

The Week That Was: 2017-11-25 (November 25, 2017)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

Quote of the Week. *"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day."*—Albert Einstein

Number of the Week: Reducing Zero to Zero

THIS WEEK:

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

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Dear Reader of The Week That Was,

The Science & Environmental Policy Project (SEPP) is a 501-c-3 organization, incorporated in Virginia. Its Federal I.D. Number is 54-1645372 and donations are US tax deductible. Support for SEPP comes entirely from private donations; we do not solicit support from industry or government.

Therefore, we can honestly claim that we are not beholden to anyone and that our writings are clear from any outside influence.

SEPP is frugal: no fancy offices, no employees, no salaries, etc. The total operating budget is less than one-half of the compensation paid to a single executive in many environmental organizations.

Yet, we continue to be very productive.

In collaboration with like-minded groups, we produce hard-hitting comments for the record and provide scientific testimony on proposed Federal climate and energy policy. We are actively attempting to eliminate or change the EPA's endangerments finding, which lacks hard evidence supporting it.

In 2007, SEPP established NIPCC (Non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change) to respond to the false claims of the UN-IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), and its followers, that use of fossil fuels, and CO₂ emissions, will lead to climate disasters.

All the NIPCC reports and their Summaries are available at www.NIPCCreport.org. In 2013, the Chinese Academy of Sciences translated and published a book based on two NIPCC reports and organized a Workshop in Beijing.

The Heartland Institute, the publisher, has organized well-attended sessions of the International Conference on Climate Change, featuring many of the 50+ NIPCC authors.

Dr. S. Fred Singer, our founder and chairman, announced plans to retire as Chairman of the Board. We are seeking a suitable replacement. Ken Haapala continues as president and oversees general operations.

To donate to SEPP by check please make it payable to SEPP and send it to the address below: or **To donate to SEPP by credit card or pay pal:** Please go to www.SEPP.org, hit the donate button on the bottom of the page, then hit the donate button on the next page and follow the instructions.

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Hypothesis Testing: Following up on work by the late Bob Carter, retired Australian chemist Ian Flanigan tests the hypothesis that the observed warming since the onset of industrialization is entirely natural against the alternative that it is due to anthropogenic carbon-dioxide emissions. Note, that due to differences in training, there are differences in terminology used between the Australians and Americans, but not in procedure. The testing of hypotheses is critical if one is to assert, as the leaders of NASA-GISS (Goddard Institute for Space Studies) asserted: CO₂ is the control knob of the earth's temperatures.

Using widely accepted temperature data from the central Greenland ice cap and atmospheric CO₂ data from the EPICA Dome C ice core in Antarctic, Flanigan shows that there is little relationship between CO₂ concentrations and air temperatures over the last 11,000 years.

“From these data we cannot ascribe any cause to the current warming event, nor is it necessary to do so. We simply observe that the data are seen to be consistent with the null hypothesis that the modern warming is due to natural causes, and inconsistent with the alternative hypothesis that this warming is due to carbon dioxide. We do not need to understand the details of the operation of the climate system, which so occupies the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).”

There is no logical reason, physically demonstrated, that shows that the relationship between CO₂ and temperatures suddenly changed in the last 150 years. Decades of experiments in several laboratories demonstrated that the relationship between CO₂ and atmospheric temperatures is weak and logarithmic. Any influence of CO₂ may be hidden by natural variation.

Flanigan addresses possible criticism that the data above are limited to ice cores by referencing comprehensive evidence offered by Ian Plimer in “Heaven and Earth, Global Warming: The Missing Science.”

Further, there is no logical reason that a new relationship may suddenly appear, that has not appeared in the past. For example, the 1979 report by the Climate Research Board, “Charney Report,” published by the National Academy of Sciences, contained the speculation that the modest warming from CO₂ would be greatly amplified by an increased warming from water

vapor, the dominant greenhouse gas. The report offered no data supporting the speculation, nor are any reported. The net effect, if it exists, is likely weak as well.

Now, we have government entities such as the IPCC and the US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) and government sponsored researchers promoting other ideas as substitutes for the lack of clear CO2 caused warming. These ideas include sudden sea level rise, coral bleaching, famine, etc. As Flanigan discusses:

“Although there is endless reporting and commentary about the danger of global warming, there is no mention of the data supporting the anthropogenic global-warming hypothesis because no such data exist. Discussion always diverts to such matters as modelling, sea-level changes, weather events, reef bleaching, melting ice caps or any of a myriad other phenomena in which changes have been observed.

“If you study nature you will always observe change, but these changes must be seen in their proper context. All of these changing phenomena may (or may not) be signs of warming. But signs of warming are precisely what one would expect to see at the peak of a warming cycle and they tell us absolutely nothing about the cause of the warming. To test the hypothesis that it is carbon dioxide that is causing the warming we must turn to carbon dioxide and temperature data: and they show that whatever the cause of the warming is, it is not carbon dioxide, whose warming effect, such as it is, is clearly outweighed by natural factors.

“Any attempt to imply that rises in sea level, for example, are a sign that carbon-dioxide emissions are the cause of global warming is bogus science (there are other reasons why sea levels might rise). It is effectively saying that the hypothesis that carbon dioxide is causing global warming is being supported by another hypothesis: that sea-level rises are due to global warming, which is due to carbon dioxide. Or that the bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef is due to the warming of the oceans, which is due to global warming, which is due to carbon dioxide.

“You cannot support a hypothesis with another hypothesis or even a series of hypotheses. That is bogus science. The test of the global-warming hypothesis can only be made against the carbon-dioxide and temperature data.” [Boldface added.]

Further, he writes: *“Those who claim that carbon dioxide causes dangerous global warming need to produce data that force the rejection of the null hypothesis: that the warming is due to natural causes. This has not been done and, in the absence of those data, the global-warming hypothesis must be regarded as nothing but a theory based on a premise that is known to be false.”* See links under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

A Bit of History: Australian Bernie Lewin, who has carefully tracked the founding and financing of the IPCC, authored a new book, which complements the essay by Ian Flanigan, “Searching for the Catastrophe Signal: The Origins of The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.”

