

The Week That Was: 2017-02-18 (February 18, 2017)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week. *“Sometimes there is no alternative to uncertainty except to await the arrival of more and better data.”* C. Wunsch [H/t Donald Rapp]

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Number of the Week: over 27 million vehicles

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THIS WEEK:

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

TWTW: Due to other commitments requiring refraining from public comments that may be misconstrued as suggesting policy, this TWTW will be short and comments restrained. Responses to correspondence will be limited. Congress is scheduled for “District work period” (recess) until February 27. Next week’s TWTW will be very brief. Thank you.

Sea Level Rise: One disturbing activity by some government entities is using the highly speculative projections of future sea level rise to frighten the public. The purpose appears to be to promote the false belief that humans can stop sea level rise by limiting or controlling carbon dioxide emissions. A common trick is using the widely ranging projections of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). These projections are based on global climate models that have not been validated, and use of a few highly questionable studies based on a small sample of occurrences that cannot be generalized, globally.

In his presentation at the Ninth International Conference on Climate Change (ICCC9), former NASA meteorologist Thomas Wismuller highlighted some of the difficulties in arriving at accurate estimate of global sea level rise. Even satellite measurements have significant errors, containing significant noise from wave action near the coast lines.

Wismuller states that we have three different metrics for estimating sea levels: 1) tidal gages with an average of 1.7 mm per year; 2) TopoX/Poseidon/Jason 1 & 2 satellites with a rise of 3.1 mm per year; and ENVISAT satellite with a rise of 0.5 to 2.5 mm per year. Importantly, all the sources indicate linear trends!

By selecting among the data, one could project a rise of 5 cm to 31 cm (2 inches to 12 inches) per century. Add to this the stunt that James Hansen used, claiming almost all the rise will occur in the last two decades of the century, and one can create almost any type of projection.

Adding to the problems, the satellite measurements have significant internal error. For example, the American-French satellites, TopoX/Poseidon 3.1, have low radar resolution with 23 mm at best resolution and an orbital tracking error of 20 to 40 mm. It is impossible to create precision from error.

Wismuller discusses some of the problems with each type of measurements. Among them, tide gages measurements have difficulties with land subsidence or land rising. For example, the land in Norfolk-Newport News area of Virginia, with large naval facilities, is subsiding. A major

reason is ground water extraction, compounded with some influence by the aftereffects of a meteor strike 35 million years ago.

Adding to the problems with accurate measurements of sea level rise, are wind influences such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) which cause the water in the Pacific pile up in the western Pacific (southeast Asia) and then recede when the wind dies down. This process is like making waves in a bathtub.

Additionally, Jo Nova discusses a new paper in *Nature Communications* that estimates that half meter (20 inch) fluctuations in sea levels were common in Southeast Asia 6,000 years ago. Clearly, these events are not new and not related to human carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

Those who make 100 year projections, without emphasizing the uncertainty are greatly misleading the public. Government entities emphasizing such studies are jeopardizing their credibility. See links under Changing Seas and Changing Earth

New EPA Administrator: On February 17, former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt was sworn in as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Since his selection as Administrator, much has been written about him and what he will do. TWTW will not comment, except to recognize there is an important difference between rights of the people and powers of government.

Transparency: To have perspective on the bureaucratic thinking in a government agency, it is useful to review the justifications the agency has used on a controversial issue. A review of parts of the eleven volumes of the published public comments and EPA responses to the EPA's finding that greenhouse gases, chiefly CO2, endanger public health and welfare reveals EPA's views on transparency. For example, in rejecting the 2009 report of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC), the agency writes:

*"EPA has reviewed and considered the NIPCC report and found that it lacks the rigorous procedures and transparency required to serve as a foundation for the endangerment analysis. A review of the NIPCC Web site indicates that the NIPCC report was developed by "two co-authors" and "35 contributors and reviewers" from "14 countries" (<http://www.nipccreport.org/index.html>). **The organization does not appear to have established any procedures for author selection and provides no evidence that a transparent and open public or expert review was conducted. Thus, the NIPCC's approach stands in sharp contrast to the clear, transparent, and open procedures of the IPCC, CCSP, USGCRP, and NRC. Relying on the work of the major assessment reports is a sound and reasonable approach. See Section III.A. (52 pp, 315 K, About PDF) of the Findings, "The Science on Which the Decisions Are Based," for our response to comments on the use of the assessment literature and previous responses in this section regarding our treatment of new and additional scientific literature provided through the public comment process.**" [Boldface added.]*

The parts in boldface are remarkable. There is no validation of the models used by the IPCC, etc. The models are failing to correctly predict limited atmospheric warming, greatly overestimating it. There is no empirical evidence demonstrating that a doubling of CO2 will produce an increase in temperatures of 3 degrees C, plus or minus 1.5 degrees C. In declaring tiny particles (PM 2.5) are a category pollutant, the EPA relied on data that are unavailable for public, or even for Congressional review. EPA's declaration that mercury from coal-fired power plants lower IQ is

based on a questionable study from the Faroe Islands, and ignores a far more rigorous study from the Seychelles Islands.

