the width of a human hair. Immediately, many in the medical community questioned the study. The sample size was small, 8111 adults; the study was dependent on subjects answering questions about the past, not objective measurements of exposure; and the correlation was weak, with the strong confounding variable of cigarette smoking. Despite what the Harvard President now states, it was weak. The study states:

“RESULTS

*Mortality rates were most strongly associated with cigarette smoking. **After adjusting for smoking and other risk factors**, we observed statistically significant and robust associations between air pollution and mortality. The adjusted mortality-rate ratio for the most polluted of the cities as compared with the least polluted was 1.26 (95 percent confidence interval, **1.08 to 1.47**). Air pollution was positively associated with death from lung cancer and cardiopulmonary disease but not with death from other causes considered together. Mortality was most strongly associated with air pollution with fine particulates, including sulfates. [Boldface added]*

“CONCLUSIONS

Although the effects of other, unmeasured risk factors cannot be excluded with certainty, these results suggest that fine-particulate air pollution, or a more complex pollution mixture associated with fine particulate matter, contributes to excess mortality in certain U.S. cities.”

Compounding the problem was the arrogance of the researchers who dismissed any questioning of their work, including adjustments. The entire issue is a classic in bureaucratic science. Officials at the EPA during the Obama Administration used PM2.5 to claim that clean burning, coal-fired power plants were killing thousands of people (no death certificates). The UN World Health Organization has made similar claims on flimsy evidence.

Ironically, according to the Harvard Gazette the new letter contains the statement:

Data transparency does not guarantee valid, high-quality science. In the scientific community, study quality is judged not by transparency but by scientific methodology and the rigor with which studies are conducted.

This is true. Nothing guarantees valid, high-quality science, including the source of the studies, be they from government agencies, universities, or individuals. Other entities repeating the same errors does not improve on the science. It is the constant testing of assumptions and methodology against hard evidence that improves on the quality of the science.

According to its Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2017, the University received \$618 million in Federally sponsored support, or 12.6% of its operating revenue of \$4.9 billion. These moneys neither support nor taint the research. They give an indication why the University is objecting so rigorously to new rules requiring transparency in EPA regulations. See links under Defending the Orthodoxy,

SEPP’s Comment on Transparency: On August 16, SEPP submitted the following comment to the EPA:

*“RE: Docket ID No. EPA–HQ–OA–2018–0259
Proposed Rule to Strengthen Science Transparency in EPA Regulations*

“We strongly support transparency in all regulatory science.

“Few actions demonstrate an authoritarian attitude in government as declaring a substance may be harmful to the public but refusing to explain why. Claiming only that science supports a policy is paternalistic. This “father knows best” attitude is degrading to citizens and earns contempt

towards those who use it. The failure of EPA to fully explain the science behind pronouncements regarding health and welfare is one such example. The lack of transparency in some of EPA's public health pronouncements is inimical to the concepts of a free and open democratic republic.

"Further, the policy is anti-science. Science progresses by continually questioning and testing prior assumptions and concepts. For example, until the late 1950s, most scientists believe that space was a vacuum. Then, Eugene Parker hypothesized the sun emitted high energy, plasma and particles with variable consistency called solar wind. Opposition was strong. But during 1959-1962 Soviet, then US, spacecraft carried instruments measuring the solar wind. The errors in past thinking were corrected, and the concept of space weather advanced considerably. This is how science advances. Parker's work is being honored by the recently launched Parker Solar Probe, the first US spacecraft named after a living person.

*"By keeping details of research secret, the EPA is causing public health science to stagnate. Further, there is no reason for the public to assume the research was competently executed. Transparency is necessary for healthy scientific growth." See links under Other Scientific News.

Dam Failure, Laos: The fear of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and the fear soot from coal-fired power plants is contributing to international organizations such as the World Bank denying funding for coal-fired power plants in developing countries. Such actions leave developing countries with fewer options, such as unreliable power from wind and solar or hydropower, which can be very reliable unless there is extensive drought.

With the Mekong River running through the eastern part of the country, the government of Laos is trying to promote development by creating hydropower along its rivers and to provide revenues by selling hydropower to neighboring countries – to become “the battery of South-East Asia.” The climate is mostly tropical savanna with a monsoon climate in the southeast, which can receive heavy rains of 3,700 millimeters (150 inches) annually. The heavy rains can vary in timing and area covered.

According to western sources, there are an estimated 51 existing hydroelectric projects already operating in Laos, and 46 more under construction. Another 112 are at the development stage. In general, these are earthen dams, not reinforced concrete. Regrettably, one of the auxiliary dams in the large Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy project failed during heavy rains, resulting in numerous deaths downstream. The finger-pointing has begun. Unfortunately, one cannot expect modern western standards of safety when constructing earthen dams in developing countries. (The official number of fatalities in building the US Hoover Dam in the 1930s is 96, without a flooding issue.) See links under energy issues – Non-US.

Opposing Global Greening: Fresh after earning the wrath of the greens for its Magazine special that the science of global warming was well understood in the decade of the 1980s, an article in the New York Times claims that global greening is harmful. It begins with a photo of Kudzu, an invasive plant. A similar stunt was used in an earlier report by the US Global Change Research Program, demonstrating the USGCRP's tendency towards propaganda. The NYT article goes on making familiar claims that additional CO₂ makes plants less nutritious and that the benefits will not last. Such claims have been countered by the data collected by CO₂ Science.

Writing in CFACT, physicist Will Happer, head of the CO₂ Coalition, demolishes the claims in the Times article. Just like the Magazine special, the new article is short on hard evidence –

perhaps termed as fact-free! See links under Social Benefits of Carbon Dioxide and Litigation Issues.

Book Review – Dumb Energy: Dispelling myths is difficult, particularly when strong vested interests profit from them. In a clearly written, short book, Norman Rogers explains why wind and solar power are “Dumb Energy: A Critique of Wind and Solar Energy.” Electricity generation from wind was invented in the 1880s, shortly after Thomas Edison opened the first electrical coal-fired power plant with the necessary infrastructure to use electricity for practical purposes. Particularly after the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, Americans demanded electric power and light. Reliable electricity became the mark of modern civilization.