According to government reports, the US government has spent over \$40 billion on Climate Science, including helping finance the IPCC, and over \$100 billion on “fighting climate change,” yet it has failed to find hard evidence that CO2 is causing dangerous global warming. Lewin’s new book may help explain why.

On his web site, 'Enthusiasm, Scepticism and Science,' Lewin has thought provoking essays on the origins and impacts of global warming alarmism including the icon of the alarmists, “the distinct human fingerprint,” and the icon of the skeptics, a graph in the first IPCC report, the source of which was not known. Also, Lewin discusses how the alarmists tried to capture the work of H.H. Lamb, largely successfully, and how the entry of economists increased the “costs” by focusing on the “economic and social dimensions” of global warming / climate change. This joined the sustainability concepts that are now popular.

In an essay posted on WUWT, Lewin discusses the sentence: “The balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate.” This sentence, along with the removal of skeptical passages, prompted the late Frederick Seitz, who was Chairman of SEPP, to call the IPCC process a “disturbing corruption of the peer-review process” and misleading to the public.

Lewin’s essay suggests that the involvement of the US in the misleading process was significantly broader than just Ben Santer, who added the sentence after the peer-review. It implies that there was an orchestrated campaign to alter the scientific findings. If so, it will be valuable to discover how government entities misled the public, in hopes of preventing similar occurrences in the future. See links under Challenging the Orthodoxy – The IPCC History.

Personal Attacks: In 2011, Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway came out with “Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming.” The book attacks Fredrick Seitz and S. Fred Singer, then the SEPP president, as well as two other distinguished scientists. At the time, only Singer was alive. Well received by some, the book has flaws similar to those in the claims for carbon dioxide-caused global warming, as discussed by Flanigan, above – lots of accusations, but little physical evidence.

Writing in WUWT, Russell Cook examines some of the background to this book. See link under Communicating Better to the Public – Go Personal.

Mann, Again? Last week’s TWTW linked to an essay by Roger Pielke, Jr., suggesting that the litigation between Mark Jacobson and Christopher Clack on the capability of the world to obtain all its energy from 100% renewables does not serve the interests of science. Pielke mentioned Mr. Mann’s litigation against a fellow scientist and several journalists as an example of deviance from norms as articulated by sociologist Robert Merton.

This week, one of Mr. Mann’s attorneys had a letter in the *Wall Street Journal* objecting to Pielke’s observations and claiming: “*Mr. Mann’s lawsuit doesn’t squelch scientific debate as his case isn’t about science but rather the latest installment in a smear campaign to destroy his reputation through verifiably false and malicious assertions of fact about his professional conduct.*”

In the comments section following the letter, Ken Haapala posted:

“A Washington newspaper published an interview with Mr. Mann, who claimed that the distinguished scientist who is Chairman of the organization of which I am president, received money from Monsanto (chemical), Philip Morris (tobacco) and Texaco (petroleum). No evidence was presented, nor is there any evidence. Unfortunately, the costs of litigation are so extreme, that we cannot afford to litigate against Mr. Mann to stop such accusations. It would be an enormous waste of resources.” See Article # 2.

Antarctic Melting: Another study was published on temperature reconstructions of the Antarctic going to year 0 CE. Only the Antarctic Peninsula showed any unusual warming in recent years, above natural variation. Of course, the authors included a comment:

“However, projected warming of the Antarctic continent during the 21st century may soon see significant and unusual warming develop across other parts of the Antarctic continent.”

No evidence, just speculation is required. Steve McIntyre remarks on the failure to publish complete records of temperature reconstructions of Antarctica:

“It astonishes me that there is no technical journal article on Law Dome d18O data either for the Holocene or for the past 2000 years. Van Ommen planned to publish the data according to my earliest correspondence with him (2004). It’s disquieting that longer Holocene data for such an important site remains unpublished.” [d18-O is the changes in the isotope of oxygen with an atomic weight of 18. The ratios of 16-O and 18-O are used to reconstruct temperatures. See links under Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

Tesla Battery: Tesla has announced that it has completed its well-publicized battery in South Australia, which may lessen future black-outs from over reliance on wind and solar. The writers at Energy Matters are not impressed, and estimated what is needed for a grid-scale storage for the wind and solar generation in the UK. One of the writers, Euan Mearns states:

“In order to deliver 4.6 GW uniform and firm RE supply throughout the year, from 26 GW of installed capacity, requires 1.8 TWh of storage. We show that this is both thermodynamically and economically implausible to implement with current technology.” See links under Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind.

Pause Delayed? Steve McIntyre examines the current controversy whether the 2016-17 El Niño interrupted 1998 to 2015 “pause in global warming.” He compares the surface datasets with the latest climate models used by the IPCC. His conclusion is most interesting:

“What does this all mean? Are models consistent with observations or not? Up to the recent very large El Nino, it seemed that even climate scientists were on the verge of conceding that models were running too hot, but the El Nino has given them a reprieve. After the very large 1998 El Nino, there was about 15 years of apparent “pause”. Will there be a similar pattern after the very large 2017 El Nino?”

“When one looks closely at the patterns as patterns, rather than to prove an argument, there are interesting inconsistencies between models and observations that do not necessarily show that the models are WRONG!!!, but neither are they very satisfying in proving that that the models are RIGHT!!!!

- *“According to models, tropospheric trends should be greater than surface trends. This is true over ocean, but not over land. Does this indicate that the surface series over land may have baked in non-climatic factors, as commonly argued by “skeptics”, such that the increase, while real, is exaggerated?”*

- “According to models, marine air temperature trends should be greater than SST trends, but the opposite is the case. Does this indicate that SST series may have baked in some non-climatic factors, such that the increase, while real, is exaggerated?”