In short, EPA applies standards to others it is unwilling to meet itself. Such is the nature of Bureaucratic Science. See links under Defending the Orthodoxy.

Sodium Anyone? On his web site, Meteorologist Cliff Mass addresses the concern some have expressed on the use of salt on highways to make them safer in "How much salt falls naturally out of the sky?" He uses a map on "Sodium ion wet deposition, 2015" found on the National Atmospheric Deposition Program Web site. The map is revealing. The heaviest concentrations of sodium (Na) are along the Gulf Coast, the Atlantic Coast from South Carolina to New Hampshire, the Pacific North West, and a bit of Utah. Few of these areas are noted for salting highways to remove ice and snow. The main culprit appears to be salt water evaporation, particularly during storms.

Searching the maps for "Total Mercury Wet Deposition, 2015" shows that the most affected general area is southern Florida with the southern Great Plains and Southeastern US also affected. These hardly represent the intercity neighborhoods that former EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson claimed were greatly affected.

California Rains: Central and Southern California are being hit by an atmospheric river, totally ending the drought. When the emergency spillway of the Oroville Dam was used, the earth in the spillway eroded, below the spillway weir. An emergency evacuation of the area downstream was declared, without clear explanation, prompting TWTW to search for the construction drawings to find if the 30-foot high concrete weir (smooth barrier) of the spillway is anchored in bedrock. The search was futile. Oroville is the second largest reservoir in California and the highest dam in the US. The lip of the spillway is 20 feet below the height of the dam, so there was no danger of the dam breaching.

Roy Spencer followed events and reported that the bedrock on which the spillway weir sits is highly fractured. This may have prompted officials to declare the evacuation. But the event illustrates that a great deal of confusion and fear can be created by officials not properly informing the public.

Ever the spoiler of false fears, Tony Heller referenced an article in *Scientific American* on the great California floods of 1860-61, which devastated the Central Valley, long before the fear of CO₂-caused climate change. Apparently, native Americans recognized what was about to happen, and followed tradition by taking to the hills. See links under Changing Weather and California Dreaming

Additions and Corrections: Commenting on the January 28 TWTW, meteorologist William Kininmonth of Australia brought up a very important distinction between weather models and climate models. Weather models "require accurate initial conditions of temperature, moisture, and wind fields." Thus, they improve with improving knowledge of the initial conditions – measurements.

"In contrast, climate model projections are fundamentally reliant on energy exchange processes, both within the model atmosphere and exchanges with each of the underlying surface and space."

Very small errors in the processes involved can accumulate into large errors, resulting in significant temperature bias.

He disagreed with a statement in the TWTW, which needs to be improved and will be discussed next time. TWTW deeply appreciates additions and corrections from such learned readers.

Number of the Week: Over 27 million vehicles. *Business Insider* of Australia reports that in 2016 there were over 27 million vehicles sold in China, about one-third were SUVs. The total number includes commercial vehicles and trucks, not clearly differentiated. By comparison, the *Los Angeles Times* reports that 2016 was a record sales year in the US with 17.55 million new vehicles sold, about 63% SUVs and light trucks. There were about 10 million more vehicles sold in China than in the US.

In developing countries, a high percentage of vehicles sales become new vehicles on the road. In developed countries, most are replacement vehicles. According to Hedges & Company, there were 261.8 million cars and light trucks registered in the US, up from 257.9 million in 2015, an increase of about 3.9 million or 1.5%. Recent data for total registered vehicles in China are not available. See links under After Paris! and

<https://hedgescompany.com/automotive-market-research-statistics/auto-mailing-lists-and-marketing>

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Science: Is the Sun Rising?

3 Recent Studies Indisputably Show Solar Activity Is Very Powerful Climate Driver!

Solar activity fluctuations control the climate: sea level in Venice, tropical storms in Australia, Amazon discharge rates

By Dr. Sebastian Lüning and Prof. Fritz Vahrenholt, (German text translated by P Gosselin), Feb 11, 2017

<http://notrickszone.com/2017/02/11/3-recent-studies-indisputably-show-solar-activity-is-very-powerful-climate-driver/#sthash.lmTJv8yi.dpbs>

Commentary: Is the Sun Rising?

Solar Cycle Quietest in 200 Years – And Surface Warming Much Slower Than Model Projections!

The sun in January 2017, and: a “pause” or not?

