

The Week That Was: 2013-05-18 (May 18, 2013)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *"The influence of mankind on climate is trivially true and numerically insignificant."* Richard Lindzen [H/t Tom Sheehan]

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Number of the Week: 76%

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April Fools: The nominations for the April Fools Award are now closed and the candidates will be evaluated by a special committee. We thank all those who submitted their candidates.

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THIS WEEK:

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

Assessing Climate Science: On her web site, Judith Curry posted sections of a March essay by Lennart Bengtsson suggesting that the Climate Establishment, those supporting the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its assertion that human (anthropogenic) carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming (carbon based AGW), should take the current pause in warming to reassess the climate science. Global warming has not occurred as projected by the models. For example, Bengtsson states that about 25 years ago the MPI model in Hamburg projected the warming since the end of the 19th century should be about 1.25° C; but, it has been only about 0.75° C. Since the theory of greenhouse warming asserts that doubling of CO₂ will cause a warming of about 1.1° C, the models used by the IPCC include an amplification of the warming by a positive feedback mechanism. With no atmospheric warming for a decade and no surface warming (according to the IPCC) for 17 years, there are significant problems with the models, which, according to Bengtsson, from 1979 to 2012 forecast an atmospheric warming about three times greater than observations.

As Curry points out, Bengtsson is part of the Climate Establishment, thus his criticisms should be carefully considered by the Establishment. However, thus far, his criticisms appear to be ignored. As Bengtsson states: "The real genuine interest in climate and climate processes is fading away as the interest is confined to the concept of climate typical of the general public or rather I shall say the predominant or politically correct concept of climate."

In her comments Curry expresses her great concern for the overemphasis on, what she calls, climate model taxonomy – the analysis of the outputs of the models which infer catastrophic outcomes far in the future. Here the administrators of the government funding have been severely deficient. The emphasis should be on the validation of the models including rigorous testing of the assumptions. As Curry states, it is far too easy to get research, with no solid testing of assumptions, published in journals such as *Nature* and *Science*, while the hard research problems are ignored. Please see links under Seeking a Common Ground.

Public Enemies? P. Gosselin reports that the German Ministry of the Environment published a 123 page pamphlet on global warming/climate change. "According to the UBA, all the climate doubt stems mainly from the USA. Beginning on page 100, the UBA lists the Americans responsible for "spreading doubt and false information", among them: ExxonMobil, Fred Singer,

Sallie Baliunas and Willie Soon, Frederick Seitz, Joe Barton, Pat Michaels, John Christy, Ross McKittrick and the Heartland Institute. The UBA cites the Union of Concerned Scientists and a one-sided Die Zeit smear from November 2012 as its reliable sources for this information.” Draw your own conclusions. Please see link under Defending the Orthodoxy.

Another 97%: The Climate Establishment seems to be fascinated with the claim that 97% - 98% of the scientists agree ... Previously, both *EOS* and the *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences* published surveys of highly questionable quality that stressed that “97% - 98% of scientists agree...” [TWTW Sep 1 & Sep 8, 2012] Now, *Environmental Research Letters* published a survey of the abstracts by a team headed by John Cook, who blogs on the misnamed web site Skeptical Science. The survey covered the years from 1991 to 2011 and searched on the topics “global climate change” and “global warming.” The survey found 11,944 abstracts, of which 66.4% expressed no position on carbon-based AGW, 32.6% endorsed carbon-based AGW, and 1% rejected AGW or were uncertain about the cause. The 32.6% immediately became “97% of scientists agree ...”

Based on separate reports by the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Research Service, SEPP estimates that the US Federal government has spent about \$140 to \$150 Billion on global warming/climate change issues from FY 1993 to 2012. Little, if any, of this funding went directly to skeptics. It should be noted that the satellite observations of atmospheric temperatures are part of this funding. Further, it would be interesting to see how many of the 32.6% of the papers were based on analysis of the outcomes of IPCC models, which have never been verified and validated, thus are little more than sophisticated speculation. On their web sites, Anthony Watts and Jo Nova have devastating comments regarding the survey.

If anything, the survey demonstrates how much of climate science is of questionable quality. Many of the papers, such as those which analyze the long range results of the models, make the logical error of *petitio principii* – they assume that which must be proven is true. Please see links under Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Cloudy Issue: The abstract of an article in *Meteorology and Atmospheric Physics* states: “Recent measurements of the cosmic ray intensity show that a former decrease with time has been reversed. Thus, even if cosmic rays enhanced cloud production, there would be a small global cooling, not warming.” However, the statement appears to be exactly consistent with the solar-cosmic ray hypothesis and the current lack of warming.

The abstract further states: “...the results do not lead to the conclusion that cosmic rays affect atmospheric clouds significantly, at least if H₂SO₄ is the dominant source of aerosols in the atmosphere.” However, the effectiveness of aerosols in forming clouds is being challenged. Please see links under Commentary: Is the Sun Rising? and Seeking a Common Ground.

EPA: Until late last week, the Republicans on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works have held up the confirmation of Regina (Gina) McCarthy for Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. McCarthy is the EPA assistant administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation, which has issued numerous air quality regulations without revealing the scientific basis for the regulations. The Republicans have taken an (unusual?) principled, stance

demanding transparency on EPA regulation making, for which they have been roundly criticized by the administration and in the general press.

On April 10, they sent a letter outlining their five major concerns (copied from the web site on May 14 with the assessment of the response by the EPA).