“From a policy perspective, I’m not convinced that any of these issues – though much beloved by climate warriors and climate skeptics – matter much to policy. Whenever I hear that 2016 (or 2017) is the warmest year EVER, I can’t help but recall that human civilization is flourishing as never before. So we’ve taken these “blows” and not only survived, but prospered. Even the occasional weather disaster has not changed this trajectory.” [Boldface added]

Number of the Week: Reducing Zero to Zero. When COP-23 ended, 20 countries announced they will phase out coal power by 2030. For some countries, such as Costa Rica, it is not much of a sacrifice, they generate zero power with coal. Jo Nova gives a breakdown for some of the countries. The ceremonial host country, Fiji, has 51% hydro, 47% diesel.

NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Science: Is the Sun Rising?

An indicator of rock bottom for the solar minimum

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 20, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/20/an-indicator-of-rock-bottom-of-the-solar-minimum/>

Link to paper: Variation of the Solar Microwave Spectrum in the Last Half Century

By Masumi Shimojo, et al. The Astrophysical Journal, Oct 12, 2017

<http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/1538-4357/aa8c75/meta>

From the abstract: “Furthermore, we found that the microwave spectra at the solar minima of Cycles 20–24 agree with each other. These results show that the average atmospheric structure above the upper chromosphere in the quiet-Sun has not varied for half a century,…”

Study: When the sun pulses X-rays, Earth’s ionosphere pulses in sync

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 22, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/22/study-when-the-sun-pulses-x-rays-earths-ionosphere-pulses-in-sync/>

Link to one paper: Detection of Three-minute Oscillations in Full-disk Ly α Emission during a Solar Flare

By Ryan O. Milligan, et al, The Astrophysical Journal Letters, Oct 9, 2017

<http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/2041-8213/aa8f3a/meta>

Link to second paper: Pulsations in the Earth's Lower Ionosphere Synchronized With Solar Flare Emission

By Laura A. Hayes, et al. Journal of Geophysical Research, Space Physics, Oct 17, 2017

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/2017JA024647/abstract>

Suppressing Scientific Inquiry

James Cook University slapdown of Great Barrier Reef science critic heads to court

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 22, 2017

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2017/11/22/james-cook-university-slapdown-of-great-barrier-reef-science-critic-heads-to-court/>

Why is James Cook University trying to get RIDD of Professor Peter [Ridd]?

By Geoff Brown, Australian Climate Sceptics, Nov 23, 2017

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2017/11/why-is-james-cook-university-trying-to.html>

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 – The IPCC History

After the “catastrophe signal” – When science entered the policy greenhouse

Guest essay by Bernie Lewin, WUWT, Nov 24, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/24/after-the-catastrophe-signal-when-science-entered-the-policy-greenhouse/>

Searching for the Catastrophe Signal: The Origins of The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

By Bernie Lewin, Amazon, Nov 21, 2017

https://www.amazon.com/Searching-Catastrophe-Signal-Origins-Intergovernmental/dp/0993118992/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1511482776&sr=1-1&keywords=searching+for+the+catastrophe+lewin

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Bad Science: An MIT Study Linking Hurricane Harvey Rainfall To Climate Change Is Alarmist Bunk

By Rep Lamar Smith, Chairman, House Science Space, and Technology Committee, Daily Caller, Nov 20, 2017

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/11/20/bad-science-an-mit-study-linking-hurricane-harvey-rainfall-to-climate-change-is-alarmist-bunk/>

[SEPP Comment: No wonder the academic climate modelers do not like Rep Smith, he uses evidence, not poorly tested models.]

Core of climate science is in the real-world data

By Ian Flanigan, News Weekly, AU, Nov 18, 2017 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.newsweekly.com.au/article.php?id=57887>

Institutional decay in climate science

By Roger Pielke Jr, Via Larry Kummer. From the Fabius Maximus website, WUWT, Nov 18, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/18/institutional-decay-in-climate-science/>

Rebutting the claim that snowfall and snowcover is diminishing as the earth warms

By Joseph D'Aleo, CCM, AMS Fellow, ICECAP, Nov 22, 2017

[http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-](http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/rebutting-the-claim-that-snowfall-and-snowcover-is-diminishing-as-the-earth/)

[blog/rebutting-the-claim-that-snowfall-and-snowcover-is-diminishing-as-the-earth/](http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/rebutting-the-claim-that-snowfall-and-snowcover-is-diminishing-as-the-earth/)

David Whitehouse: A Poor Analysis of the Pause

By David Whitehouse, GWPF, Nov 22, 2017

<https://www.thegwpf.com/a-poor-analysis-of-the-pause/>

“It is 0.112°C per decade, as opposed to a previous 0.05°C per decade, for the period 1998-2012. Once again one notes the unscholarly accuracy of a thousandth of a degree which is unwarranted by the errors in the data.”

“Over and over again it has been pointed out that start and end points must be variable, and errors properly accounted for, to obtain a fair estimate given annual variability.”

[SEPP Comment: See link immediately below.]

Defending the Orthodoxy

Global warming hiatus? New study says no

By Chelsea Harvey, E&E, Nov 21, 2017

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/11/21/stories/1060067053>

Link to paper: Recently amplified arctic warming has contributed to a continual global warming trend

By Jianbin Huang, et al. Nature Climate Change, Nov 20, 2017

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-017-0009-5>

[SEPP Comment: See link immediately above.]

Britain threatens to scupper EU climate law over 'Brexit no deal' clause

By James Crisp, Sunday Telegraph, UK, Via GWPF, Nov 18, 2017

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/18/britain-threatens-scupper-eu-climate-law-brexit-no-deal-clause/>

[SEPP Comment: The newspaper article is complete with what appears to be black smoke coming from a chimney somewhere unidentified.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Climate Alarmists Keep Jet-Setting To Fancy International Meetings Despite Their Failed Models

By Anthony Sadar, Daily Caller, Nov 21, 2017

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/11/21/climate-alarmists-keep-jet-setting-to-fancy-international-meetings-despite-their-failed-models/>

The Never Ending Climate Hustle

By Steven Hayward, Power Line, Nov 20, 2017 [H/t Timothy Wise]
<http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2017/11/the-never-ending-climate-hustle.php>

After Paris!

Global Coal Pledge Puts Merkel on the Spot – Again

A new alliance to phase out coal power by 2030 leaves the host country on the sidelines, as Germany wrestles with its own emissions dilemma.