By Frank Bosse and Fritz Vahrenholt, Translated/condensed by P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Feb 17, 2017

<http://notrickszone.com/2017/02/17/solar-cycle-quietest-in-200-years-and-surface-warming-much-slower-than-model-projections/#sthash.0NeOe5Ra.dpbs>

Challenging the Orthodoxy -- NIPCC

Nature, Not Human Activity, Rules the Climate

S. Fred Singer, Editor, NIPCC, 2008

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

Overcoming Chaotic Behavior of Climate Models

By S. Fred Singer, SEPP, July 2010

http://www.sepp.org/science_papers/Chaotic_Behavior_July_2011_Final.doc

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>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Nature Unbound II: The Dansgaard- Oeschger Cycle

By Javier, Climate Etc. Feb 17, 2017

<https://judithcurry.com/2017/02/17/nature-unbound-ii-the-dansgaard-oeschger-cycle/>

David Whitehouse: Data, Deflection And The Pause

By David Whitehouse, GWPF Science Editor, Feb 12, 2017

<http://www.thegwpf.com/data-deflection-and-the-pause/>

DAVID ROSE: How can we trust global warming scientists if they keep twisting the truth

By David Rose, Mail on Sunday, Feb 12, 2017

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-4216180/How-trust-global-warming-scientists-asks-David-Rose.html>

Kimberley Strassel: Don't Wimp Out On Climate

By Kimberley Strassel, WSJ, Via GWPF, Feb 17, 2017

<http://www.thegwpf.com/kimberley-strassel-dont-wimp-out-on-climate/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

EPA's Response to Public Comments on the Proposed Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases: Volumes 1-11

By Staff Writers, EPA,

<https://www.epa.gov/climatechange/epas-response-public-comments-proposed-endangerment-and-cause-or-contribute-findings>

Justice Alito Declares “Carbon Dioxide Is Not a Pollutant” in a Candid, Confused Speech

By Mark Joseph Stern, Slate, Feb 13, 2017 [H/t Timothy Wise]

http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2017/02/13/justice_alito_declares_carbon_dioxide_is_not_a_pollutant.html

[SEPP Comment: The justice is not confused about what is a pollutant, the reporter is. The Supreme Court found greenhouse gases could be pollutant and regulated under the Clean Air

Act if the EPA found they endanger human health and welfare. It is EPA's speculative finding that makes them pollutants, although the EPA cannot produce direct evidence supporting its finding. The finding is a major issue among scientists.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Are Climate Alarmists Glassy-Eyed Cultists?

By Francis Menton, Manhattan Contrarian, Feb 16, 2017

<http://manhattancontrarian.com/blog/2017/2/16/are-climate-alarmists-glassy-eyed-cultists>

14 Reasons Why Silicon Valley Embraced Climate Alarmism

Guest essay by Leo Goldstein, WUWT, Feb 13, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/02/13/14-reasons-why-silicon-valley-embraced-climate-alarmism/>

[SEPP Comment: One could add: They assume global climate models are thoroughly tested.]

Baffin Bay and Kane Basin polar bears not 'declining' concludes new report

By Susan Crockford, Polar Bear Science, Feb 15, 2017

<https://polarbearscience.com/2017/02/15/baffin-bay-and-kane-basin-polar-bears-not-declining-concludes-new-report/>

[SEPP Comment: New report: we do not know whether prior reports of population decline were reliable or not.]

More Data Manipulation By NOAA, NASA, HadCRUT...Cooling The Past, Warming the Present

By Kenneth Richard, No Tricks Zone, Feb 13, 2017

<http://notrickszone.com/2017/02/13/more-data-manipulation-by-noaa-nasa-hadcrut-cooling-the-past-warming-the-present/#sthash.95XaTq87.dpbs>

The Times Manipulates the Climate Science Scandal Data

By Tully Borland, American Thinker, Feb 12, 2017

http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2017/02/the_times_manipulates_the_climate_science_scandal_data.html

Whistleblower Links NOAA Study to Climate Treaty Agendas

By Larry Bell, Newsmax, Feb 13, 2017

<http://www.newsmax.com/LarryBell/balloon-cpp-radiosonde/2017/02/13/id/773270/>

After Paris!

Here's How Trump Can Withdraw From The Paris Climate Agreement

By Michael Bastasch, Daily Caller, Feb 13, 2017

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/02/13/heres-how-trump-can-withdraw-from-the-paris-climate-agreement/>

Covenant of Democratic Nations

By Geoff Brown, Australian Climate Sceptics, Feb 16, 2017

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2017/02/covenant-of-democratic-nations.html>

The Jaw-Dropping Growth in Chinese Car Sales

By Bill Murray, Real Car Energy, Feb 13, 2017

http://www.realclearenergy.org/charticles/2017/02/13/httpwwwrealclearenergyorgcharticles20170213the_jaw-dropping_growth_in_chinese_car_sales_110186.html

Link to report: CHART: The jaw-dropping growth in Chinese car sales

By Paul Colgan, Business Insider, Australia, Feb 13, 2016

<http://www.businessinsider.com.au/chart-the-jaw-dropping-growth-in-chinese-car-sales-2017-2>

“Looking at it another way, China bought more cars last year than there are people in Australia, and a third of those were SUVs.”