1. That the EPA issue new guidance drafted by its Office of General Counsel that clearly outlines: a) standards and procedures to ensure that all official business is conducted solely on official government email accounts; and b) standards and procedures for responding fully, truthfully, and in a timely manner to FOIA requests and Congressional inquiries. EPA's response is a step forward.
2. That all private email accounts of Regina McCarthy are exhaustively reviewed, and that all emails regarding official EPA business are produced unredacted to the committee. If no such emails exist, that an affidavit stating that fact by McCarthy be produced for the committee. In addition, we are asking for transparency on specific documents the committee has obtained in unredacted form. The EPA has been wholly unresponsive.
3. That underlying data used to promulgate Clean Air Act rules be made public so the public can independently examine cost/benefit and other issues. That the EPA release a full set of data files for the American Cancer Society Study; the Harvard Six Cities Study; HEI/Krewski et al. 2009; Laden et al. 2006; Lepeule 2012; and Jerrett 2009. The EPA has been wholly unresponsive.
4. That written assurances be given the committee that the EPA will conduct cost/benefit analyses as required under various executive orders and as required by the CAA, Section 321(a), specifically through issuance of new guidance mandating "whole economy" modeling on major rules. The EPA has been wholly unresponsive.
5. That all petitions for rulemaking or the promulgation of guidance received by the Agency, including by the Office of the Administrator and/or by the Office of General Counsel, be tracked, listed, and made publicly available, including copies of the documents, via readily available links on the Agency's website. This information is to be regularly updated. That all notices of intent to sue received by the Agency, including by the Office of the Administrator and/or by the Office of General Counsel be tracked, listed, and made publicly available, including copies of the documents, via readily available links on the EPA website. This information is to be regularly updated. The EPA has partially responded. [This relates to "sue and settle" with no opportunity for those most affected to challenge.]

More detail can be found at:

http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=F52A53AB-FAA7-77E3-2E57-DF15459B241B

Green Jobs v. Black Gold? For years politicians in many countries have been promising prosperity and high paying green jobs from the development of renewable energy, such as solar and wind power. The green jobs are proving to be as illusionary as the reliability of wind. Largely

unnoticed by Washington, for a decade deep underground hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling of dense shale for oil and natural gas has been creating prosperity and jobs in the regions in which it is occurring. These activities are regulated by the several states and there is no verified instance in which fracturing has resulted in contamination of well water.

Some in Washington are finally taking notice and the Department of Interior has announced proposed regulations for permitting these activities on Federal lands. It remains to be seen how severe the final regulations will be.

Senator Inhofe has an amusing take on the situation and the possibility of Iran building an atomic bomb with his proposed “Iranian Oil Replacement Zones.” Impose a total embargo on the export of oil by Iran and designate Federal lands for the production of 1.25 million barrels of oil per day to offset current Iranian exports. Please see links under Energy Issues, Alternative Energy and Washington’s Control of Energy.

Snowpack: Governor of California Jerry Brown has blamed the wildfires in California on global warming, and the LA Times amplified the concern by reporting the snowpack in the Sierra Mountains is 17% of normal. Official reports in March put it at 67% of normal. However, to prepare for the summer, the critical measurement is how much water in the reservoirs, not how much is in the snowpack. Reports put the level of reservoirs at or above normal thanks to November – December rains. In late February, the largest, Lake Shasta, was at 79%, or 107% of normal.

One of the big problems those who manage the water resources face every year is how much to draw down the reservoirs in the fall to prepare for the spring floods. Accurate weather prediction would be a boon for them. One would think journalists at the LA Times would know how they get their water. The same applies for much of the western US, where all the major rivers are dammed. Please see links under California Dreaming.

400 ppm: It appears that the reports last Friday putting the CO2 concentration in the atmosphere at 400 parts per million may have been premature. Of course, there were many alarmist reports stating it is the highest in human history, which is technically true. However, it was about 3000 ppm 65 million years ago and the ancestors of all current species of plants and animals survived. Please see links under The Magic 400?

Number of the Week – 76%. Bjørn Lomborg estimates that 76% of renewable energy is from biomass burning, and it accounts for about 10% of all energy use. “About 60% of this is wood, twigs, and dung, used by almost three billion people who lack access to modern fuels – and resulting in terrible air pollution and millions of deaths.” Please see link Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy -- Other

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see this week’s TWTW at: www.sepp.org. The articles are at the end of the pdf.

1. From the IRS to the EPA?

By Jason Riley, WSJ, May 15, 2013

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324767004578485020262618766.html?mod=W>
[SJ Opinion MIDDLESecond](#)

2. Europe's Manufacturers Feel Squeezed

As Officials Talk of Rebuilding Industry, Business Leaders See the Real Challenge as Just Holding On

By Stephen Fidler, WSJ, May 16, 2013

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323398204578486910790220942.html>

3. Europe's Green Central Planning

State intervention to protect one industry begets intervention to protect another.

Editorial, WSJ, May 9, 2013

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323744604578472723637628606.html>

4. Understanding Carbon Dioxide and Climate Change

Two letters in response to the Schmitt-Happer essay in defense of CO₂, WSJ, May 16, 2013

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324216004578483381642480020.html?KEYWORDS=Roger+Cohen>

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Commentary: Is the Sun Rising?

A review of the relevance of the 'CLOUD' results and other recent observations to the possible effect of cosmic rays on the terrestrial climate

By Erlykin, Sloan, & Wolfedale, Meteorology and Atmospheric Physics, May 2013 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00703-013-0260-x>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

William Happer on CNBC, Video

Posted by Lubos Motl, The Reference Frame, May 17, 2013

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2013/05/william-happer-on-cnbc.html>

[SEPP Comment: Although Happer was frequently interrupted, the program demonstrates a shift towards giving skeptics an opportunity to speak on CNBC.

Surface Radiation Budget: Where's the Proof?