By Darrell Delamaide and Silke Kersting, Handelsblatt, Nov 24, 2017 [H/t Energy Matters]
<https://global.handelsblatt.com/politics/global-coal-pledge-puts-merkel-on-the-spot-again-853529>

Not Powering Past Coal: 20 countries that didn't use much coal, agree to not use much coal

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Nov 22, 2017

<http://joannenova.com.au/2017/11/not-powering-past-coal-20-countries-that-didnt-use-much-coal-agree-to-not-use-much-coal/>

Costa Rica & Renewable Energy

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 24, 2017

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2017/11/24/costa-rica-renewable-energy-2/#more-30993>

[SEPP Comment: Exposing the details behind the headlines like: “Costa Rica generated electricity using only renewables for 300 days this year.”]

How the Bonn climate talks survived Trump

The White House sparked a furor by pushing coal, but U.S. negotiators largely stayed the course from the 2015 Paris deal.

By Emily Holden, Politico, Nov 18, 2017

<https://www.politico.com/story/2017/11/18/trump-climate-talks-bonn-paris-247677>

Northern Virginia Governments Look at Major Renewable Energy Purchase

By Ivy Main, Blue Virginia, Nov 20, 2017

<http://bluevirginia.us/2017/11/northern-virginia-governments-look-at-major-renewable-energy-purchase>

Link to plan: Regional Climate and Energy Action Plan

By Staff Writers, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Mar 23, 2017

<https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2017/03/23/regional-climate-and-energy-action-plan-climate-energy-climate-change-energy/>

Summary: The Regional Climate and Energy Action Plan is a tool to help the region achieve its regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. The plan puts forth recommended actions for local governments aimed at reducing the carbon impact of the built environment, energy, and transportation sectors, while increasing resiliency and improving education and outreach.

<https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2017/03/23/regional-climate-and-energy-action-plan-climate-energy-climate-change-energy/>

[SEPP Comment: The plan could not be downloaded from the web site.]

U.N. climate envoys agree on way forward, despite Trump

By Staff Writers, AFP, Nov 18, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/un-climate-envoys-agree-to-take-stock-of-global-warming-in-2018/article20549698.ece>

Change in US Administrations

Climate envoy slams rejection of Paris deal; WH says US will cut on own terms

By Marotte Le Roux, Bonn (AFP), Nov 16, 2017 [Toshio Fujita]

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Obama_climate_envoy_slams_Trumps_rejection_of_Paris_Agreement_999.html

"Climate change is a huge challenge, we all know that," he said. [Todd Stern, President Obama's special envoy.]

"We are in a... race against time to transform the economy faster than the bad stuff of climate change," he said.

"Trying to say it's a hoax, or it doesn't mean anything, or it's a terrible agreement and the rest of the world is laughing at us, is just so ridiculous."

Irony can be so... Ironic – Trump's solution to AGW: "Drill, Baby, Drill!"

Guest commentary by David Middleton, WUWT, Nov 19, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/19/irony-can-be-so-ironic-trumps-solution-to-agw-drill-baby-drill/>

Problems in the Orthodoxy

A Reply to Cook and Oreskes on Climate Science Consensus Messaging

By Warren Pearce, et al, Environmental Communications, Nov 14, 2017 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17524032.2017.1392109?journalCode=renc20&>

Seeking a Common Ground

Roger Pielke Jr. describes the politics of unlikely climate scenarios

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 21, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/21/roger-pielke-jr-describes-the-politics-of-unlikely-climate-scenarios/>

Link to paper: Why do climate change scenarios return to coal?

By Justin Ritchie, Hadi Dowlatabadi, Energy, Dec 1, 2017

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360544217314597#!>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by CO2 Science

The Growth Response of Two Thale Cress Ecotypes to Elevated CO2

Jauregui, I., Aparicio-Tejo, P.M., Baroja, E., Avila, C. and Aranjuelo, I. 2017. Elevated CO2 improved the growth of a double nitrate reductase defective mutant of *Arabidopsis thaliana*: The importance of maintaining a high energy status. *Environmental and Experimental Botany* 140: 110-119. Nov 24, 2017

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/nov/a15.php>

"In light of these several findings, Jauregui *et al.* conclude that their results 'have shown that implementation of ammonium nutrition should enable plants to exploit the oncoming increases in atmospheric CO2.' And that is good news worth reporting!"

Elevated CO2 Helps to Mitigate the Negative Impacts of Waterlogging on Sweet Cherry

Pérez-Jiménez, M., Hernández-Munuera, M., Piñero, M.C., López-Ortega, G. and del Amor, F.M. 2017. CO2 effects on the waterlogging response of 'Gisela 5' and 'Gisela 6' (*Prunus cerasus* x *Prunus canescens*) sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*) rootstocks. *Journal of Plant Physiology* 213: 178-187. Nov 22, 2017

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/nov/a14.php>

“In light of all of the above discoveries, plus others of the author's observations, Jiménez *et al.* conclude that ‘elevated CO₂ was able to increase photosynthesis and thereby help plants to overcome waterlogging.’ And thus they document yet another important benefit of atmospheric CO₂ enrichment for earth's plant life.”

The Thermal Tolerance of Red and Blue King Crabs

Long, W.C. and Daly, B. 2017. Upper thermal tolerance in red and blue king crab: sublethal and lethal effects. *Marine Biology* 164: 162, DOI: 10.1007/s00227-017-3190-1. Nov 21, 2017
<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/nov/a13.php>

“Thus, it would appear that a little ocean warming would be beneficial to these two key Alaskan fisheries species.”

The CO₂ Impact on Six Lentil Cultivars

Bourgault, M., Brand, J., Tausz-Posch, S., Armstrong, R.D., O'Leary, G.L., Fitzgerald, G.J. and Tausz, M. 2017. Yield, growth and grain nitrogen response to elevated CO₂ in six lentil (*Lens culinaris*) cultivars grown under Free Air CO₂ Enrichment (FACE) in a semi-arid environment. *European Journal of Agronomy* 87: 50-58. Nov 2, 2017

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/nov/a12.php>

“In light of the above, it would appear that lentils will experience future CO₂-induced growth enhancements, even under conditions of drought. Furthermore, lentils will have higher total N contents and only slightly less N concentrations, which latter deficiency would likely be eliminated via a minimal application of N fertilizer.”