2016 U.S. auto sales set a new record high, led by SUVs

By Staff Writers, AP, Jan 4, 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/business/autos/la-fi-hy-auto-sales-20170104-story.html>

Change in US Administrations

In the US, Trump ushers in era of dramatic deregulation

By Ivan Couronne, AFP, Feb 10, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/us-trump-ushers-era-dramatic-deregulation-191242697.html>

The Time Has Come to Implement Trump’s Environmental Campaign Promises

By Alan Carlin, Carlin Economics and Science, Feb 17, 2017

<http://www.carlineconomics.com/archives/3403>

Retire the Phony ‘Social Cost of Carbon’

By Roger Bezdek and Paul Driessen, Master Resource, Feb 13, 2017 [H/t Cooler Heads]

<https://www.masterresource.org/social-cost-of-co2/retire-phony-social-cost-carbon/>

[SEPP Comment: Detailed analysis of a bureaucratic absurdity.]

Seeking a Common Ground

Learning from Bill Gates

By Bjørn Lomborg, Project Syndicate, Feb 14, 2017

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/gates-foundation-investment-strategy-by-bjorn-lomborg-2017-02>

Link to annual letter by the Gates Foundation: Dear Warren: Our 2017 Annual Letter

Warren Buffett’s Best Investment

By Bill and Melinda Gates, Feb 14, 2017

https://www.gatesnotes.com/2017-Annual-Letter?WT.mc_id=02_14_2017_02_AL2017GFO_GF-GFO_&WT.tsrc=GFGFO

[SEPP Comment: Governments should learn effective giving.]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by CO2 Science

A Brief History of Tree Growth in Tibetan Plateau Alpine Forests

Silva, L.C.R., Sun, G., Zhu-Barker, X., Liang, Q., Wu, N. and Horwath, W.R. 2016. Tree growth acceleration and expansion of alpine forests: The synergistic effect of atmospheric and edaphic change. *Science Advances* 2: e1501302. Feb 17, 2017

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/feb/all.php>

“the six scientists report that their "measurements of stable isotopes (carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen) in tree rings indicate that tree growth has been stimulated by the synergistic effect of rising atmospheric CO2 and a warming-induced increase in water and nutrient availability from thawing permafrost." And this great *greening of the earth* continues unabated.”

Bamboos Exposed to Elevated CO₂ and Ozone: How Do They Do?

Guo, Z., Zhuang, M., Li, Y., Chen, S. and Yang, Q. 2015. Adaptability of *Indocalamus decorus* to climate change based on physiological and biochemical responses to elevated carbon dioxide and ozone. *iForest* **9**: 311-317. Feb 16, 2017

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/feb/a10.php>

Atmospheric CO₂ Enrichment Enhances Crop Water Use Efficiency

Deryng, D., Elliott, J., Folberth, C., Muller, C., Pugh, T.A.M., Boote, K.J., Conway, D., Ruane, A.C., Gerten, D., Jones, J.W., Khabarov, N., Olin, S., Schaphoff, S., Schmid, E., Yang, H. and Rosenzweig, C. 2016. Regional disparities in the beneficial effects of rising CO₂ concentrations on crop water productivity. *Nature Climate Change* **6**: 786-790. Feb 14, 2017

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/feb/a8.php>

“In closing, the four US and twelve European researchers write that their findings ‘quantify the importance of CO₂ effects on potential water savings and, in so doing, highlight key limitations of global hydrological models that do not consider effects of CO₂ on evapotranspiration.’ And, therefore, they further state that their results ‘demonstrate the need to expand field experiments and encourage greater consistency in modelling the effects of rising CO₂ across crop and hydrological modelling communities,’ which efforts would likely suggest potentially positive outcomes.”

Some Significant Shortcomings of Current CMIP5 Climate Models

Scafetta, N. 2016. Problems in Modelling and Forecasting Climate Change: CMIP5 General Circulation Models versus a Semi-Empirical Model Based on Natural Oscillations. *International Journal of Heat and Technology* **34**: S435-S442. Feb 15, 2017

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V20/feb/a9.php>

Measurement Issues -- Surface

‘Slowdown’ In Ocean Heating Gives Climate Sceptics A Warm Glow

By Jonathan Leake, The Sunday Times, Via GWPF, Feb 12, 2017

<http://www.thegwpf.com/slowdown-in-ocean-heating-gives-climate-sceptics-a-warm-glow/>

[SEPP Comment: Graphics showing different measuring procedures. The article does not address the key issues: What are the errors in each type of measurement and how well are the data integrated.]

Measurement Issues -- Atmosphere

Atmospheric temperature measured by satellites sets new record in 2016.