In the early 20th century, systems of delivering reliable electric power, called the grid, were developed, and regulated by local and state governments. In 1935, the Federal Power Act was passed, largely written by power engineers and scientists. It recognizes the grid is an energized system of delivering power, not electrons, for the benefit of all on it. Contrary to myth, it is impossible to distinguish which electrons come from which generators and the grid does not recognize political boundaries. Reinforced by Supreme Court decisions, the Power Act divides the power industry in three categories – generation, local distribution, and transmission. States were given jurisdiction over generation and local distribution. The federal government over transmission. A large part of the costs of transmission is created by the need for stability on the grid, not than just delivering power.

Wind power was initially used in many communities and rural areas. Because wind power is inherently unreliable, it lost to the reliability of the grid. Human preference demonstrated that reliable electricity is of high-value, while unreliable electricity is of low-value. Wind power will continue to be unreliable until a low-cost system of storing electricity on a massive scale is created. Solar power has similar issues and the sun sets daily. Massive subsidies and “accounting tricks” hid the high costs of unreliable wind and solar energy from the public.

Rogers addresses many of the weaknesses of wind and solar and accounting “tricks” used to make them appear to competitive with traditional power. These include heavy subsidies in the form of tax credits that can be sold to corporations desiring to reduce their taxes. Rogers does not clarify the costs (subsidies) that transmission companies (grid operators) must pay for making the unreliable electricity reliable, raising the value of unreliable electricity.

These costs are passed on to the consumers, not the generators of unreliable electricity. Thus, the US public pays a double subsidy for unreliable energy from wind and solar. It subsidizes the capital costs of construction through tax credits, etc., and it subsidizes the costs of making unreliable electricity reliable. On top of these subsidies, over half of the states require these low-value types of electrical generation.

In addition to the myth that wind and solar are a low-cost substitute for fossil fuels and hydropower, Rogers addresses many other myths about electricity and its generation. No doubt, this valuable book will receive great criticism from those who benefit from current myths. See Dumb Energy: A Critique of Wind and Solar Energy, on Amazon Books,

https://www.amazon.com/Dumb-Energy-Critique-Solar-energy/dp/1732537631/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1534698523&sr=1-1&keywords=dumb+energy

Number of the Week: \$43 billion. The above mentioned 2017 Financial Report for Harvard University values its investment portfolio at \$43,275,926,000.

No TWTW Next Week: Ken Haapala will be attending the 36th Annual Meeting of Doctors for Disaster Preparedness next weekend, August 25 and 26, in Las Vegas. He will present SEPP's April Fools Award to a well deserving recipient (probably not attending) and give a talk on group think (bureaucratic science) using the recently claimed acceleration in sea level rise as an example. TWTW will resume on September 1.

SEPP'S APRIL FOOLS AWARD THE JACKSON

Nominations closed on July 30, and voting will close on August 21. Award to be announced at the 36th Annual Meeting of the Doctors for Disaster Preparedness, August 25-26.

The three leading candidates are Governor Jerry Brown of California, who is leading the state into a future of high electricity costs, Pope Francis, and Governor Jay Inslee of Washington State who wants an Apollo program to replace carbon-based fuels. He and his staff are probably unaware that veterans of the Apollo program used their hard science, to include root-cause analysis, to determine that CO2 presents no pressing problem.

Others nominated include Kate Brown, Governor of Oregon; Jacinda Arden, PM, of New Zealand who wishes to eliminate nuclear and sources of greenhouse gases, including livestock; Bill Nye, the non-science guy; Angela Merkel, PM of Germany; Michael Bloomberg, former Mayor of NYC for contributions to the Paris Agreement; Al Gore, obvious; A.G. Sulzberger, publisher of the New York Times; and Lord Stern, UK, for imaginative statistical techniques, making something of low future value appear valuable today.

Still others include David King, former UK science advisor; Eric Schneiderman, former AG of New York for promoting frivolous litigation at the expense of users of fossil fuels: Catharine McKenna, Canadian Minister of Environment & Climate Change; Michael Mann, promoter of climate fears, who did not get a Nobel; Paul Krugman, promoter of climate fears, who did get a Nobel in economics and promptly forgot his earlier ideas; Paul R. Ehrlich, misanthrope, who did not get a Nobel; Malcolm Turnbull, PM of Australia where NEG means No Electricity Generated; Maxine Waters, bull-horn specialist; and Ben Santer, who contributed greatly to change the UN IPCC from a scientific organization to a political pressure group.

Please send in your votes for one of these exceptional candidates.

NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Censorship

YouTube will now place Wikipedia entries about global warming below videos 'refuting evidence of rising temperatures'

By Joe Pinkstone, Daily Mail, UK, Aug 9, 2018

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-6042837/YouTube-takes-climate-change-deniers.html>

[SEPP Comment: Among the topics on which Wikipedia is expected to provide reliable information are anti-vaccination and climate change? Both the anti-vaccination groups and global warming alarmists have very weak hard evidence. Will Wikipedia understand that government policy supporting vaccination does not transfer to government policy supporting dire global warming?]

Challenging the Orthodoxy -- NIPCC

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Physical Science

Idso, Carter, and Singer, Lead Authors/Editors, 2013

<https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/CCR-II/CCR-II-Full.pdf>

Summary: <http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/ccr2a/pdf/Summary-for-Policymakers.pdf>

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Biological Impacts

Idso, Idso, Carter, and Singer, Lead Authors/Editors, 2014

<http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/ccr2b/pdf/Full-Report.pdf>

Summary: <https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/CCR-IIb/Summary-for-Policymakers.pdf>

Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming

The NIPCC Report on the Scientific Consensus

By Craig D. Idso, Robert M. Carter, and S. Fred Singer, NIPCC, Nov 23, 2015

<http://climatechangereconsidered.org/>

Download with no charge

<https://www.heartland.org/policy-documents/why-scientists-disagree-about-global-warming>

Nature, Not Human Activity, Rules the Climate

S. Fred Singer, Editor, NIPCC, 2008

http://www.sepp.org/publications/nipcc_final.pdf

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Alabama's state climatologist John Christy rebuts claims of recent fires, heat waves being caused by human activity in in-depth interview

By Jeremy Beaman, Yellow Hammer, Aug 14, 2018 [H/t WUWT]

<https://yellowhammernews.com/alabamas-state-climatologist-john-christy-rebuts-claims-of-recent-fires-heat-waves-being-caused-by-human-activity-in-in-depth-interview/>

Breaking the Climate Spell

Getting out of the Paris Agreement was just the first step on the road to a realist global energy policy.