Models v. Observations

Reconciling Model-Observation Reconciliations

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Nov 18, 2017

<https://climateaudit.org/2017/11/18/reconciling-model-observation-reconciliations/>

Measurement Issues -- Atmosphere

Claim: plant respiration of CO₂ into atmosphere underestimated by 30%

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 18, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/18/claim-plant-respiration-of-co2-into-atmosphere-underestimated-by-30/>

Measurement Issues -- Surface

Besting the BEST surface temperature record

Guest essay by Patrick J. Michaels and Ryan Maue, Center for the Study of Science, Cato Institute, Via WUWT, Nov 23, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/23/besting-the-best-surface-temperature-record/>

Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

New Antarctic Temperature Reconstruction

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Nov 20, 2017

<https://climateaudit.org/2017/11/20/new-antarctic-temperature-reconstruction/>

Link to paper: Antarctic climate variability on regional and continental scales over the last 2000 years

By Barbara Stenni, et al. *Climate of the Past*, Nov 17, 2017

<https://www.clim-past.net/13/1609/2017/cp-13-1609-2017.pdf>

Antarctica cooling since Roman Times, climate models wrong (again)

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Nov 23, 2017

<http://joannenova.com.au/2017/11/antarctica-cooling-since-roman-times/>

Remember when the calving of the Petermann Glacier was a sure sign of ‘global warming’? Never mind.

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 22, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/22/remember-when-the-calving-of-the-petermann-glacier-was-a-sure-sign-of-global-warming-never-mind/>

W Hudson Bay polar bear season wrap-up: problem bear stats & sea ice vs. 2016

By Susan Crockford, Polar Bear Science, Nov 22, 2017

<https://polarbearscience.com/2017/11/22/w-hudson-bay-polar-bear-season-wrap-up-problem-bear-stats-sea-ice-vs-2016/>

Warming Defied...Greenland Glacier Growth Over Past 5 Years... Polar Bears Leaving Early For Ice!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Nov 24, 2017

<http://notrickszone.com/2017/11/24/warming-defied-greenland-glacier-growth-over-past-5-years-polar-bears-leaving-early-for-ice/#sthash.85dOlyye.dpbs>

Un-Science or Non-Science?

Scientists Can Now Tell How Much Glaciers Melting Will Affect Specific Cities

Justin Worland, Time, Nov 17, 2017

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/scientists-now-tell-much-glaciers-200756940.html>

Link to paper: Should coastal planners have concern over where land ice is melting?

Eric Larour, Erik R. Ivins and Surendra Adhikari, Science Advances, AAAS, Nov 15, 2017

<http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/3/11/e1700537>

From article: “Global sea levels may rise by more than six feet by 2100, according to research published in the journal PNAS.”

[SEPP Comment: Does this mean that the Southern Hemisphere should be concerned with melting of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet?]

Lowering Standards

War Plan Orange for Climate Change

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Nov 21, 2017

<http://www.powerforusa.com/2017/11/21/war-plan-orange-for-climate-change/>

[SEPP Comment: Even though there is a nuclear submarine on the cover, the magazine’s thinking is back in the age of coal-powered ships.]

BBC Liked It Better When India Was In The Dark

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 23, 2017

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2017/11/23/bbc-liked-it-better-when-india-was-in-the-dark/>

“Perhaps we should all aim to be like North Korea!”

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

Health Warnings issued for Tasmanians facing six days over 25 degrees (77F+) !

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Nov 21, 2017

<http://joannenova.com.au/2017/11/health-warnings-issued-for-tasmanians-facing-six-days-over-25-degrees-77f/>

Global Warming Might Be Especially Dangerous for Pregnant Women

Scientists are concerned that heat waves could be linked to more premature births and stillbirths.

By Ellie Kincaid, The Atlantic, Nov 21, 2017 [H/t Willie Soon]

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/11/pregnancy-heat-outcomes/546362/>

Study: The rise of climate activism is web-enabled

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 21, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/21/study-the-rise-of-climate-activism-is-web-enabled/>

Link to paper: Internet-Enabled Activism and Climate Change

By Luis E. Hestres and Jill E. Hopke, Climate Science, Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Sep 2017

<http://climatescience.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228620.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228620-e-404>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

80 x 50 Hokum

New Yorkers are footing the bill for Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio’s quixotic energy-efficiency plans.

By Robert Bryce, City Journal, Autumn 2017

<https://www.city-journal.org/html/80-x-50-hokum-15508.html>

[SEPP Comment: Can’t wait to see giant turbines on the Empire State Building. What will the vibration do to the structure?]

No, Trump’s Immigrant Grandfather Wasn’t A ‘Climate Change Refugee’

By Michael Bastasch, Daily Caller, Nov 21, 2017

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/11/21/no-trumps-immigrant-grandfather-wasnt-a-climate-change-refugee/>

Link to paper: Climate of migration? How climate triggered migration from southwest Germany to North America during the 19th century

By Rüdiger Glaser, Iso Himmelsbach, and Annette Bösmeier, Climate of the Past, Nov 21, 2017

<https://www.clim-past.net/13/1573/2017/>

[SEPP Comment: The paper does not discuss the frequent wars during the latter 1800s such as the Wars of Unification, the Austro-Prussian War, 1866, Franco Prussian war, 1870-71, conscription into the Prussian Army, etc.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Go Personal.

Oreskes Inability to Keep Her Mouth Shut & the Big Erik Conway Problem

Guest essay by Russell Cook, WUWT, Nov 18, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/18/oreskes-inability-to-keep-her-mouth-shut-the-big-erik-conway-problem/>

[SEPP Comment: Exposing attacks on SEPP Chairman Fred Singer.]