Press Release by Carl Mears, RSS, Jan 5, 2017

http://images.remss.com/papers/rsstech/Jan_5_2017_news_release.pdf

Changing Weather

Massive Flood In California After Two Decades Of Drought

By Tony Heller, The Deplorable Climate Science Blog, Feb 13, 2017

<https://realclimatescience.com/2017/02/massive-flood-in-california-after-two-decades-of-drought/>

Link to article:

California Megaflood: Lessons from a Forgotten Catastrophe

By Lynn Ingram, Scientific American, Jan 1, 2013

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/atmospheric-rivers-california-megaflood-lessons-from-forgotten-catastrophe/>

Flooding: What Is Normal?

Professor Paul Bates, School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol, Via Not a Lot of People Know That, Feb 17, 2017

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2017/02/17/flooding-what-is-normal/>

[SEPP Comment: Describing a flood as one in a hundred years is misleading.]

Northwest Weather Hits Southern California with the Most Substantial Storm in Years

By Cliff Mass, Weather Blog, Feb 17, 2017

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2017/02/northwest-weather-hits-southern.html>

Changing Seas

Asian sea levels changed rapidly 6,000 years ago — natural sea level rise “unprecedented”

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Feb 13, 2017

<http://joannenova.com.au/2017/02/asian-sea-levels-changed-rapidly-6000-years-ago-natural-sea-level-rise-unprecedented/#more-52953>

Link to paper: Half-metre sea-level fluctuations on centennial timescales from mid-Holocene corals of Southeast Asia

By Aron J. Meltzner, et al., Nature Communications, Feb 10, 2017

<http://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms14387>

“Regional sea-level change is a superposition of secular eustatic trends and interannual regional oscillations, not all of which are well studied. The largest interannual variability of sea level occurs in the tropical Pacific and is related to the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO); early (1993–2001) satellite data showed high rates of sea-level rise in Southeast Asia that approached 30 mm per year, though those extreme rates have not persisted.”

“The consistency of the Southeast Asian records, from sites 2,600 km apart, suggests that the records reflect regional changes in RSL [Relative Sea Levels] that are unprecedented in modern times.”

[SEPP Comment: This sea level variation in Southeast Asia demonstrates the tremendous error that is created by those who select regional changes over a brief time and project them globally on a century basis. If a rise of 30 mm per year persisted, it would result in a rise of 300 cm, or 118 inches, per century.]

“Tide Gauges/Satellites; Different Measures – Same Ocean! Will the REAL Sea-Level Please Rise???”

By Tom Wismuller, ICC9-9, July 8 & 9, 2014

<http://climateconferences.heartland.org/thomas-wismuller-iccc9/>

Changing Earth

Land Subsidence and Relative Sea-Level Rise in the Southern Chesapeake Bay Region

By Jack Eggleston and Jason Pope, USGS & Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, 2013

<file:///C:/Users/Owner/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/JIXJDQCU/SLR%20USGS%20Circ1392%202013.pdf>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Claim: 0.7C / Century is Exceptional

Guest essay by Eric Worrall, WUWT, Feb 13, 2017

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/02/13/claim-0-7c-century-is-exceptional/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Do a Poll?

On-Air Weathercasters views on Climate Change

By Geoff Brown, Australian Climate Sceptics, Feb 16, 2016

<http://thelimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2017/02/on-air-weathercasters-views-on-climate.html>

Questioning European Green

Germans Face Pain As Power Prices Surge To “Record Levels”, Renewables Go “Almost AWOL”

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Feb 15, 2017

<http://notrickszone.com/2017/02/15/germans-face-pain-as-power-prices-surge-to-record-levels-renewables-go-almost-awol/#sthash.IJ9R7iT.dpbs>

Harsh Winter: How Coal, Lignite And Gas Saved Germany From Disaster

Conventional power plants played a crucial role in meeting Germany’s energy requirements during dark and chilly January. Now suppliers are demanding market reforms.

By Jürgen Flauger, Handelsblatt, Via GWPF Feb 11, 2017

<http://www.thegwpf.com/harsh-winter-how-coal-and-gas-save-germany-from-disaster/>

The Political Games Continue

[U.S. House] Committee Probes Allegations of Politicization of NOAA Study

Press Release by Staff Writers, Committee on Science, Space, & technology, Feb 14, 2017

<https://science.house.gov/news/press-releases/committee-probes-allegations-politicization-noaa-study>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

The Baker-Shultz Carbon-Tax Plan Is a Bad Deal for Americans

By Rupert Darwall, National Review Online, Via GWPF, Feb 14, 2017

<http://www.thegwpf.com/the-baker-shultz-carbon-tax-plan-is-a-bad-deal-for-americans/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Pruitt sworn in as EPA chief

By Timothy Cama, The Hill, Feb 17, 2017

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/320179-pruitt-sworn-in-as-epa-chief>

Grants Management:

EPA Partially Follows Leading Practices of Strategic Workforce Planning and Could Take Additional Steps

By Staff Writers, GAO, Feb 8, 2017 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-144>

In 2015, EPA awarded roughly \$3.9 billion in grants—which is nearly half its budget—to support activities like repairing water infrastructure.