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, May 13, 2013

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2013/05/surface-radiation-budget-wheres-the-proof/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

German Ministry Of Environment Identifies, Targets American And German Enemy Skeptics In 123-Page Pamphlet

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, May 16, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/05/16/german-ministry-of-environment-identifies-targets-american-and-german-enemy-skeptics-in-123-page-pamphlet/>

Unsettled Science! We need more Grants

By Goeff Brown, NCTCS, May 14, 2013

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2013/05/unsettled-science-we-need-more-grants.html>

A Change in Temperature

By Justin Gillis, NYT, May 13, 2013

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/14/science/what-will-a-doubling-of-carbon-dioxide-mean-for-climate.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130514&_r=0

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Another blow to the ‘extreme weather is climate’ alarmism meme – Australian cyclone activity down

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, May 17, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/05/17/another-blow-to-the-extreme-weather-is-climate-alarmism-meme-australian-cyclone-activity-down/>

Questioning European Green

The EU green hell

Limits to growth ideology a self-fulfilling prophecy

By Benny Peiser, Financial Post, May 13, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2013/05/13/the-eu-green-hell/>

Why British Energy Policy Imperils Manufacturing Industries,

By Jermeý Nicholson, Civitas, May 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.civitas.org.uk/economy/IdeasforEconomicGrowth6.pdf>

[SEPP Comment: Civitas can be considered a pro-growth publication. The charts on 2011 electricity prices for energy intensive industries, by selected countries, and the impact of climate policies on industrial electricity prices in 2011, 2015 and 2020, by selected countries, should give pause to all but the most adamant renewable promoters.]

To eat or heat? That’s the EU’s question

By Licia Corbella, Calgary Herald, May 15, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/Corbella+heat+That+question/8388644/story.html>

Questioning Green Elsewhere

Texas: A Global Green Paragon

By Walter Russell Mead, Via Meadia, May 14, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2013/05/14/texas-a-global-green-paragon/>

[SEPP Comment: Surprising chart of carbon dioxide emissions by various categories.]

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Climate Change: Future Federal Adaptation Efforts Could Better Support Local Infrastructure Decision Makers

By Staff Writers, GAO, Apr 12, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-242>

Problems in the Orthodoxy

Coalition faces an exodus of energy experts as funding for renewables is held up on grounds of cost

Blow to fight against climate change as CO2 in the atmosphere hits record high

By Paul Bignell & Oliver Write, Independent, UK, May 11, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/coalition-faces-an-exodus-of-energy-experts-as-funding-for-renewables-is-held-up-on-grounds-of-cost-8611631.html>

New York Times Conceding Low Sensitivity! Now Talking About “CO2 Quadrupling” To Get Catastrophe Scenarios!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, May 14, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/05/14/new-york-times-conceding-low-sensitivity-now-talking-about-co2-quadrupling-to-get-catastrophe-scenarios/>

The Magic 400?

Carbon dioxide in atmosphere did not break 400 ppm at Hawaii site

By Goeffrey Mohan, LA Times, May 13, 2013 [H/t Climate Depot]

<http://www.latimes.com/news/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-carbon-dioxide-400-20130513,0,7196126.story>

Carbon dioxide levels hit troubling milestone, scientists say

By Brian Vastag and Jason Samenow, Washington Post, May 10, 2013

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/atmospheric-carbon-dioxide-levels-hit-worrisome-milestone/2013/05/10/7cfe450c-b9a4-11e2-b94c-b684dda07add_story.html

Heat-Trapping Gas Passes Milestone, Raising Fears

By Justin Gillis, NYT, May 10, 2013 [H/t Tom Hayward]

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/11/science/earth/carbon-dioxide-level-passes-long-feared-milestone.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130511&r=1&

Climate Change: Swift Political Action Can Avert Crisis

Editorial, Guardian, UK, May 11, 2013

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/may/12/observer-editorial-carbon-dioxide-levels-high>

Lowering Standards

Retrospective prediction of the global warming slowdown in the past decade

By Virginie Guemas, Francisco J. Doblas-Reyes, Isabel Andreu-Burillo & Muhammad Asif, Nature, Apr 7, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1863.html>

[SEPP Comment: Editors of Nature sinking to a new low.]

See WUWT a graph showing the actual predictions:

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/05/14/in-retrospect-we-predicted-global-warming-would-slow/>

Seeking a Common Ground

Lennart Bengtsson on global climate change

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc., May 13, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/05/13/lennart-bengtsson-on-global-climate-change/#more-11674>

Sulfate aerosols cool climate less than assumed

Life span of cloud-forming sulfate particles in the air is shorter than assumed due to a sulfur dioxide oxidation pathway which has been neglected in climate models so far

Press Release Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, May 14, 2013

<http://www.mpg.de/7248507/sulfate-aerosol-clouds-climate>

Link to paper: Enhanced Role of Transition Metal Ion Catalysis During In-Cloud Oxidation of SO₂

By Eliza Harris, et al., Science, May 10, 2013

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/340/6133/727>

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

Hansen’s scandalous interview

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, May 17, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/5/17/hansens-scandalous-interview.html>

Floods could overwhelm London as sea levels rise - unless Thames Barrier is upgraded

Study concludes there is 1 in 20 chance that existing defences would be unable to cope with extreme storm surge

By Steve Connor, Independent, UK, May 14, 2013

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/floods-could-overwhelm-london-as-sea-levels-rise--unless-thames-barrier-is-upgraded-8616204.html>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Scientists say [sic] united on global warming, at odds with public view

By Alister Doyle, Reuters, May 16, 2013

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/16/us-climate-scientists-idUSBRE94F00020130516>

Link to paper: Quantifying the consensus on anthropogenic global warming in the scientific literature

By John Cook, et al, Environmental Research Letters, May 15, 2013

<http://iopscience.iop.org/1748-9326/8/2/024024/article>

Cook’s fallacy “97% consensus” study is a marketing ploy some journalists will fall for

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, May 17, 2013

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/05/cooks-fallacy-97-consensus-study-is-a-marketing-ploy-some-journalists-will-fall-for/#more-28451>

The 97% consensus – a lie of epic proportions.