High Profile Swiss Meteorologist Slams Stefan Rahmstorf: “The Holy Wrath Of The Righteous”

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Nov 21, 2017

<http://notrickszone.com/2017/11/21/high-profile-swiss-meteorologist-slams-stefan-rahmstorf-the-holy-wrath-of-the-righteous/#sthash.k7HHkhWf.dpbs>

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Crunching new numbers for a potent greenhouse gas

By Niina Heikkinen, E & E News, Nov 20, 2017

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/11/20/stories/1060066951>

[SEPP Comment: Social Cost of Methane?]

Global climate models may be misjudging methane releases into the atmosphere

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 20, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/20/global-climate-models-may-be-misjudging-methane-releases-into-the-atmosphere/>

Link to paper: Methanogenesis in oxygenated soils is a substantial fraction of wetland methane emissions

By Jordan C. Angle, et al. Nature Communications, Nov 16, 2017

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-01753-4>

Trump admin is silent on Montreal climate pact

By Benjamin Hulac, E&E News, Nov 22, 2017

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2017/11/22/stories/1060067175>

[SEPP Comment: Expanding the scope of the Montreal Protocol gives reason why any international agreements should be strongly questioned by the Senate, as required in the Constitution for a Treaty.]

Questioning European Green

Benny Peiser: Mugged by Reality, Germany's Climate Consensus Is Collapsing

By Benny Peiser, GWPF, Nov 20, 107

<https://www.thegwpf.com/mugged-by-reality-germanys-climate-consensus-is-collapsing/>

Wall Street Journal Calls Merkel's Energiewende "A Meltdown" Involving "Astronomical Costs"

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Nov 19, 2017

<http://notrickszone.com/2017/11/19/wall-street-journal-calls-merkels-energiewende-a-meltdown-involving-astronomical-costs/#sthash.eUrgctwn.dpbs>

Germany's Green Energy Dream Is In Danger Of Falling Apart

By Michael Bastasch, Daily Caller, Nov 20, 2017

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/11/20/germanys-green-energy-dream-is-in-danger-of-falling-apart/>

Germany Has Plunged Into Unprecedented Political Chaos

By Paul Hockenos, Foreign Policy, Via GWPF, Nov 20, 2017

<https://www.thegwpf.com/germany-has-plunged-into-unprecedented-political-chaos/>

Climate Policies To Cost £66bn In Next Five Years

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 23, 2017

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2017/11/23/climate-policies-to-cost-66bn-in-next-five-years/>

[SEPP Comment: The cost of the Climate Change Act alone is £66bn, equivalent to about £2500 per household. Then add in the Climate Change Levies, the Environmental Levies, the Fuel Duties, and soon you have real money.]

Green levies 'will add £200 to energy bills': Company says measures should be paid for through general taxation

British Gas estimates bill for average customer will increase by £200 next year

Company says this is down to government scheme to shift to renewable energy

Boss Ian Conn has called for the switch to be paid for out of general taxation

By Sean Poulter, Daily Mail, UK, Nov 20, 2017 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5102293/Green-levies-add-200-energy-bills-year.html>

Europe's Increasing Opposition to Climate Alarmism May Prove to Be Important

By Alan Carlin, Carlin Economics and Science, Nov 24, 2017

<http://www.carlineconomics.com/archives/4040>

Funding Issues

U.N. Climate Projects, Aimed at the Poorest, Raise Red Flags

By Hiroko Tabushi, NYT, Nov 16, 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/16/climate/green-climate-fund.html>

“The board observers have also asked why the fund’s finances, set up to back locally owned projects that reach the most vulnerable communities, were going toward private-sector enterprises led by global investment firms — like \$110 million in loans and grants for solar projects in Kazakhstan led by London-based United Green Energy and the investment arm of Kazakhstan’s sovereign wealth fund.”

[SEPP Comment: Apparently, island nations such as Kiribati expect to be paid from the Green Climate Fund for participating in the Paris festivities.]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

No subsidies for green power projects before 2025, says UK Treasury

Government accused of ‘turning their back on renewables’ after saying there will be no more money for new low-carbon levies

By Adam Vaughan, Guardian, UK, Nov 23, 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/22/no-subsidies-for-green-power-projects-before-2025-says-uk-treasury>

“With existing commitments, low carbon power subsidies are set to cost around £9bn a year by 2025.”

Tax Bill Attacked for Loss of Electric Car Subsidy—But Most Americans Don't Want Electric Cars

By Steve Goreham, Master Resource, Nov 20, 2017

<https://www.masterresource.org/electric-vehicles/tax-ev-low-demand/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Buyout stories: 'We are kind of being hollowed out'

By Kevin Bogardus and Hannah Northey, E&E News, Nov 22, 2017

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/11/22/stories/1060067223>

EPA is Clearing Out the Agency's FOIA Backlog

Press Release, EPA, Nov 21, 2017

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-clearing-out-agencys-foia-backlog>

Energy Issues – Non-US

Helm and the death of UK wind and solar

By Roger Andrews, Energy Matters, Nov 22, 2017

<http://euanmearns.com/helm-and-the-death-of-uk-wind-and-solar/>

“In his recent post on the Helm Review Euan Mearns predicted that Helm’s recommendation that ‘intermittent producers need to bear the cost of converting intermittent to firm capacity’ will, if adopted, ‘sound the death knell for new wind and solar projects in the UK’. This post presents ball-park estimates of the economic impacts of Helm’s recommendation for two cases – wind-plus-storage and wind-plus-CCGT.”

Energy Issues – Australia

Climate Unicorns downunder as Australians offer to cut CO2 by 50% per capita in 12 years

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Nov 25, 2017

<http://joannenova.com.au/2017/11/climate-unicorns-downunder-as-australians-offer-to-cut-co2-by-50-per-capita-in-12-years/>

Renewable Energy Jobs at \$68 million each. WOW!