By Robert Darwall, The Weekly Standard. Aug 13, 2018

<https://www.weeklystandard.com/rupert-darwall/breaking-the-climate-spell>

“The Rio Summit was the brainchild of Canadian -Maurice Strong, and he understood that what most motivates political leaders, bureaucrats, and corporate CEOs is the fear of being left out.

“‘The process is the policy,’ Strong said, and the annual climate conferences that have been held since the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in Rio created a sense of irresistible momentum. It’s that spell Trump is now breaking.”

The Major Change in the Global Warming Groupthink Between 1990 and 1995

Guest Opinion: Dr. Tim Ball, WUWT, Aug 12, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/12/the-major-change-in-the-global-warming-grouphink-between-1990-and-1995/>

[SEPP Comment: From the Club of Rome to the IPCC – use mathematical models, not hard evidence to reinforce wrong assumptions.]

A Better World Is Here

By Bjørn Lomborg, Project Syndicate, Aug 16, 2018

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/extraordinary-human-progress-since-1990-by-bjorn-lomborg-2018-08>

Twelve Invisible Eco-Catastrophes and Threats of Doom That are Actually Fake

Guest essay by Patrick Moore, WUWT, Aug 3, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/03/twelve-invisible-eco-catastrophes-and-threats-of-doom-that-are-actually-fake/>

Climatology’s startling error of physics: answers to comments

By Christopher Monckton of Brenchley, WUWT, Aug 15, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/15/climatologys-startling-error-of-physics-answers-to-comments/>

Wind and Solar Energy: Good for Nothing

By Norman Rogers, American Thinker, Aug 11, 2018 [H/t John Dunn]

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2018/08/wind_and_solar_energy_good_for_nothing.html

Defending the Orthodoxy

Letter opposes possible EPA shift

Harvard officials, hospital leaders call on agency to withdraw proposed ‘transparency’ rule, which they say would bar use of best science data

By Alvin Powell, The Harvard Gazette, Aug 10, 2018 [H/t Willie Soon]

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/08/harvard-officials-hospital-leaders-call-on-epa-to-withdraw-transparency-rule-which-they-say-would-bar-use-of-best-science-data/>

Link to prior letter: Letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt regarding proposed “Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science” rule

By Drew Gilpin Faust, President, Harvard University, **June 4, 2018**

<https://www.harvard.edu/president/news/2018/letter-to-epa-administrator-scott-pruitt-regarding-proposed-strengthening>

Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2017, Harvard University,

Signed by Drew Gilpin Faust, President, October 26, 2017

https://finance.harvard.edu/files/fad/files/final_harvard_university_financial_report_2017.pdf

An Association between Air Pollution and Mortality in Six U.S. Cities

By Douglas W. Dockery, C. Arden Pope, Xiping Xu, John D. Spengler, James H. Ware, Martha E. Fay, Benjamin G. Ferris, Jr., and Frank E. Speizer, The New England Journal of Medicine, **Dec 9, 1993**

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM199312093292401>

Global corporations buy record 7.2GW of clean energy so far this year

This has already surpassed 2017’s record of 5.4GW

By Jonny Bairstow, Energy Live, News, Aug 6, 2018

<https://www.energylivenews.com/2018/08/06/global-corporations-buy-record-7-2gw-of-clean-energy-this-year/>

Fuzzy math could doom Trump's attack on Obama climate rule

The Trump administration's plan to roll back Obama regulations calls for altering the cost-benefit balance, but that opens the door to legal challenges.

By Alex Guillen and Emily Holden, Politico, Aug 16, 2018

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/08/16/trump-climate-change-obama-cost-benefits-740455>

“The Environmental Protection Agency's proposed replacement is expected to downplay the money that people and businesses would save from using less electricity, a key feature of the Obama-era greenhouse rule for power plants. People tracking the issue also expect that the agency will count only a fraction of the improvements in public health from reduced smog and soot pollution, and won't consider any benefits from slowing climate change outside the U.S.”

[SEPP Comment: Why does the EPA need regulations to force people and business to save money? CO2 does not cause smog and soot.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Why the Climate Alarmists Are Winning at the State Level

By Alan Carlin, Carlin Economics and Science, Aug 17, 2018

<http://www.carlineconomics.com/archives/4559>

The planet is experiencing an unexplained major cooling and scientists are ignoring it.

By Javier, WUWT, Aug 14, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/14/the-planet-is-experiencing-an-unexplained-major-cooling-and-scientists-are-ignoring-it/>

Climate Alarm Flames Out As Scientists Find Global Fires/Burned Area Has Sharply DECLINED Since 1910s

By Kenneth Richard, No Tricks Zone, Aug 13, 2018

<http://notrickszone.com/2018/08/13/climate-alarm-flames-out-as-scientists-find-global-fires-burned-area-has-sharply-declined-since-1910s/>

Drought Proofing a Dry Continent

Guest essay by Viv Forbes, WUWT, Aug 16, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/16/drought-proofing-a-dry-continent/>

GUEST COLUMN: Climate change data is wildly overestimated

By Matthew Lau, Toronto Sun, Aug 14, 2018 [H/t Cooler Heads]

<https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/guest-column-climate-change-data-is-wildly-over-estimated>

Study shows global forest loss over past 35 years has been more than offset by new forest growth

By Byb Yirka, Phys.org, Aug 9, 2018 [H/t Climate Depot]

<https://phys.org/news/2018-08-global-forest-loss-years-offset.html>

Link to paper: Global land change from 1982 to 2016

By Xiao-Peng Song, Matthew C. Hansen, Stephen V. Stehman, Peter V. Potapov, Alexandra Tyukavina, Eric F. Vermote & John R. Townshend, Nature, Aug, 2018

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-018-0411-9>

“Over the entire span [1982 to 2016], the researchers found that new tree cover had offset tree cover loss by approximately 2.24 million square kilometers—which they note is approximately the size of Texas and Alaska combined.

Change in US Administrations

Deregulation Nation: President Trump Cuts Regulations At Record Rate

By Terry Jones, IBD, Aug 14, 2018

<https://www.investors.com/politics/commentary/deregulation-nation-president-trump-cuts-regulations-at-record-rate/>

With a quarter million comments in, EPA set to move on contentious 'secret science' rule

By John Siciliano, Washington Examiner, Aug 16, 2018

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy/with-a-quarter-million-comments-in-epa-set-to-move-on-contentious-secret-science-rule>

Wildfires seem unstoppable, but they can be prevented. Here's how.