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, May 17, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/05/17/to-john-cook-it-isnt-hate-its-pity-pity-for-having-such-a-weak-argument-you-are-forced-to-fabricate-in-epic-proportions/>

Al Gore Makes A Crackpot Statement About Dirty Oil

Editorial, IBD, May 10, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/051013-655714-gore-says-no-such-thing-as-ethical-oil.htm>

Climate change 'will make hundreds of millions homeless'

Carbon dioxide levels indicate rise in temperatures that could lead agriculture to fail on entire continents

By Robin McKie, Science Editor, Guardian, UK, May 11, 2013 [H/t Climate Depot]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/may/12/climate-change-expert-stern-displacement?CMP=twtd>

'Fish thermometer' reveals long-standing, global impact of climate change

By Staff Writers, Vancouver, Canada (SPX), May 17, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Fish_thermometer_reveals_long_standing_global_impact_of_climate_change_999.html

Link to PEW: Warming Oceans are reshaping Fisheries

<http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/fact-sheets/warming-oceans-are-reshaping-fisheries-85899475142>

Fishy temperature proxy

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, May 16, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/05/16/fishy-temperature-proxy/>

[SEPP Comment: See comments by Patrick Michaels.]

Washington Post Headline: “Worlds fish have been moving to cooler waters for decades, study finds”

By Bob Tisdale, WUWT, May 16, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/05/16/washington-post-headline-worlds-fish-have-been-moving-to-cooler-waters-for-decades-study-finds/>

Models v. Observations

2013 in Global Temperature: Standstill Continues

By David Whitehouse, GWPF, May 15, 2013

<http://www.thegwgf.org/2013-global-temperature-change/>

Atmospheric Methane Concentrations

By Staff Writers, SPPI & CO2 Science, May 8, 2013

http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/originals/atmospheric_methane.pdf

[SEPP Comment: Except for brief intervals, atmospheric methane increase has been far below what was modeled by the IPCC.]

Measurement Issues

Met Office Hadley Centre and Climatic Research Unit HadCRUT4 and CRUTEM4 Temperature Data Sets Adjusted/Corrected/Updated... Can You Guess The Impact?

By Justthefacts, WUWT, May 12, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/05/12/met-office-hadley-centre-and-climatic-research-unit-hadcrut4-and-crutem4-temperature-data-sets-adjustedcorrectedupdated-can-you-guess-the-impact/>

Changing Weather

2013 Hurricane Season Forecast

By Joe Bastardi, WeatherBell Analytics, Mar 30, 2013

<http://www.weatherbell.com/2013-Hurricane-Season-Forecast>

[SEPP Comment: Predicting a tough season along the eastern seaboard of the US, similar to the 1950's due to a cold PDO and a warm AMO.]

Lack of Major Hurricanes Keeps Setting Records

By James Taylor, Heartland, May 7, 2013

NCDC on April and January to April

By Staff Writer, ICECAP, May 16, 2013

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/in-the-news/ncdc_on_april_and_january_to_april/

Still waiting for spring in Minnesota

By Staff Writer, ICECAP, May 12, 2013

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/political-climate/still_waiting_for_spring_in_minnesotaitce_invades_lake_homes1/

A New Chapter for U.S. Numerical Weather Prediction

By Cliff Mass, His Blog, May 15, 2013

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2013/05/a-new-chapter-for-us-numerical-weather.html>

[SEPP Comment: A benefit from Sandy! How well will they use it?]

Decline in snow cover spells trouble for many plants, animals

By Staff Writers, Madison WI (SPX), May 10, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Decline_in_snow_cover_spells_trouble_for_many_plants_animals_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Contradicting this article on diminishing snow cover, last week Joe D'Aleo stated the snow cover for the past winter, Nov to April, was the greatest since satellite measurements permitted accurate measurements.]

This Past Winter Ignored Global Warming Hype

By Art Horn, Energy Tribune, May 15, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/76868/this-past-winter-ignored-global-warming-hype#sthash.EQjbP9iD.dpbs>

Warmer springs causing loss of snow cover throughout the Rocky Mountains

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX). May 16, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Warmer_springs_causing_loss_of_snow_cover_throughout_the_Rocky_Mountains_999.html

Link to paper: Regional patterns and proximal causes of the recent snowpack decline in the Rocky Mountains, U.S.

By Pederson, Betancourt, and McCabe, Geophysical Research Letters, May 12, 2013

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/grl.50424/abstract>

[SEPP Comment: Assumes late 20th century warming is anthropogenic, yet discusses cycles such as the 1930s.]

Changing Climate

Is cooling worse than we thought?

By Joe Bastardi, Weatherbell.com, May 11, 2013
http://icecap.us/index.php/go/new-and-cool/is_cooling_worse_than_we_thought1/

Changing Seas

Ice melt, sea level rise, to be less severe than feared: study

By Alister Doyle, Reuters, May 14, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://news.yahoo.com/ice-melt-sea-level-rise-less-severe-feared-180053857.html>

[SEPP Comment: The claim of an accelerated rate of rise no longer applies.]

Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

Temperature change on the Antarctic Peninsula linked to the tropical Pacific

By Qinghua Ding* and Eric J. Steig, Journal of Climate, 2013

<http://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/abs/10.1175/JCLI-D-12-00729.1?journalCode=clim>

World's melting glaciers making large contribution to sea rise

By Staff Writers, Boulder CO (SPX), May 17, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Worlds_melting_glaciers_making_large_contribution_to_sea_rise_999.html

Unable to find link to paper

[SEPP Comment: Now that it is becoming clear that the contribution to sea level rise from Greenland and the Antarctic has been greatly overstated.]