House members: EPA officials may be using Signal to “spread their goals covertly”

Encrypted messaging app gains new currency under the Trump administration.

By Cyrus Farivar, Ars Technica, Feb 15, 2017

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2017/02/house-members-epa-officials-may-be-using-signal-to-spread-their-goals-covertly/>

Energy Issues – Australia

Australian Blackouts Due To Unreliable Renewables Were Predicted In Royal Society Paper

By Miles Kemp, Sunday Mail (South Australia), Via GWPF, Feb 12, 2016

<http://www.thegwgf.com/green-madness-blackouts-due-to-unreliable-renewables-were-predicted-in-royal-society-paper/>

Australian Heatwave Excuses

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Feb 14, 2017

<https://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2017/02/14/australian-heatwave-excuses/>

“Only baseload generating capabilities, i.e., coal, natural gas, nuclear, and, usually, hydro, can be included when determining the capacity of the grid to provide electricity under any circumstance, including heatwaves.”

SA Blackout: a grid crippled by complexity

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Feb 16, 2017

<http://joannenova.com.au/2017/02/sa-blackout-a-grid-crippled-by-complexity/>

Link to report: System Event Report, South Australia, 8 February 2017

By Staff Writers, AEMO (Australian Energy Market Operator) Feb 15, 2017

<https://www.aemo.com.au/->

[/media/Files/Electricity/NEM/Market Notices and Events/Power System Incident Reports/2017/System-Event-Report-South-Australia-8-February-2017.pdf](https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/Files/Electricity/NEM/Market_Notices_and_Events/Power_System_Incident_Reports/2017/System-Event-Report-South-Australia-8-February-2017.pdf)

Energy Issues -- US

U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Lowest Since 1994

By Bill Murray, Real Clear Energy, Feb 15, 2017

http://www.realclearenergy.org/charticles/2017/02/15/httpwwwrealclearenergyorgcharticles20170215httpwwwrealclearenergyorgcharticles20170215us_greenhouse_gas_emissions_lowest_since_1994_110187.html

Link to report: DRAFT Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2015

By Staff Writers, EPA, Feb 14, 2017

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-02/documents/2017_complete_report.pdf

[SEPP Comment: Key tables: page 4; (2015, 6506; 1992 65,424); Figure ES-4: 2015 U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Gas (Percentages based on MMT CO₂Eq.) (CO₂ 82.2%) p.8; and Sources of CO₂ emissions.]

US GDP, Energy Consumption and CO₂ Emissions

By Euan Mearns, Energy Matters, Feb 13, 2017

<http://euanmearns.com/us-gdp-energy-consumption-and-co2-emissions/#more-17002>

[SEPP Comment: Points out that the economic shift to services and government were important for reducing US emissions.]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

U.S. crude oil production increases following higher drilling activity

By Staff Writers, EIA, Feb 15, 2017

<http://www.eia.gov/petroleum/weekly/>

Gas Hydrate Breakdown Unlikely to Cause Massive Greenhouse Gas Release

Press Release USGS, Feb 9, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<https://www.usgs.gov/news/gas-hydrate-breakdown-unlikely-cause-massive-greenhouse-gas-release>

Link to paper: "The Interaction of Climate Change and Methane Hydrates,"

By C. Ruppel and J. Kessler, Reviews of Geophysics, Feb 8, 2017

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/2016RG000534/full>

Return of King Coal?

Coal, fuel of the future

By Martin Livermore, The Scientific Alliance, Feb 17, 2017

<http://scientific-alliance.org/node/1037>

[SEPP Comment: Given the difficulties in Europe for electricity, replacing fossil fuels with "renewables" for transportation and heating will be very difficult. The BP Energy Outlook may be far too optimistic. The interactive map of CO2 emissions of the European electricity consumption produces surprising results. For example, at one point Denmark used 65% fossil fuels.]

Demon Coal

By Norman Rogers, American Thinker, Feb 14, 2017

http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2017/02/demon_coal.html

Utilities vote to close Navajo coal plant at end of 2019

Utility owners need to work out an arrangement with the Navajo Nation to decommission the plant after the lease expires.

By Ryan Randazzo, The Republic, Feb 13, 2017

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/money/business/energy/2017/02/13/utilities-vote-close-navajo-generating-station-coal-plant-2019/97866668/>

Nuclear Energy and Fears

The world's largest nuclear plants differ by age, number of reactors, and utilization

By Staff Writers, EIA, Feb 6, 2017

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=29832>

Toshiba's nuclear reactor mess winds back to a Louisiana swamp

By Staff Writers, Bloomberg, Feb 13, 2017 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<https://about.bnef.com/blog/toshibas-nuclear-reactor-mess-winds-back-to-a-louisiana-swamp/>

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy -- Other

New Renewable Energy Targets for Scotland

By Euan Mearns, Energy Matters, Feb 17, 2017

<http://euanmearns.com/new-renewable-energy-targets-for-scotland/#more-17057>

"Scotland is to become world leader in the hydrogen economy. I suspect we will find ourselves leading a group of 1 country that may quickly go to the wall should these proposals be implemented."

