



TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION
LEGISLATORS' GUIDE TO THE ISSUES

Climate Science

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THE ISSUE

Previously declared to be “settled beyond dispute,” climate science concluding that man-made emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) cause global warming has become significantly unsettled over the last year. Disclosures about data manipulation and fundamental errors now discredit a once broadly accepted body of science. Global warming activists, many scientists among them, have heretofore dismissed questions and silenced skeptical scientists. In fact, a genuine debate about this issue may have just begun.

Cascading revelations about the weakness and improprieties in global warming science prompted the state of Texas to take legal action. In February 2009, the Attorney General of Texas challenged the scientific sufficiency of EPA's Endangerment Finding that CO₂ is a pollutant harmful to human health and welfare. In formal investigations, policymakers around the world now question the scientific justification for binding CO₂ limits and subsidies for alternative energy. To date, the U.S. government has dismissed mounting evidence of core errors in orthodox global warming science sponsored by the United Nations.

For the last 20 years, climate science issued by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been widely regarded as authoritative. Conclusions from the IPCC reports' Summary for Policymakers (SPM) are the official justification for all major policy action on the issue including: the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the 2005 European Union's GHG Emission Trading System, U.S. legislation such as the Waxman-Markey bill (passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2008), and EPA's Endangerment Finding.

The United Nations (UN) and the World Meteorological Organization formed the IPCC in 1986. Member governments appointed scientists to the IPCC. Although hundreds of scientists have contributed to the four voluminous technical reports published by the IPCC since 1990, policy judgments about the likelihood of catastrophic warming and need for aggressive policy dictates have been made by a small cadre of scientists and UN staff.

The scientific consensus has never been as broad as proclaimed. As early as 1997, more than 100 scientists signed the Leipzig Declaration questioning the validity of IPCC recommendations. “We believe dire predictions of a future warming have not been validated by the historic climate record, which appears to be dominated by natural fluctuations, showing both warming and cooling. These predictions are based on nothing more than theoretical models and cannot be relied on to construct far-reaching policies.” (Leipzig Declaration)

Issued in 2007, the policy summary in IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) persuaded many U.S. policymakers to support legislation to cap CO₂, mandate renewable energies, and ration energy use. Many opponents of carbon caps predicted their inevitability and tried to mitigate their cost. Those who questioned the IPCC science were vilified as “climate deniers.”

In the summer of 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives narrowly passed the 1,500 page Waxman-Markey (W/M) cap-and-trade bill. With 1,000 new rules implemented by 21 federal agencies, new spending of \$825 billion, and energy taxes of \$865 billion, the W/M legislation would force reduction of fossil fuel use to a level not seen since the late 19th century. Growing awareness of the staggering cost, job loss, government growth, and ineffectiveness has stalled the U.S. Senate's action on the House bill.

In late 2009, thousands of emails among lead scientific contributors to the IPCC were disclosed and revealed the following: document manipulation and destruction of key data, active subversion of the peer review process to silence dissenting views, and alleged violation of Freedom of Information laws. Popularly labeled as the Climate Gate scandals, disclosures from these leaked emails go to the core of IPCC claims. Apart from the email disclosures, IPCC officials also have admitted multiple errors in source materials. The IPCC has since reversed many claims about melting Himalayan glaciers, the Amazon rainforest, and the Netherlands. What IPCC reports had called peer reviewed evidence, in key instances, turned out to be factually incorrect opinion expressed by environ-

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mental activists. Evidence for the rate of glacial recession ultimately derived from a hiking guide—hardly science to justify a transformation of the economy.

National governments across the world have begun official reviews of the IPCC science. To date, the U.S. government has ignored the gravity of the flaws revealed in the IPCC science. Federal courts, however, may compel a formal reassessment. At least 16 states have joined Texas in contesting EPA's Endangerment Finding. EPA's decision, like other federal and state agencies, relies solely on the IPCC science.

The IPCC's modeled science of human-induced global warming is far too uncertain to justify a legislated transformation of U.S. energy systems evolved over a century. After years of unquestioned acceptance of IPCC science, it is time to ask basic questions. The justification for laws and public expenditures that put energy prices and supply at risk should be solid and transparent.

THE FACTS

- ★ The IPCC science predicting catastrophic warming is theoretical science based on models and not on observational measurement. There is no proven causal link between increased man-made CO₂ emissions and increased global temperatures.
 - ★ Global average temperatures have declined over the last decade.
 - ★ The slight global warming observed over the last century (0.7C/1.3F) is not unprecedented. A medieval warming period from 700-1000 A.D. was followed by a cooling period from 1400 to 1800 A.D.
 - ★ Observational measurements by NASA satellites taken over the last seven years indicate that increased CO₂ in the upper atmosphere does not have the "temperature forcing" strength assumed by IPCC science.
 - ★ CO₂ is not a pollutant but is necessary for human life. Photosynthesis by plants would be impossible without CO₂. CO₂ concentrations in the ambient atmosphere have no adverse effects on human health.
- ★ CO₂ is naturally present in the atmosphere at a level of approximately 270 parts per million (ppm). Over the last century, fossil fuel emissions (CO₂) have increased the current ambient level to approximately 390 ppm.
 - ★ OSHA sets the permissible exposure level for CO₂ at 5,000 ppm.
 - ★ Water vapor and clouds constitute 90 percent of the earth's greenhouse gases. CO₂ contributes 3.5 percent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ★ Conduct an independent assessment of climate science conducted and taught in Texas universities.
- ★ Urge federal policymakers to establish an independent, rigorous review of IPCC science.
- ★ Suspend state programs that require or incentivize GHG reduction pending a rigorous review of IPCC science.
- ★ Avoid state and federal mandates to reduce CO₂.

RESOURCES

Global Warming: Man-Made or Natural? by S. Fred Singer, Texas Public Policy Foundation (Sept. 2007) <http://www.texaspolicy.com/pdf/2007-09-PP24-globalwarming-singer.pdf>.

International Symposium on the Greenhouse Controversy, Leipzig, Germany, Nov. 9-10, 1995 & Nov. 10-11, 1997, <http://www.sepp.org/policy%20declarations/leipzig.html>.

Climate Change Reconsidered: A Report of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change by Craig Idso and F. Fred Singer, Lead Authors, The Heartland Institute (2009).

Petition for Reconsideration of Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases Under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act.

Unstoppable Global Warming: Every 1,500 Years by S. Fred Singer and Dennis T. Avery (Rowman and Littlefield: 2006).

Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming by Bjorn Lomborg, Knopf (2007).

The Great Global Warming Blunder by Roy Spencer (Encounter Books, New York: 2010). ★