The effect of climate change on iceberg production by Greenland glaciers

By Staff Writers, London, UK (SPX), May 13, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/The_effect_of_climate_change_on_iceberg_production_by_Greenland_glaciers_999.html

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Agriculture and Livestock Remain Major Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), May 10, 2013

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Agriculture_and_Livestock_Remain_Major_Sources_of_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_999.html

Collapse Of Bee Colonies Is Latest Target For Anti-Pesticide Groups

By Paul Driessen, IBD, May 13, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials-perspective/051313-655865-green-groups-go-after-pesticides-to-save-bees.htm?p=full>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

One Hundred and One Years of Netherlands' Windstorms

Reference: Cusack, S. 2013. A 101 year record of windstorms in the Netherlands. *Climatic Change* 116: 693-704.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/may/14may2013a1.html>

U.S. Climate Change and Its 20th-Century Biological Consequence

Reference: Dobrowski, S.Z., Abatzoglou, J., Swanson, A.K., Greenberg, J.A., Mynsberge, A.R., Holden, Z.A. and Schwartz, M.K. 2013. The climate velocity of the contiguous United States during the 20th century. *Global Change Biology* 19: 241-251.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/may/14may2013a3.html>

How Well Do Climate Models Mimic Atmospheric Teleconnections?

Reference: Handorf, D. and Dethloff, K. 2012. How well do state-of-the-art atmosphere-ocean general circulation models reproduce atmospheric teleconnection patterns? *Tellus A* 64: org/10.3402/tellusa.v64i0.19777.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/may/15may2013a2.html>

Is There a Human Influence on Extreme Temperatures in China?

Reference: Wen, Q.H., Zhang, X., Xu, Y. and Wang, B. 2013. Detecting human influence on extreme temperatures in China. *Geophysical Research Letters* 40: 1-6, doi:10.1002/grl.50285.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/may/15may2013a4.html>

In summary the conclusion by Wen et al. that "human influence is detectable on extreme temperatures in China" appears to be based on model-driven analysis that does not represent important observed realities, that large-scale circulation changes have led to fewer rain/cloud days, and subsequently, to extreme warm temperatures. These large-scale circulation changes are governed by several parameters few, if any of which, include anthropogenic (CO₂-induced) warming. As such, the conclusion that "increasing extreme temperatures over China are linked primarily to anthropogenic warming" is not well substantiated.

Litigation Issues

Power Plant Global Warming Suit Dismissed by Federal Court

By Sonal Patel, Power News, May 16, 2013

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5613.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2673662&hq_l=7&hq_v=5e660500d0

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Why You Just May Come to Like a Carbon Tax

By Ike Brannon, Real Clear Energy, May 14, 2013 [H/t Cooler Heads]

http://www.realclearenergy.org/articles/2013/05/14/why_you_just_may_come_to_like_a_carbon_tax_107016.html

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Obama administration unveils fracking rules

By Ben Geman, The Hill, May 16, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/300231-interior-to-unveil-revised-draft-fracking-rules>

[SEPP Comment: Washington cannot continue to ignore the great success of deep underground hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling of dense shale.]

EPA waives fee requests for friendly groups, denies conservative groups

By Michal Conger, Washington Examiner, May 14, 2013

http://washingtonexaminer.com/epa-waives-fee-requests-for-friendly-groups-denies-conservative-groups/article/2529609?custom_click=rss

Energy Issues – Non-US

New Renewable Energy Technologies: a monstrous boondoggle?

By Leyland Consultants, NZCSC, May 9, 2013

http://nzclimatescience.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=940&Itemid=1

[SEPP Comment: An overview of wind, solar, wave, and tide power with estimates of cost as compared with nuclear power. Except for isolated areas, the renewable forms of generation would not exist without government subsidies.]

Oily Dirt

By Randall Morck, Project Syndicate, May 15, 2013

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/how-obama-should-approve-the-keystone-xl-pipeline-by-randall-morck>

[SEPP Comment: Carbon dioxide sequestration has not been demonstrated on a commercial scale and will trigger the protest by greens as demonstrated by Yucca mountain nuclear waste storage.]

The World is Not Running Out of Oil – but Europe Is

By Peter Glover, Energy Tribune, May 14, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/76816/the-world-is-not-running-out-of-oil-but-europe-is#sthash.Wprd07JC.dpbs>

Energy Issues -- US

To Defeat Iran, Drill For Energy At Home

By Jim Inhofe, IBD, May 10, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials-viewpoint/051013-655687-to-defeat-iran-drill-for-american-energy.htm>

Obama's Green Jobs Promise Carries A High Cost

Editorial, IBD, May 13, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/051313-655875-obama-green-jobs-cost-millions-each.htm>

U.S. pumps up oil production as demand rises in developing world

By Patrice Hill, Washington Times, May 14, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/may/14/us-oil-surge-transforms-markets-undercuts-opec/>

Washington's Control of Energy

The President's Ruinous Energy Policy: Once More with Feeling

By Jeffrey Folks, American Thinker, May 15, 2013

http://www.americanthinker.com/2013/05/the_presidents_ruinous_energy_policy_once_more_with_feeling.html

Keystone Pipeline Needs to be Built for America

By Michael Economides, Energy Tribune, May 13, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/76753/keystone-pipeline-needs-to-be-built-for-america#sthash.UK7bLYZ.dpbs>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Oil Boom Raises North Dakota Wages

By Staff Writers, NCPA, May 14, 2013

http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=23171&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DPD

Link to articles: How Oil Made Working-Class North Dakota a Whole Lot Richer
Employment in the drilling region jumped by 35 percent, and average pay leaped by half

By Jordan Weissman, The Atlantic, May 2, 2013 [H/t NCPA]

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/05/how-oil-made-working-class-north-dakota-a-whole-lot-richer/275506/>

There's Oil Flowing Again in Texas: Corpus Christi's Oil & Gas Boom

By Tim Daiss & Michael Economides, Energy Tribune, [No Date]

<http://www.energytribune.com/76942/theres-oil-flowing-again-in-texas-corpus-christis-oil-gas-boom#sthash.6u3PaiHH.dpbs>

Oil trains -- pipelines on wheels -- headed to Northwest terminals and refineries from North Dakota fracking

By Scott Learn, The Oregonian, May 13, 2013 [H/t Gordon Fulks]

http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2013/05/oil_trains_-_pipelines_on_whe.html

Industry chief says EU's gas sector is in a 'disastrous' state

By Staff Writers, Reuters, May 15, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.euractiv.com/energy/industry-chief-eu-gas-sector-dis-news-519741>

Study: Gas 'fracking' in Arkansas not affecting groundwater

By Staff Writers, Durham, N.C. (UPI), May 15, 2013

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Study_Gas_fracking_in_Arkansas_not_affecting_groundwater_999.html

Return of King Coal?