By Ryan Zinke, Opinion contributor, USA Today, Aug 8, 2018 [H/t WUWT]

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/08/08/active-forest-management-prevent-wildfires-column/913801002/>

Social Benefits of Carbon Dioxide

New York Times hysterical over global greening

By William Happer, CFACT, Aug 13, 2018 [H/t Cooler Heads]

<http://www.cfact.org/2018/08/13/new-york-times-hysterical-over-global-greening/>

Benefits of Global Warming: Record Harvests Reported in Numerous Countries

By Staff Writers, Financial Times, Via GWPF, Aug 8, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/benefits-of-global-warming-us-forecasts-record-soyabean-crop/>
[SEPP Comment: More inclined to assert the benefits of CO2 enrichment and advances in agriculture.]

The Fight Against Global Greening – Part 3

Guest Essay by Kip Hansen, WUWT, Aug 17, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/17/the-fight-against-global-greening-part-3/>

[SEPP Comment: See the previous two parts.]

Problems in the Orthodoxy

Study: CO2 rise after last ice age didn't need man-made influences, just the deep Pacific Ocean

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Aug 13, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/13/study-co2-rise-after-last-ice-age-didnt-need-man-made-influences-just-the-deep-pacific-ocean/>

Link to paper: Flushing of the deep Pacific Ocean and the deglacial rise of atmospheric CO2 concentrations

By Du, Haley, Mix, Walczak & Pratorius, Nature Geoscience, Aug 13, 2018

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-018-0205-6>

[SEPP Comment: Is this article in Nature implying that temperatures rose before CO2 rose?]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by CO2 Science

The Impact of Ocean Acidification and Warming on an Intertidal Rock Pool Community

Legrand, E., Riera, P., Bohner, O., Coudret, J., Schlicklin, F., Derrien, M. and Martin, S. 2018. Impact of ocean acidification and warming on the productivity of a rock pool community. *Marine Environmental Research* 136: 78-88. Aug 17, 2018

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V21/aug/a11.php>

“Consequently, the seven researchers conclude that ‘the present results evidenced that rock pool assemblages appear relatively robust to changes in temperature and pCO₂, in terms of primary production.’”

An 810-Year Summer Temperature Reconstruction in Scotland

Rydval, M., Loader, N.J., Gunnarson, B.E., Druckenbrod, D.L., Linderholm, H.W., Moreton, S.G., Wood, C.V. and Wilson, R. 2017. Reconstructing 800 years of summer temperatures in Scotland from tree rings. *Climate Dynamics* 49: 2951-2974. Aug 16, 2018

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V21/aug/a10.php>

[SEPP Comment: Mr. Mann’s hockey-stick is absent.]

A Test of the Progressive Nitrogen Limitation Hypothesis Following 10 Years of CO₂ Enrichment in an Oak Ecosystem

Sun, J., Dai, W., Peng, B., Liu, J., He, T., Jiang, P., Han, S. and Bai, E. 2018. Does the accelerated soil N cycling sustain N demand of *Quercus mongolica* after decade-long elevated CO₂ treatment? *Biogeochemistry* 139: 197-213. Aug 15, 2018

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V21/aug/a9.php>

“In light of these and other findings discussed in the authors’ paper, the eight scientists conclude that, ‘consistent with our hypothesis, elevated CO₂ increased photosynthesis and microbial biomass, which accelerated soil N cycling and supplied additional N for plant growth, ‘ revealing that ‘progressive N limitation for plant growth has not happened in this oak dominated system after 10 years of elevated CO₂ treatment.’”

The Relationship Between Diurnal Temperature Range and Mortality in Hefei, China

Tang, J., Xiao, C., Li, Y., Zhang, J., Zhai, H., Geng, X., Ding, R. and Zhai, J. 2018. Effects of diurnal temperature range on mortality in Hefei city, China. *International Journal of Biometeorology* 62: 851-860. Aug 13, 2018

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V21/aug/a8.php>

“DTR is the abbreviation for *diurnal temperature range*, defined as the difference between maximum and minimum temperatures within a 24-hour period. It is an important indicator of global climate change, with several studies reporting that DTR is *declining* in most parts of the world.

“The significance of the above findings is noted when one recognizes that multiple studies have confirmed that minimum temperatures have been rising predominately faster than maximum temperatures across the globe in recent decades, resulting in a significant decline in DTR worldwide. Consequently, given the relationship between DTR and mortality demonstrated here (and as observed in many other studies of the subject), one can rationally conclude that recent climate change, with its associated *reduction* in DTR, has helped to *save* lives. And that data-driven observation is just the *opposite* of what climate alarmists claim should be occurring due to global warming!”

Changing Weather

Atlantic ‘Tripole’ of Ocean Temperatures Driving Hurricane Season and Europe’s Crazy Summer

Guest weather analysis by Joe D’Aleo, CCM, AMS Fellow., WUWT, Aug 3, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/03/atlantic-tripole-of-ocean-temperatures-driving-hurricane-season-and-europes-crazy-summer/>

Dense Canadian Smoke Veil Moves Southward over Washington State

By Cliff Mass, Weather and Climate Blog, Aug 12, 2018

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2018/08/dense-canadian-smoke-veil-moves.html>

Changing Climate

Nature Unbound X – The next glaciation

By Javier, Climate Etc. Aug 14, 2018

<https://judithcurry.com/2018/08/14/nature-unbound-x-the-next-glaciation/#more-24256>

[SEPP Comment: The tenth in a series of posts on Judith Curry’s web site.]

Changing Climate – Cultures & Civilizations

Easter Island's society might not have collapsed

Press Release, Field Museum, Chicago,

<https://www.fieldmuseum.org/about/press/easter-islands-society-might-not-have-collapsed>

Unable to link to paper

Why did Greenland’s Viking colonies disappear? It may have been because the trade in walrus ivory collapsed

At one point, the Vikings’ descendants thrived on a lucrative trade in walrus tusks, which were sold to Europe’s elite and carved into luxury items

By Staff Writers, AP, Aug 8, 2018 [H/t GWPF]

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/europe/article/2158799/why-did-greenlands-viking-colonies-disappear-it-may-have-been>

Link to paper: Ancient DNA reveals the chronology of walrus ivory trade from Norse Greenland

By Bastiaan Star, James H. Barrett, Agata T. Gondek, Sanne Boessenkool, Proceedings of the Royal Society B, Aug 8, 2018

<http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/285/1884/20180978>

[SEPP Comment: The collapse of the ivory trade would have not caused a collapse of Nordic agriculture.]