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Vehicles

Europe's Green Madness: Dieselgate Was A Political Disaster

By Holman Jenkins, WSJ, Via GWPF, Feb 15, 2017

<http://www.thegwpf.com/europes-green-madness-dieselgate-was-a-political-disaster/>

“We have here an emblem of the Western world’s infirmity. Multiple irrationality loops have taken over. Climate policy is the primary example—a pure traffic in costly gestures that create no real benefits for the public. In the U.S., the totality of Obama climate policies—his fuel mileage targets, his coal regulations, his wind and solar subsidies—would not make a detectable difference in the earth’s climate even if given a century to work their non-magic. Yet the cost will be hundreds of billions.”

California Dreaming

Oroville Dam: Crisis Eases, Emergency Spillway Repairs in Progress

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Feb 15, 2017

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2017/02/oroville-dam-crisis-eases-emergency-spillway-repairs-in-progress/>

NOAA & The Oroville Dam

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Feb 15, 2017

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2017/02/15/noaa-the-oroville-dam/>

Link to NOAA report: Flooding concerns at Oroville Dam as water levels reach capacity

By Tom Di Liberto, NOAA, Feb 14, 2017

<https://www.climate.gov/news-features/event-tracker/flooding-concerns-oroville-dam-water-levels-reach-capacity>

[SEPP Comment: Interesting graph on inflow to Oroville Reservoir since 1995, showing that the latest is not the greatest.]

Health, Energy, and Climate

Deaths from India air pollution rival China: study

By Nick Perry

New Delhi (AFP) Feb 14, 2017

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Deaths_from_India_air_pollution_rival_China_study_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Have death rates actually increased or are the deaths based on model calculations? According to the World Bank, the World death rate continues to decline. 17.75 per 1,000 in 1960 to 7.75 per 1,000 in 2014. Female life expectancy at birth has gone from 54.4 to 73.6. Male and female life expectancy at birth has gone from 52.5 to 71.5

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.CDRT.IN>

Crude death rate in India went from 8.88 per 1,000 in 2000 to 7.35 in 2014. There is a sharp dip in 2007, 08, & 09 that is unexplained. In 2010 the rate returned to 7.53 and its general trend of decline to 2014. (from CIA World Factbook)

<http://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=in&v=26>

Other News that May Be of Interest

GAO: Cyber attack threat from federal employees

By Paul Bedard, Washington Examiner, Feb 15, 2017 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/gao-cyber-attack-threat-from-federal-employees/article/2614902>

Link to GAO Report: Cybersecurity: Actions Needed to Strengthen U.S. Capabilities

Statement of Gregory C. Wilshusen, Director, Information Security Issues, GAO, Release date Feb 14, 2017

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/690/682756.pdf>

“Over the past several years, GAO has made about 2,500 recommendations to federal agencies to enhance their information security programs and controls. As of February 2017, about 1,000 recommendations had not been implemented.”

How much salt falls naturally out of the sky?

By Cliff Mass, Weather Blog, Feb 12, 2017

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2017/02/how-much-salt-falls-naturally-out-of-sky.html>

Link to the National Atmospheric Deposition Program Web site maps and data

<http://nadp.sws.uiuc.edu/data/>

Mercury: http://nadp.isws.illinois.edu/maplib/pdf/mdn/hg_dep_2015.pdf

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Worse than we thought – global food production 2

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions, Feb 16, 2017

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/7838>

“Climate change is set to do far worse damage to global food production than even the gloomiest of previous forecasts, according to studies presented at the Royal Society in London, UK, on Tuesday.

“We need to seriously re-examine our predictions of future global food production,” said Steve Long, a crop scientist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, US. Output is “likely to be far lower than previously estimated’.”

New Scientist, 26 Apr 2005

[SEPP Comment: *Since these dire predictions, crop yields in the US and the world have soared.*]

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ARTICLES:

1. Scott Pruitt’s Back-to-Basics Agenda for the EPA

The new administrator plans to follow his statutory mandate—clean air and water—and to respect states’ rights.

By Kimberley A. Strassel, WSJ, Feb 17, 2017

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/scott-pruitts-back-to-basics-agenda-for-the-epa-1487375872>

SUMMARY: The journalist states:

Republican presidents tend to nominate one of two types of administrator to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. The first is the centrist—think Christie Todd Whitman (2001-03)—who might be equally at home in a Democratic administration. The other is the fierce conservative—think Anne Gorsuch (1981-83)—who views the agency in a hostile light.