AES Corp. to Retire 990 MW of Coal Capacity on Environmental Rule Concerns

By Sonal Patel, Power News, May 16, 2013

http://www.powernews.com/POWERnews/5615.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2673662&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e660500d0

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

Wind farms get pass on eagle deaths

By Staff Writers, AP, May 14, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://townhall.com/news/politics-elections/2013/05/14/ap-impact-wind-farms-get-pass-on-eagle-deaths-n1594298>

"What it boils down to is this: If you electrocute an eagle, that is bad, but if you chop it to pieces, that is OK," said Tim Eicher, a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement agent based in Cody.

Wind Performing Badly

By Lisa Linowes, Master Resource, May 16, 2013
<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/05/wind-performing-badly/#more-25620>

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

Hugging a Burning Tree

By Bjørn Lomborg, Project Syndicate, May 15, 2013

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/resisting-the-biomass-temptation-by-bj-rn-lomborg>
[SEPP Comment: Disagree with the statement that the industrial revolution caused climate change.]

It’s been tried. Now What?

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, May 14, 2013

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2013/05/14/its-been-tried-now-what/>

Biofuel Promises,

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, May 17, 2013

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2013/05/17/biofuel-promises/>

California Dreaming

Californians are paying ridiculous subsidies for electric cars

By Bjørn Lomborg, WUWT, May 12, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/05/12/lomborg-californians-are-paying-ridiculous-subsidies-for-electric-cars/>

Jerry Brown blames climate change for state's early fire season

By Anthony York, LA Times, May 6, 2013 [H/t Gordon Fulks]

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/political/la-me-pc-fire-jerry-brown-global-climate-change-environment-wildfire-sparks-camarillo-20130506%2c0%2c6218955.story>

Sierra Snowpack at Record Low for January, February

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News, Mar 1, 2013

http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2013/3/1/sierra_snowpack_at_record_low_for.htm

Environmental Industry

Big Green's anti-fracking operatic chorus hits false notes

By Ron Arnold, Washington Examiner, May 9, 2013

http://washingtonexaminer.com/ron-arnold-big-greens-anti-fracking-operatic-chorus-hits-false-notes/article/2529276?utm_source=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest%20-%2005/14/2013&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest

Other Scientific News

And you thought the Sun just sat there burning

By Andrew Malcolm, IBD, May 12, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/politics-andrew-malcolm/051213-655583-nasa-time-lapse-video-three-years-in-the-life-of-our-sun.htm?p=full>

[SEPP Comment: A 3 minute video capturing solar change over 3 years.]

Microbes capture, store, and release nitrogen to feed reef-building coral

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), May 16, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Microbes_capture_store_and_release_nitrogen_to_feed_reef_building_coral_999.html

News in Brief: Warming may not release Arctic carbon

Element could stay locked in soil, 20-year study suggests

By Erin Wayman, Science News, May 15, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/350415/description/News_in_Brief_Warming_may_not_release_Arctic_carbon

Link to paper: Long-term warming restructures Arctic tundra without changing net soil carbon storage

By Sistla, et al., Nature, May 15, 2013

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nature12129.html>

Other News that May Be of Interest

China emperors ruled via false prophecies: Xinhua

By Staff Writers, Beijing (AFP), May 13, 2013

http://www.spacewar.com/reports/China_emperors_ruled_via_false_prophecies_Xinhua_999.html

America's New Manufacturing Boomtowns

By Joel Kotkin, Forbes, May 15, 2013

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2013/05/15/americas-manufacturing-boomtowns/>

US urban trees store carbon, provide billions in economic value

By Staff Writers, Science Blog, May 8, 2013

<http://scienceblog.com/62894/us-urban-trees-store-carbon-provide-billions-in-economic-value/>

Link to the paper, Carbon storage and sequestration by trees in urban and community areas of the United States

By Nowak, et al., USDA, Apr 15, 2013

<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/24240>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Humans may have driven ancient mastodons into 'civil war'

By Staff Writers, Ann Arbor, Mich. (UPI), May 7, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Humans_may_have_driven_ancient_mastodons_into_civil_war_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Trophy hunters with high powered rifles shoot the largest elephants from a distance. Therefore, early hunters with primitive weapons that require short distances and close contact must have killed the largest mastodons – what logic!]

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ARTICLES:

1. From the IRS to the EPA?

By Jason Riley, WSJ, May 15, 2013

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324767004578485020262618766.html?mod=W>
SJ Opinion MIDDLESecond

Gina McCarthy, President Obama's pick to replace Lisa Jackson as head of the Environmental Protection Agency, is awaiting Senate confirmation. And Republicans have taken heat for asking Ms. McCarthy too many questions about her plans for the EPA. My concern is that they haven't asked her enough questions.

The Washington Examiner reported Tuesday that the EPA under Ms. Jackson has a history of favoring groups that share the agency's political agenda. "Conservative groups seeking information from the Environmental Protection Agency have been routinely hindered by fees normally waived for media and watchdog groups, while fees for more than 90 percent of requests from green groups were waived," according to the report.