By Geoff Brown, Australian Climate Sceptics, Nov 18, 2017

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2017/11/renewable-energy-jobs-at-68-million.html>

Energy Issues -- US

Why We Must Save One of America's Largest Coal Plants

By Matthew Kandrach, Real Clear Energy, Nov 20, 2017

http://www.realclearenergy.org/articles/2017/11/20/why_we_must_save_one_of_americas_largest_coal_plants__110260.html

Washington’s Control of Energy

Nebraska’s approval of Keystone XL route is no guarantee of pipeline’s completion

By Ben Wolfgang, The Washington Times, Nov 20, 2017

https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/nov/20/keystone-xl-oil-pipeline-route-okd-nebraska-elimin/?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTIRRM01qY3pOakV3TmptaayIsInQiOiJLdW1oZ3NobCt5UCtyVUNYUUhNtjR6d2FFYW5WMFNzYnFmQ1wva3hQaWVfYnM5QjcrWkdSSjB2QytObWNcL3JxMmZMMjd0OStreUlWZXlaTkMrMGcrdmx3Sm5PVTY1ZTRwNk5lc2NUckM4N1ZkaU13OFRE RjdhYWZmYnBXZHZFU2k4In0%3D

[SEPP Comment: After many years of delay, due to oil production from hydraulic fracturing, it may no longer be financially sound to build it.]

Five things to watch in the new Keystone fight

By Devin Henry, The Hill, Nov 24, 2017

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/361618-five-things-to-watch-in-the-new-keystone-fight>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

America's oil and gas output could soar 25% by 2025

By Ivana Kottasová, CNN Money, Nov 14, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://money.cnn.com/2017/11/14/news/economy/us-oil-gas-shale-iea/index.html>

Alaska, China release terms of \$43B gas export project

By Margaret Kriz Hobson, E&E News, Nov 22, 2017

<https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2017/11/22/stories/1060067155>

Combustion Engines Catch New Spark --- Thinner oils improve efficiency, helping the old technology stay relevant as electric vehicles gain ground

By Sarah Kent, and Chester Dawson, Wall Street Journal, Via Investor Village, Nov 21, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<https://www.investorvillage.com/smbd.asp?mb=5028&mn=82073&pt=msg&mid=17723790>

Environmental Defense Fund president has a fundamental misunderstanding of gas markets

By Rod Adams, Atomic Insights, Nov 18, 2017 [H/t John McClaughry]

<https://atomicinsights.com/environmental-defense-fund-president-fundamental-misunderstanding-gas-markets/>

Rosneft Announces Completion Of World's Longest Well

By Zainab Calcuttawala, Oil Price.com, Nov 16, 2017

<https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Rosneft-Announces-Completion-Of-Worlds-Longest-Well.html>

Return of King Coal?

The Use of Coal is Increasing

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Nov 17, 2017

<http://www.powerforusa.com/2017/11/17/the-use-of-coal-is-increasing/>

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Radioactive readings in Russia were 986 times the norm

By Staff, Agence France-Presse, Nov 20, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3871917/radioactive-readings-russia-986-times-norm/>

UK Made 'Grave Strategic Errors' in Hinkley Point Nuclear Subsidy Scandal

By Staff Writers, Financial Times, Via GWPF, Nov 22, 2017

<https://www.thegwpf.com/uk-made-grave-strategic-errors-in-hinkley-point-nuclear-subsidy-scandal/>

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

Grid-Scale Storage of Renewable Energy: The Impossible Dream

By Euan Mearns, Energy Matters, Nov 20, 2017

<http://euanmearns.com/grid-scale-storage-of-renewable-energy-the-impossible-dream/#more-20203>

[SEPP Comment: Except where hydropower is possible on a huge scale.]

Supporting Wind and Solar Energy at the Expense of the Environment

By Matt Ridley, Rational Optimist, Nov 20, 2017

<http://www.rationaloptimist.com/blog/the-green-civil-war/>

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Vehicles

Are electric vehicles the future?

By Martin Livermore, The Scientific Alliance, Nov 24, 2017

<http://scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/are-electric-vehicles-future>

“Electric vehicles don’t represent a step change in transport as trains and cars did. There may be a major change in underlying technology, but this offers no intrinsic new benefits to the public.”

Claim: Electric cars could ‘power our lives’

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 23, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/23/claim-electric-cars-could-power-our-lives/>

Link to paper: “The Viability of Vehicle-to-Grid Operations from a Battery Technology and Policy Perspective”

By Kotub Uddin, Matthieu Dubarry, and Mark B. Glick, Energy Policy, Feb 2018

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421517307619>

California Dreaming

California government mandates send electricity prices skyrocketing, but Texas free market policies keep prices low

Bk DeVore, Fox News, Nov 16, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/11/16/california-government-mandates-send-electricity-prices-skyrocketing-but-texas-free-market-policies-keeps-prices-low.html>

Health, Energy, and Climate

Campaigners demand urgent cuts to power bill after number of winter deaths among the elderly rise by 40%

By Sean Poulter, Daily Mail, Nov 22, 2017

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5109511/Calls-cut-power-bills-winter-deaths-rise-40.html>

Environmental Industry

Environmentalism Is Increasingly Anti-Human, Pro-Authoritarian

By Wesley Smith, Evolution News, Nov 21, 2017

<https://evolutionnews.org/2017/11/environmentalism-is-increasingly-anti-human-pro-authoritarian/>

Boots, Not Suits

By Matt Ridley, Rational Optimist, Nov 22, 2017

<http://www.rationaloptimist.com/blog/michale-gove-and-the-environment/>

[SEPP Comment: *The play of the greens, appeal to the international bureaucracy, accountable to no one.*]

Other Scientific News

Antarctic detector offers first look at how Earth stops high-energy neutrinos in their tracks

Results come from NSF-managed IceCube Neutrino detector at the South Pole

Press Release, NSF, Nov 22, 2017

https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=243782&WT.mc_id=USNSF_51&WT.mc_e v=click

Fantastic visualization of Earth’s atmosphere in 2017

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Nov 19, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/11/19/fantastic-visualization-of-earths-atmosphere-in-2017/>
<https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/12772>

Other News that May Be of Interest

Billions of dollars at stake in epic battle shaping up between University of California and two Texas Universities

By Thomas Lifson, American Thinker, Nov 20, 2017 [H/t John Dunn]

http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2017/11/billions_of_dollars_at_stake_in_epic_battle_shaping_up_between_university_of_california_and_two_texas_universities_.html

BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Climate change will make Bearded Dragons dumber

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Nov 24, 2017

<http://joannenova.com.au/2017/11/climate-change-will-make-bearded-dragons-dumber/#more-56041>

Rats getting smaller and bigger

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Nov 19, 2017

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/3358>

“You probably hadn’t noticed — but the head shape and overall size of rodents has been changing over the past century. A University of Illinois at Chicago ecologist has tied these changes to human population density and climate change.