Changing Seas

Reef corals have endured since 'age of dinosaurs' and may survive global warming

By Staff Writers (SPX), Aug 10, 2018

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Reef_corals_have_endured_since_age_of_dinosaurs_and_may_survive_global_warming_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Coral reefs have existed for about 500 million years. Long before the dinosaurs, starting about 250 million years ago.]

New Study Shows Some Corals Might Adapt to Climate Changes

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Aug 4, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/04/new-study-shows-some-corals-might-adapt-to-climate-changes/>

Link to pdf or paper: Two threatened Caribbean coral species have contrasting responses to combined temperature and acidification stress

By Langdon, Baker, Albrict, Jones

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326693053_Two_threatened_Caribbean_coral_species_have_contrasting_responses_to_combined_temperature_and_acidification_stress

[SEPP Comment: CO2 Science has been stating this for years.]

Coral Bleaching Is a Natural Event That Has Gone On for Centuries, New Study

By Graham Lloyd, The Australian, Via GWPF, Aug 16, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/coral-bleaching-goes-back-four-centuries-new-study/>

Link to paper: Reconstructing Four Centuries of Temperature-Induced Coral Bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef

By Nicholas A. Kamenos and Sebastian J. Hennige, Frontiers in Marine Science, Aug 15, 2018

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2018.00283/full>

From news article: “Large-scale observations of the Great Barrier Reef first began in the late 1970s.”

The Great Ocean Cleanup Begins

By Michael Abrams, ASME, August 2018, [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<https://www.asme.org/engineering-topics/articles/technology-and-society/the-great-ocean-cleanup-begins>

[SEPP Comment: A worthwhile endeavor, going after the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.]

Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

New Arctic Study Finds Spring Sea Ice Melted 2 Months Earlier Than Today During Roman, Medieval Times

By Kenneth Richard, No Tricks Zone, Aug 16, 2018

<http://notrickszone.com/2018/08/16/new-arctic-study-finds-spring-sea-ice-melted-2-months-earlier-than-today-during-roman-medieval-times/>

Changing Earth

Study: Earthquakes on one side of Earth can trigger new ones on opposite side

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Aug 13, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/13/study-earthquakes-on-one-side-of-earth-can-trigger-new-ones-on-opposite-side/>

Link to paper: Evidence of Systematic Triggering at Teleseismic Distances Following Large Earthquakes

By O’Malley6, Mondal, Goldfinger & Behrenfeld, Nature, Aug 2, 2018

https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-30019-2.epdf?author_access_token=hOAlfd3xnWvqS7nPt12bzNRgN0jAjWel9jnR3ZoTv0OAYF-yK8q7T-DzGoi6vX-slJKvLeyXd3MxxYsClrHr4Fqkh1Ow7pnJ5mV2yvzVxGPeft7ny0uFZW_z90FYvtMRLk0HarwNEIGn4v3V7OGsMw%3D%3D

Lowering Standards

Michael Howard Loses The Plot

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Aug 16, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/08/16/michael-howard-loses-the-plot/#more-35067>

RFF in the Trump Era: Assume, Don't Debate, Climate Alarmism/Forced Energy Transformation (2017 Annual Report more of the same)

By Robert Bradley Jr. Master Resource, Aug 14, 2018

<https://www.masterresource.org/resources-for-the-future-rff/rff-2017-annual-report/>

Why do distorted views on global warming and the Middle East go unchallenged by the BBC?

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Aug 13, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/08/13/why-do-distorted-views-on-global-warming-and-the-middle-east-go-unchallenged-by-the-bbc/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?

Brace yourself: more starving polar bear news stories in the pipeline from Svalbard

By Susan Crockford, Polar Bear Science, Aug 15, 2018

<https://polarbearscience.com/2018/08/15/brace-yourself-more-starving-polar-bear-news-stories-in-the-pipeline-from-svalbard/>

Bob Ward Complains To IPSO—And Loses!

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Aug 15, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/08/15/bob-ward-complains-to-ipso-and-loses/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

PG&E: Climate Change Caused the California Fires, Not Negligent Power Line Maintenance

Guest essay by Eric Worrall, WUWT, Aug 13, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/13/pge-climate-change-caused-the-california-fires-not-negligent-power-line-maintenance/>

Questioning European Green

Villages die as community makes way for coal in Germany

Once the Garzweiler opencast mine is finished, 20 villages will have gone.

By Stefanie Glinski, Thomson Reuters Foundation, Aug 13, 2018 [H/t GWPF]

<http://news.trust.org/item/20180813110020-y6ono/>

[SEPP Comment: Consequences of shutting down operating nuclear plants.]

Questioning Green Elsewhere

Understanding the Climate and History of California Fires

Guest Opinion: Dr. Tim Ball, WUWT, Aug 4, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/04/understanding-the-climate-and-history-of-california-fires/>

Have investors lost interest in “clean energy”?

By Roger Andrews, Energy Matters, Aug 15, 2018

<http://euanmearns.com/have-investors-lost-interest-in-clean-energy/>

Green Jobs

Report: Tesla no longer committed to buying all solar modules made by Panasonic in Buffalo

By Dan Miner, Buffalo Business First, Aug 17, 2018

<https://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/news/2018/08/16/report-tesla-no-longer-committed-to-buying-all.html>

[SEPP Comment: Possible trouble for Governor Cuomo's grand plan for solar in Buffalo?]

Governor Cuomo Announces More Than 1,000 Percent Growth of Solar Power in New York
Press Release, State of New York, Feb 5, 2018

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-more-1000-percent-growth-solar-power-new-york>

See link immediately above.

Corruption trial, Tesla cutbacks cloud \$750M taxpayer-funded project in Buffalo

Amid a corruption trial into bid rigging surrounding the Buffalo Billion initiative, there were new question Friday about the future of the Tesla plant in south Buffalo and New York's \$750 million investment into the facility.