Government agencies like the EPA typically waive so-called Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request fees for groups disseminating information for public benefit, but it's up to the agency to decide whether a fee-waiver is justified. At the EPA, fees were waived for liberal environmental groups like Greenpeace and EarthJustice almost always. Meanwhile, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a free-market think tank, "had its requests denied 93 percent of the time. One request was denied because CEI failed to express its intent to disseminate the information to the general public. The rest were denied because the agency said CEI 'failed to demonstrate that the release of the information requested significantly increases the public understanding of government operations or activities.'"

This is important because the White House and Democrats have increasingly used regulators at the EPA to advance a green agenda that they can't get through Congress. The Examiner story suggests that the administration is also using agency regulators to tamp down criticism, the kind of activity that's at the heart of the IRS scandal. If the fee waiver is denied, that is usually the end of the FOIA request, since many groups don't have the resources to pay for the documents they are requesting.

"Appointing Ms. Jackson's successor is among the most important personnel moves for President Barack Obama in his second term because the top environmental regulator has broad executive powers in an era of legislative gridlock," wrote The Wall Street Journal in December after Ms. Jackson announced that she was stepping down. "The next EPA leader is likely to write and enforce regulations affecting power plants, factories, and oil and natural-gas drilling rigs across the country. The EPA could look at regulating hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and is already moving ahead with limits on greenhouse-gas emissions from coal-fired power plants."

Ms. McCarthy worked under Ms. Jackson at the EPA as an assistant administrator, and Republicans have sent her more than 650 questions as part of the confirmation process. Sen. David Vitter of Louisiana, who has led the GOP opposition to her nomination, says that Ms. McCarthy has not been asked specifically about the agency's uneven handling of FOIA requests but that he plans to do so.

"We know the Obama EPA has completely mismanaged FOIA, but granting fee waivers for their friends in the far-left environmental community, while simultaneously blocking conservative-

leaning groups from gaining access to information, is really no different than the IRS disaster," Mr. Vitter told me in an email Tuesday.

2. Europe's Manufacturers Feel Squeezed

As Officials Talk of Rebuilding Industry, Business Leaders See the Real Challenge as Just Holding On

By Stephen Fidler, WSJ, May 16, 2013

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323398204578486910790220942.html>

Business leaders from across Europe met here Thursday to discuss—among other things—a proposal from the European Commission to "reindustrialize Europe." The idea is to raise the share of industry in the region's economic output to 20% by 2020, from 15.6% now.

Some executives at the annual European Business Summit, however, viewed the target as not much more than a vain hope. The real challenge they say is to prevent further deindustrialization of the continent.

The problem faced by European industry derives from more than the fact that, as new figures this week emphasized, their home market is mired in the longest recession since World War II. It is that many companies are stuck in a competitive vise.

On the one hand, they face challenges from U.S. industry, revitalized by falling energy costs thanks largely to the successful exploitation of shale gas. On the other, there are the formidable Chinese exporters supported by bountiful cheap government credit and low-price inputs.

Trade tensions between the European Union and China have mounted over the past few weeks with a decision by the commission, the EU executive, to impose heavy tariffs on Chinese solar-panel imports and to prepare an unfair-trade investigation into two Chinese network equipment suppliers, Huawei Technologies Co. and ZTE Corp. 000063.SZ +1.37%

While there is a debate over the wisdom of confronting China, some executives at least believe that over time China will become a more conventional competitor as it responds to unfair trade cases.

But on energy, companies are confronting a real conundrum. They face among the highest energy prices in the world and the single EU market in energy—which advocates say could offer a real boost to European productivity—is little more than an aspiration.

Meanwhile, the continent's efforts to curb carbon emissions are viewed as further hampering the competitiveness of EU companies and have led to unintended consequences.

According to the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, the EU was responsible in 2011 for just 11% of global carbon-dioxide emissions, compared with 29% for China and 16% for the U.S.

Though part of the recent decline is accounted for by recession, some industrialists argue that the figures show that the EU can do little more to contribute to further reductions in carbon emissions. The big gains lie elsewhere.

Indeed, they say high energy prices are encouraging the closure in Europe of energy-intensive plants—for example, those manufacturing steel or aluminum—in favor of imports from outside the region from manufacturing facilities that sometimes are less energy-efficient.

This process, known as carbon leakage, may increase overall global carbon emissions since more efficient plants in Europe are closed in favor of less efficient plants outside. The effect of confused EU policy targets for energy security, carbon emissions and renewable energy sources has been to increase coal consumption in Europe at the expense of lower-carbon natural gas, said Helge Lund, chief executive officer of Norway's Statoil.

For some, the idea of reindustrializing Europe sounds like old-fashioned thinking. Pascal Lamy, the departing head of the World Trade Organization, told the conference that services were increasingly embedded into production chains. "The frontier between goods and services is becoming totally blurred," he said.

Yet, some industrialists point out that it is those economies that have protected their industrial base, led by Germany, that have been the most resilient in the face of the continent's recession. Each industrial job supports two in services, said Jürgen Thumann, president of Business Europe, a business-lobby group.

The news isn't all bad. Leif Johansson, chairman of Ericsson and chairman of the European Round Table of Industrialists, said economic reforms in parts of Southern Europe are beginning to bear fruit. Receding fears of a euro breakup will also bring forward investments that have been put on hold, he said.

But the energy dilemma remains and is moving up the agenda of European governments. EU leaders will be discussing it at a summit in Brussels next week.

Herman Van Rompuy, who presides over EU summits, pointed out that real energy prices in Europe had increased 27% between 2005 and early 2012, more than in most other industrialized economies. By 2035, the continent's dependence on foreign oil and gas imports is forecast to exceed 80%. "This will have an impact on the competitiveness of our companies, and of our economy as a whole," he told the conference.

He suggested a policy with four elements: energy efficiency, modernizing infrastructure, diversifying energy sources and pushing to integrate Europe's national energy markets into one.