“The finding is reported by Oliver Pergams, UIC research assistant professor of biological sciences, in the July 31 issue of PLoS One. Pergams found both increases and decreases in the 15 anatomic traits he measured, with changes as great as 50 percent over 80 years.

Science Daily, July 31, 2009”

ARTICLES:

1. Trump vs. the Deep Regulatory State

The tempestuous president is overseeing a principled, far-reaching reform of agencies that had exceeded their constitutional writ.

By Christopher DeMuth, WSJ, Nov 17, 2017

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-vs-the-deep-regulatory-state-1510952431?tesla=y>

The fellow at the Hudson Institute and former president of the American Enterprise Institute writes:

“Federal regulation has been growing mightily since the early 1970s, powered by statutes that delegate Congress’s lawmaking authority to mission-driven executive agencies. Beginning in 2008, the executive state achieved autonomy. The Bush administration during the financial crisis, and the Obama administration in normal times, decreed major policies on their own, without congressional authorization and sometimes even in defiance of statutory law.

“President Trump might have been expected to continue the trend. As a candidate, he had railed against imperious Washington and promised to clear regulatory impediments to energy

development and job creation. Yet he also was an avid protectionist, sounded sometimes like an antitrust populist, and had little to say about regulatory programs like those of the Federal Communications Commission and the Food and Drug Administration. He was contemptuous of Congress and admiring of President Obama's unilateral methods. Clearly, this was to be a results-oriented, personality-centered presidency.

"The record so far has been radically different. With some exceptions (such as business as usual on ethanol), and putting aside a few heavy-handed tweets (such as raising the idea of revoking broadcast licenses from purveyors of "fake news"), President Trump has proved to be a full-spectrum deregulator. His administration has been punctilious about the institutional prerogatives of Congress and the courts. Today there is a serious prospect of restoring the constitutional status quo ante and reversing what seemed to be an inexorable regulatory expansion. Consider three leading indicators.

"First, Mr. Trump has appointed regulatory chiefs who are exceptionally well-qualified and are determined reformers. Deregulation succeeds only when political officials are earnestly committed to the broad public missions of their agencies—and equally committed to ferreting out bureaucratic excesses, ideological detours and interest-group machinations." [supporting paragraph omitted]

"Second, the Trump administration is turning back from unilateral lawmaking. Mr. Obama made several aggressive excursions into this dangerous territory. He issued orders shielding certain classes of illegal aliens from deportation, spent billions without a congressional appropriation to subsidize insurance plans on the ObamaCare exchanges, and imposed the EPA's Clean Power Plan. Each was a substantive policy that Congress had considered and declined to enact. Each was justified by legal arguments that administration officials conceded to be novel and that many impartial experts (including those who favored the policies on the merits) regarded as risible. Each ran into strong resistance from the courts." [supporting paragraphs omitted].

"A third indicator is the introduction of regulatory budgeting, which sounds tedious but is potentially revolutionary. The idea goes back to the late 1970s, when the new health, safety and environmental agencies were first issuing rules that required private businesses and individuals to spend tens of millions of dollars or more. It seemed anomalous that this should be free of the disciplines of taxing, appropriating and budgeting that applied to direct expenditures. Jimmy Carter's commerce secretary, Juanita Kreps, proposed a regulatory budget as a good-government measure; Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D., Texas) introduced legislation; and several academics (myself included) worked out the theory and practicalities in congressional reports and journal articles.

The idea never went anywhere. One problem was the inherent sponginess of regulatory cost estimates, which seemed inconsistent with the clear dollar metrics that drive spending budgets. Another was the herculean task of tracking the aggregate cost of the stock and flow of agency rules. When Ronald Reagan came into office, he instead imposed a cost-benefit test on individual rules, enforced by OMB. All subsequent administrations essentially continued that approach."

The author then argues regulatory budgeting may be feasible today.

2. Science, the Courts and the Public's Interest

Were Robert Merton alive today he would reject Mr. Pielke's claim that science is stronger when scientists must turn the other cheek to attacks on their character.

Letters, WSJ, Nov 23, 2017

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/science-the-courts-and-the-publics-interest-1511459180>

After introducing the issue, Mr. Mann's attorney asserts:

“Mr. Mann’s lawsuit doesn’t squelch scientific debate as his case isn’t about science but rather the latest installment in a smear campaign to destroy his reputation through verifiably false and malicious assertions of fact about his professional conduct. The D.C. Court of Appeals affirmed Mr. Mann’s right to proceed holding that “defamatory statements that are personal attacks on an individual’s honesty and integrity . . . if false, do not enjoy constitutional protection and may be actionable.” Nor do Merton’s scientific norms prevent scientists, like all free people, from defending their good name through the courts if necessary. Mr. Pielke’s invitation to muzzle scientists confronting ad hominem fallacies under the guise of “scientific debate” would strike a grievous blow at the institution of science by chilling free inquiry and thought, the bedrock of a vibrant scientific community. This notion is as true today as it was in 1937 Nazi Germany, which Merton wrote about in his “Science and the Social Order.” Were Merton alive today he would reject Mr. Pielke’s claim that science is stronger when scientists must turn the other cheek to attacks on their character.”

Peter J. Fontaine

In the comments section following the letter, Ken Haapala posted:

“A Washington newspaper published an interview with Mr. Mann, who claimed that the distinguished scientist who is Chairman of the organization of which I am president, received money from Monsanto (chemical), Philip Morris (tobacco) and Texaco (petroleum). No evidence was presented, nor is there any evidence. Unfortunately, the costs of litigation are so extreme, that we cannot afford to litigate against Mr. Mann to stop such accusations. It would be an enormous waste of resources.”