By Joseph Spector, 2WGRZ, June 22, 2018

<https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/local/buffalo/corruption-trial-tesla-cutbacks-cloud-750m-taxpayer-funded-project-in-buffalo/71-566712246>

Litigation Issues

Contradictions Mount as Lawyer for Colorado Climate Lawsuits Struggles to Defend His Role

By Lea Giotto, Energy in Depth, Aug 15, 2018

<http://eidclimate.org/contradictions-mount-as-lawyer-for-colorado-climate-lawsuits-struggles-to-defend-his-role/>

“In the NYT Magazine article, reporter Nathaniel Rich writes that the fossil-fuel industry is ‘a common boogeyman’ whom many find convenient to blame for why action on climate change wasn’t taken sooner. But Rich found (as EID has reported previously) that pretty much everyone knew about climate change during the time period when Bookbinder is accusing the fossil fuel industry of concealing information from the public:”

U.S. judge rules securities suit against Exxon, executives can proceed

By Gary McWilliams, Reuters, Aug 15, 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-exxon-mobil-lawsuit/u-s-judge-rules-securities-suit-against-exxon-executives-can-proceed-idUSKBN1L01WB>

“The case is one of several, including shareholder and employee lawsuits, centered on whether Exxon has for decades lied about climate change, including its impact on energy prices and the environment and its ability to develop reserves, and taken public positions inconsistent with what it knew.”

[SEPP Comment: The lead plaintiff is the Greater Pennsylvania Carpenters Pension Fund.]

Washington [State] judge throws out children's climate change lawsuit

By John Siciliano, Washington Examiner, Aug 15, 2018 [H/t WUWT]

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy/washington-judge-throws-out-childrens-climate-change-lawsuit>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Remembering the Death of Federal Cap-and-Trade (2010 NYT analysis revisited)

By Robert Bradley Jr. Master Resource, Aug 13, 2018

<https://www.masterresource.org/cap-and-trade-carbon-pricing/remembering-death-cap-trade-nyt-article-worth-revisiting/>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

China's solar industry is at a crossroads

Generous subsidies have been slashed or removed to rein in rampant growth. Liu Bin examines the changes

By Liu Bin, China Dialogue, Aug 13, 2018

<https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/10775-China-s-solar-industry-is-at-a-crossroads>

Solar boom to bust in China: world's largest solar PV projects drop 43% as subsidies cut

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Aug 17, 2018

<http://joannenova.com.au/2018/08/solar-boom-to-bust-in-china-worlds-largest-solar-pv-projects-drop-43-as-subsidies-cut/>

Arizona regulators determine signatures valid on 50% renewables ballot initiative

By Robert Walton, Utility Dive, Aug 17, 2018 [H/t Cooler Heads]

<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/arizona-regulators-determine-signatures-valid-on-50-renewables-ballot-init/530293/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Four Reasons the Endangered Species Act Desperately Needs Reform

By Robert Gordon, CEI, Aug 8, 2018

<https://cei.org/blog/four-reasons-endangered-species-act-desperately-needs-reform>

Taming the EPA Regulatory Hydra: An essential first step

By Paul Dreissen and William Kovacs, WUWT, Aug 18, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/18/taming-the-epa-regulatory-hydra-an-essential-first-step/>

There's a Common Thread in EPA Attempts to Thwart Rolling Back Obama-Era vehicles Regulations

By Michael Bastasch, Daily Caller, Aug 15, 2018

<http://dailycaller.com/2018/08/15/epa-obama-era-vehicle-regulations/>

Energy Issues – Non-US

Dam collapse highlights risks to communities as Laos seeks to become hydroelectricity hub

By Anne Barker, ABC, Aug 3, 2018

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-03/dam-collapse-highlights-risks-to-communities-in-laos/10071836>

Xe Pian Xe Namnoy Hydroelectric Power Project

By Staff Writers, Power-Technology.com, No date (Accessed Aug 17, 2018)

<https://www.power-technology.com/projects/xe-pian-xe-namnoy-hydroelectric-power-project/>

Welcome to Dark Age Britain: Anti-Frackers Demand Research Ban on Shale Gas

By Staff Writers, GWPF, Aug 12, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/welcome-to-dark-age-britain-anti-frackers-demand-research-ban-on-shale-gas/>

[SEPP Comment: If it were not for "fracking" on privately owned and state owned lands and resources in the US, not doubt this would have happened during the previous administration.]

Energy Issues -- Australia

Abbott wins this round: Turnbull pulls Paris Agreement from NEG, but still wants to meet it "for free"

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Aug 17, 2018

<http://joannenova.com.au/2018/08/abbott-wins-this-round-turnbull-pulls-paris-agreement-from-neg-but-still-wants-to-meet-it-for-free/>

Dear Australia, would you rather have \$8,500 or a 0.0001C cooler climate for your 130th Birthday?

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Aug 14, 2018

<http://joannenova.com.au/2018/08/dear-australia-would-you-rather-have-8500-or-a-0-0001c-cooler-climate-for-your-130th-birthday/>

The NEG: A Frankenstein Green Energy Policy which Upsets Pretty Much Everyone

Guest essay by Eric Worrall, WUWT, Aug 14, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/14/the-neg-a-frankenstein-green-energy-policy-which-upsets-pretty-much-everyone/>

Turnbull's new approach to electricity: smoke and mirrors

By Alan Moran, Catallaxy Files, Aug 18, 2018 [H/t Quadrant]

<http://catallaxyfiles.com/2018/08/18/turnbulls-new-approach-to-electricity-smoke-and-mirrors/>

Energy Issues -- US

New York Denies Air Permit for New Gas-Fired Power Plant

By Darrell Proctor, Power Mag, Aug 7, 2018

https://www.powermag.com/new-york-denies-air-permit-new-gas-fired-power-plant/?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiWmprMVIUUm1ORE5pWIRWaiIsInQiOiJld09uSIV5OEFjN3NabFpQSUVNVTRMUnZsN0o5QVgwZUkzb3Yyb09NNU5ybzBZbG1kT21jZnBRYnl4RVFWNk9lanZleW4xM2MyaXVSb0w1cGRubUx6M2J1aHA1NFBudXYyXC9SamVBRlpORUhqOUpwMFJuU1QzTnpvemRsRVF3Nm0ifQ%3D%3D

[SEPP Comment: Is the political season in New York getting expensive, more contributions are needed?]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

EU caves on demands to buy more US gas in bid to stave off trade war

By Anna Isaac, Telegraph, UK, Aug 9, 2018 [H/t GWPF]

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/08/09/eu-caves-demands-buy-us-gas-bid-stave-trade-war/>

Return of King Coal?