Creating a true single market in energy could save buyers an annual €30 billion (\$38.7 billion) in gas and €35 billion for electricity, he said. The resultant reduction in energy bills would provide a significant boost to productivity.

Up until now, national governments, encouraged by their big energy companies, have blocked a single market in energy. Their willingness finally to act in this area will be an interesting signal of their determination to claw back their economies' lost competitiveness.

3. Europe's Green Central Planning

State intervention to protect one industry begets intervention to protect another.

Editorial, WSJ, May 9, 2013

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323744604578472723637628606.html>

The European Union looks set to join the U.S. in imposing punitive duties on imports of solar panels from China. It's the typical start of a trade war, but it's also a parable about the costs and complications of the "green economy."

As reported in this newspaper, EU trade chief Karel De Gucht this week proposed tariffs ranging from 37.3% to 67.9% on solar panels and panel components sold by Chinese firms. In the last few years, Chinese imports have come to represent 80% of Europe's market for photovoltaic equipment. European makers, many of them German, have been squeezed at a time when demand in Europe for solar power is booming.

But it's worth remembering why this market is booming in the first place. Since 2000, Germany has subsidized green power via "feed-in tariffs," which guarantee renewable-energy producers an above-market price for their electricity output. The cost of these subsidies is covered by a surcharge on household energy bills. Other EU countries, including Spain and the U.K., have adopted the German model for their green power initiatives.

The amount of Germany's feed-in tariffs is supposed to decrease every month as renewable-energy volume increases and green power gradually becomes more competitive with fossil fuels. But that's contingent on renewable-energy producers requiring less government support to stay in business. So the least the Commission could do is keep costs low for these firms and individuals.

No such luck. Duties on Chinese panel imports will mean higher up-front costs for solar generation in Germany, which could in turn mean higher electricity bills for households and businesses if Berlin decides to compensate energy producers by increasing feed-in tariff payments.

Import tariffs will, however, be a fillip for those beleaguered European photovoltaic-panel makers. The Bonn-based firm SolarWorld SWV.XE -1.27% helped launch the antidumping complaints that led to duties last year by the U.S. Commerce Department and now by the European Commission.

SolarWorld is embroiled in a major debt restructuring and is petitioning Qatar for a lifeline. The company's stock closed up 9% after Wednesday's reports that the tariffs will be in place by next month.

The protectionist outburst comes at an awkward moment for Europe. Officials in Brussels and Berlin are urging the Continent's governments to improve their economic competitiveness—while insulating a particular European industry, a German-dominated one no less, from competition. It's

becoming clear that Europe's "green economy" can be sustained only through constant state intervention, with subsidies and protections for one industry leading to subsidies and protections for others as the market distortions pile up.

There's a name for this sort of economic policy. It's called central planning.

4. Understanding Carbon Dioxide and Climate Change

Two letters in response to the Schmitt-Happer essay in defense of CO₂, WSJ, May 16, 2013
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324216004578483381642480020.html?KEYWORDS=Roger+Cohen>

By Roger Cohen, Letter, WSJ, May 16, 2013

Kudos to Drs. Schmitt and Happer for their illuminating exposition on the role of atmospheric carbon dioxide in the plant world, thereby setting us straight on this much maligned molecule. It effectively counters attempts to brand CO₂ as a "pollutant," the propaganda photos showing chimneys belching smoke (never mind that CO₂ is odorless and colorless) and the bizarre government-created carbon markets that benefit a few rent seekers and speculators while costing much in economic growth and jobs.

Moreover, the beneficial effects of CO₂ cited by the authors are much more than theory. Continuing satellite observations show that increasing atmospheric CO₂ has been literally greening the planet. Measurements over the past 30 years record a major increase in vegetation across the world's land area, including equatorial regions such as the Amazon rain forest. A quantity called the "Normalized Difference Vegetation Index" is used to monitor plant growth, vegetation cover and biomass production. It shows a considerable net "greening" of the Earth, due largely to increased atmospheric CO₂.

The climate-change field has been dominated by poor science feeding a reinforcing political process for much too long. The world has stopped warming for close to two decades now, forcing alarmists to scurry around for explanations and excuses. There are no trends in extreme weather events, despite the astrology that now feeds the attempts to make everything that happens fit the dogma.

We should bear these realities in mind when politicians, rent-seeking corporations and grant-seeking academics try to tell us otherwise.

DISAGREE:

By James Kasting and Katherine Freeman, Penn State, Letter WSJ, May 16, 2013

In the op-ed "In Defense of Carbon Dioxide" (May 9), Harrison H. Schmitt and William Happer argue that higher carbon dioxide concentrations will be beneficial because they will encourage growth and increase the efficiency of certain C₃ crops, including wheat and rice. But other studies have shown that the beneficial effects of CO₂ may be more than outweighed by decreases in soil moisture and increases in heat stress and insect pests associated with future climate change. Furthermore, weeds which are C₃ plants may outcompete C₄ crops like corn in a CO₂-rich world. Higher CO₂ isn't likely to solve the problem of world hunger.

Mr. Happer, a physicist by training, should know that increases in atmospheric CO2 will warm the climate—the only question is how strong the climate feedbacks will be. And it is simply not true that climate warming has little correlation with carbon dioxide concentrations. The correlation is strong both in the recent past and throughout Earth's history, showing that the models are accurate or may even underestimate the warming from CO2.

Speaking of paleoclimate, the authors note that atmospheric CO2 concentrations more than 65 million years ago could have been in excess of 3,000 parts per million, but they fail to point out that there were no polar ice caps at that time and that sea level was tens of meters higher than today, submerging up to 20% of the present continental area during parts of the Cretaceous period.

Fertilization of plant growth isn't the only anticipated consequence of higher atmospheric CO2 levels. We have the capacity to move the Earth to a completely different and unwelcome climate state.

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