An 865-MW Georgia Power Coal Plant Is Showing Distress

By Sonal Patel, Power Mag, Aug 6, 2018

https://www.powermag.com/an-865-mw-georgia-power-coal-plant-is-showing-distress/?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiWmprMVIUUm1ORE5pWIRWaiIsInQiOiJld09uSIV5OEFjN3NabFpQSUVNVTRMUnZsN0o5QVgwZUkzb3Yyb09NNU5ybzBZbG1kT21jZnBRYnl4RVFWNk9lan

[ZleW4xM2MyaXVSb0w1cGRubUx6M2J1aHA1NFBudXYyXC9SamVBRlpORUhqOUpwMFJ
uUIQzTnpvemRsRVF3Nm0ifQ%3D%3D](https://www.elp.com/articles/2018/08/european-heat-wave-forces-french-nuclear-plants-to-shut-down.html)

Nuclear Energy and Fears

European heat wave forces French nuclear plants to shut down

By Staff Writers, AP, Aug 7, 2018

<https://www.elp.com/articles/2018/08/european-heat-wave-forces-french-nuclear-plants-to-shut-down.html>

“Since Thursday, four French nuclear reactors in three power plants near the Rhine and the Rhone Rivers, including Fessenheim, have had to be temporarily shut down. EDF said the decision was made to **avoid overheating** the rivers.” [Boldface added]

Nuclear aids New England energy security, say governors

The governors of five states in the USA's New England region have called on the regional grid operator to evaluate incentives for nuclear energy, among other affordable, clean and secure energy options.

By Staff Writers, WNN, Aug 15, 2018 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Nuclear-aids-New-England-energy-security,-say-gove>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

How climate change influences wind energy

By Staff Writers, Reve, Wind Energy and Electric Vehicle Review. Aug 6, 2018

<https://www.evwind.es/2018/08/06/how-climate-change-influences-wind-energy/64150>

Based on prior paper: Future Changes of Wind Speed and Wind Energy Potentials in EURO-CORDEX Ensemble Simulations

By Julia Moemken Mark Reyers Hendrik Feldmann Joaquim G. Pinto, AGU100 Advancing Earth and Space Science, June 5, 2018

<https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1029/2018JD028473>

Wind farms see a slump in returns [UK]

By Staff Writers, The Energy Advocate, Aug 15, 2018

<https://theenergyadvocate.co.uk/2018/08/15/wind-farms-see-a-slump-in-returns/>

Last month wind generated power was down by an average of 20%, according to weather data company Vaisala OYJ, with wind speeds in some parts of Europe down throughout 2018.

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy -- Other

The Dethroning of King Corn in the US Ethanol Industry

By Joe Barnett, Real Clear Energy, Aug 17, 2018

https://www.realclearenergy.org/articles/2018/08/17/the_dethroning_of_king_corn_in_the_us_ethanol_industry_110328.html

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Vehicles

Trump’s Rollback of CAFE Mandates Is a Big Win for Car Buyers, Consumer Choice

By Nicolas Loris, The Daily Signal, Aug 16, 2018

<https://www.dailysignal.com/2018/08/16/trumps-rollback-of-cafe-mandates-is-a-big-win-for-car-buyers-consumer-choice/>

Chariots of Death and Indecision

By Charles G. Battig, American Thinker, Aug 13, 2018

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2018/08/chariots_of_death_and_indecision_.html

California Dreaming

High-speed rail in California has become a slow-motion train wreck

Editorial, Las Vegas Review, Aug 10, 2018 [H/t Cooler Heads]

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-high-speed-rail-in-california-has-become-a-slow-motion-train-wreck/>

Other Scientific News

'Touch the sun': NASA spacecraft hurtles toward our star

By Marcia Dunn, AP, Aug 13, 2018 [H/t Gordon Fulks]

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/nasa-spacecraft-rockets-toward-sun-for-closest-look-yet/ar-BBLOILO?li=BBnbfcl&OCID=ansmsnews11>

NASA's Parker Solar Probe Is Named for Him. 60 Years Ago, No One Believed His Ideas About the Sun.

Eugene N. Parker predicted the existence of solar wind in 1958. The NASA spacecraft is the first named for a living person.

By Kenneth Change, NYT, Aug 11, 2018 [H/t Willie Soon]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/10/science/eugene-parker-solar-wind-nasa-probe.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>

[SEPP Comment: An excellent example of the importance of speculation, and the need to be open to evidence to support, or reject, it.]

Strange events: Earth's upper atmosphere creating glowing clouds

By Anthony Watts, Aug 15, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/15/strange-events-earths-upper-atmosphere-creating-glowing-clouds/>

BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Liquid Sunshine: Ammonia made from sun, air, and water could turn Australia into a renewable energy superpower

By Robert F. Service, Science Mag, July 13, 2018 [H/t Tom Hayward]

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/361/6398/120>

Claim: Global Warming Makes Police Officers Lazy

Guest essay by Eric Worrall, WUWT, Aug 15, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/08/15/claim-global-warming-makes-police-officers-lazy/>

[SEPP Comment: Updating the old stereotype of the southern sheriff?]

Stand by for a solution

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Aug 17, 2018

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/3776>

“Gordon Brown will go head-to-head with David Cameron on green issues today by urging people to save electricity by not leaving their television sets on standby. He intends to highlight the “huge waste” from consumer goods left on standby – about 10 per cent of the electricity supply. The Telegraph (UK), 20 Apr 2006”

Stirring the pot

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Aug 16, 2018

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/4003>

“Recently, the scientific entrepreneur Nathan Myhrvold, whose company Intellectual Ventures has invested in several geoengineering ideas, said that we could cool the earth by stirring the seas. He has proposed deploying a million plastic tubes, each about a hundred metres long, to roil the water, which would help it trap more CO2.

“‘The ocean is this giant heat sink,’ he told me. ‘But it is very cold. The bottom is nearly freezing. If you just stirred the ocean more, you could absorb the excess CO2 and keep the planet cold.’

The New Yorker, 14 May 2012”

Missed it by that much!

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Aug 11, 2018

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/5924>

“Last year a series of lakes formed on the vast body of ice that covers most of Greenland. Acting like a lubricant, the water quickly made its way to the base of the ice sheet, forcing giant slabs of ice to rise, then slide into the ocean. The speed at which the ice broke off shocked many scientists.

“‘We used to think that it would take 10,000 years for melting at the surface of an ice sheet to penetrate down to the bottom. Now we know it doesn’t take 10,000 years; it takes 10 seconds,’ says Richard Alley, a professor of geosciences at Pennsylvania State University.

Sydney Morning Herald, 3 Feb 2007”

[SEPP Comment: Richard Alley’s work may have been changed by increased government funding to Penn State to promote fear of CO2. Greenland is not sliding into the ocean.]

ARTICLES:

1. Round Up the Usual Lawyers

Attorneys relied on junk science to win \$289.2 million in damages.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 15, 2018

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/round-up-the-usual-lawyers-1534375738>

SUMMARY: The editorial states:

“The world’s most widely used herbicide isn’t carcinogenic, but it’s now a corporate toxin. On Friday a California jury ordered Monsanto to pay \$289.2 million in damages for failing to give sufficient warning about the “substantial dangers” of its signature weed killer known as Roundup. Shares of Bayer, which recently acquired Monsanto, have plummeted this week in anticipation of a legal onslaught from plaintiff lawyers.

“The San Francisco Superior Court case involved Dewayne “Lee” Johnson, who was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in 2014. Working as a school groundskeeper, Mr. Johnson routinely used Roundup, and he now claims its active ingredient, glyphosate, caused his cancer. The jury examined gory photos of the lesions that covered up to 80% of his body, and in testimony Mr. Johnson described how even wearing clothing caused excruciating pain. Such emotional testimony would elicit sympathy in any jury of human beings.

“But legal claims are supposed to be about the law and evidence. And the problem for Mr. Johnson is that there’s overwhelming scientific evidence that glyphosate does not cause cancer. One comprehensive study, published last November in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, investigated cancer incidence among nearly 45,000 licensed pesticide applicators who had been exposed to glyphosate.

“The study found ‘no evidence of an association between glyphosate use and risk of any solid tumors or lymphoid malignancies’—including non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Even the Environmental Protection Agency, far from a corporate shill, has likewise concluded that glyphosate is safe.

“The outlier in the scientific community is the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer. Over the years this group has claimed pickled vegetables and ‘very hot beverages’ may cause cancer, and its risk assessments suggest that working as a barber or hairdresser is only slightly less hazardous than being exposed to mustard gas. So it wasn’t shocking in 2015 when the group concluded that glyphosate is also “probably carcinogenic.”

A Reuters investigation later revealed that the U.N. outfit had repeatedly ignored and omitted evidence that showed no link between glyphosate and cancer. Christopher Portier, an adviser who worked on the group’s glyphosate determination, was concurrently accepting payments from Lundy & Lundy, a law firm behind several cancer-related class-action lawsuits. Lo, Mr. Portier also testified as an expert witness for Mr. Johnson.

“Judge Suzanne Ramos Bolanos remarked twice during the trial that the evidence for punitive damages was ‘thin,’ and Monsanto plans to push back on Friday’s verdict. In post-trial motions, the company will ask the judge to reexamine the jury’s verdict. Judge Bolanos has the authority to vacate the jury’s decision, declare a mistrial and call a new one, or reduce Monsanto’s damages. The company may also appeal to a higher court.”

The editorial continues that this is the first glyphosate lawsuit to make it to trial, but about 5,000 are filed and concludes: “Too bad there’s not a weed killer for junk lawsuits.”

2. The Phony Numbers Behind California’s Solar Mandate

A state-hired consultant lowballed the costs and assumed massive subsidies in estimating benefits. By Steven Sexton, WSJ, Aug 12, 2018

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-phony-numbers-behind-californias-solar-mandate-1534110302>

SUMMARY: The assistant professor of public policy and economics at Duke University writes:

“California’s energy regulators effectively cooked the books to justify their recent command that all homes built in the Golden State after 2020 be equipped with solar panels. Far from a boon to homeowners, the costs to builders and home buyers will likely far exceed the benefits to the state.

“The California Energy Commission, which approved the rule as part of new energy-efficiency regulations, didn’t conduct an objective, independent investigation of the policy’s effects. Instead it relied on economic analysis from the consultancy that proposed the policy, Energy and Environmental Economics Inc. Its study concluded that home buyers get a 100% investment return—paying \$40 more in monthly mortgage costs but saving \$80 a month on electricity. If it’s such a good deal, why aren’t home buyers clamoring for more panels already? Most new homes aren’t built with solar panels today, even though the state is saturated by solar marketing.

“The Energy Commission is too optimistic about the cost of panels. It assumes the cost was \$2.93 a watt in 2016 and will decline 17% by 2020. Yet comprehensive analysis of panel costs by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory estimated the average cost of installed panels to be \$4.50 a watt for the 2- to 4-kilowatt systems the policy mandates. That is \$4,000 more than regulators claim for a 2.6-kilowatt model system in the central part of the state, where 20% of new homes are expected to be built. Berkeley Lab further estimates that costs fell a mere 1% between 2015 and 2016, far short of the 4% average annual decline the regulators predict.

“Now consider the alleged savings on energy bills. The commission’s analysis assumes California will maintain its net energy-metering policy, which effectively subsidizes electricity produced by a rooftop solar panel. Residential solar generators are paid as much as eight times what wholesale generators receive, according to a grid operator’s analysis of publicly available data. Dozens of states are rethinking these generous subsidies, paid by ratepayers, because they shift the costs of maintaining the electric grid to relatively poor nonsolar households. The California Public Utilities Commission is set to revisit this regressive policy in 2019—before the solar mandate takes effect.

“If the subsidies are removed, solar adopters would be in the red. This is why the electricity generated by the solar mandate should be valued at the cost of its replacement from the grid—not at the subsidized rate households receive. In a presentation at the National Bureau of Economic Research earlier this year, I estimated the value of rooftop generation for each of California’s ZIP Codes using one year of price data from the grid operator. The average electricity value of the solar mandate’s model system is \$12.50 a month, far less than the \$80 benefit the regulators claim.”

Moreover, using statistics to estimate which power plants would respond to additional solar generation, my colleagues and I also estimated the total value of the pollution avoided by the mandate’s model system to be only \$6 a month. Even accepting the Energy Commission’s optimism about solar panel costs, the policy’s public benefits are only half as large.

After further discussion the essay concludes:

“Though the solar mandate is unlikely to deliver huge savings to consumers, it certainly will raise the price of new and old homes. This couldn’t come at a worse time: Rising housing costs are putting the dream of homeownership further out of reach of low- and middle-income Californians. Sacramento politicians accuse the Trump administration of ignoring science and forgoing expert, independent review in pursuing its environmental and energy agenda. They should look in the mirror.”