Scott Pruitt, whom the Senate confirmed Friday, 52-46, doesn’t fit either mold. His focus is neither expanding nor reducing regulation. “There is no reason why EPA’s role should ebb or flow based on a particular administration, or a particular administrator,” he says. “Agencies exist to administer the law. Congress passes statutes, and those statutes are very clear on the job EPA has to do. We’re going to do that job.” You might call him an EPA originalist.

Not that environmentalists and Democrats saw it that way. His was one of President Trump’s most contentious cabinet nominations. Opponents objected that as Oklahoma’s attorney general Mr. Pruitt had sued the EPA at least 14 times. Detractors labeled him a “climate denier” and an oil-

and-gas skill, intent on gutting the agency and destroying the planet. For his confirmation hearing, Mr. Pruitt sat through six theatrical hours of questions and submitted more than 1,000 written responses.

During an interview, Pruitt said:

“We’ve made extraordinary progress on the environment over the decades, and that’s something we should celebrate,” he says. “But there is real work to be done.” What kind of work? Hitting air-quality targets, for one: “Under current measurements, some 40% of the country is still in nonattainment.” There’s also toxic waste to clean up: “We’ve got 1,300 Superfund sites and some of them have been on the list for more than three decades.”

Such work is where Washington can make a real difference. “These are issues that go directly to the health of our citizens that should be the absolute focus of this agency,” Mr. Pruitt says. “This president is a fixer, he’s an action-oriented leader, and a refocused EPA is in a great position to get results.”

“That, he adds, marks a change in direction from his predecessor at the EPA, Gina McCarthy. ‘This past administration didn’t bother with statutes,’ he says. ‘They displaced Congress, disregarded the law, and in general said they would act in their own way. That now ends.’

“Mr. Pruitt says he expects to quickly withdraw both the Clean Power Plan (President Obama’s premier climate regulation) and the 2015 Waters of the United States rule (which asserts EPA power over every creek, pond or prairie pothole with a ‘significant nexus’ to a ‘navigable waterway’). ‘There’s a very simple reason why this needs to happen: Because the courts have seriously called into question the legality of those rules,’ Mr. Pruitt says. He would know, since his state was a party to the lawsuits that led to both the Supreme Court’s stay of the Clean Power Plan and an appeals court’s hold on the water rule.

“Will the EPA regulate carbon dioxide? Mr. Pruitt says he won’t prejudge the question. ‘There will be a rule-making process to withdraw those rules, and that will kick off a process,’ he says. ‘And part of that process is a very careful review of a fundamental question: Does EPA even possess the tools, under the Clean Air Act, to address this? It’s a fair question to ask if we do, or whether there in fact needs to be a congressional response to the climate issue.’ Some might remember that even President Obama believed the executive branch needed express congressional authorization to regulate CO₂ —that is, until Congress said ‘no’ and Mr. Obama turbocharged the EPA.

“Among Mr. Pruitt’s top priorities is improving America’s water infrastructure. ‘I’m going to be advancing this with the president, this idea that when we talk about investing in infrastructure, we need to look more broadly than bridges and roads,’ he says. ‘Look at what happened in Flint,’ the Michigan town where lead was found in the water supply. ‘Look at what is happening in California,’ where the Oroville Dam’s failure endangers tens of thousands of homes.

“Mr. Pruitt defies the stereotype of the fierce conservative who wants to destroy the agency he runs. Nonetheless, he is likely to encounter considerable hostility. The union that represents the EPA’s 15,000-strong bureaucracy urged its members to besiege their senators with calls this week asking them to reject Mr. Pruitt’s appointment. (The effort didn’t have much effect: The vote was nearly along party lines, with only two Democrats and one Republican breaking ranks.) These

bureaucrats have the ability to sabotage his leadership. That's what happened to Mrs. Gorsuch. She went to war with the bureaucracy, and the bureaucracy won.

"Mr. Pruitt wants progress..."

"Mr. Pruitt has read those laws his agency is charged with enforcing, and they guide another major change: a rebalancing of power between Washington and the states. 'Every statute makes clear this is supposed to be a cooperative relationship,' he explains, 'that Congress understood that a one-size-fits-all model doesn't work for environmental regulation, and that the state departments of environmental quality have an enormous role to play.'

"He faults President Obama's EPA for its 'attitude that the states are a vessel of federal will. They were aggressive about dictating to the states and displacing their authority and letting it be known they didn't trust the states.' Mr. Pruitt has numbers to back up the claim: During the combined presidencies of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, the EPA imposed five federal air-quality implementation plans on states. Mr. Obama's EPA imposed 56.

The author cites a coalition for the Chesapeake Bay as one the example of the ability of the affected states and the federal working together. Then he writes:

"Mr. Pruitt argues that his renewed focus on statutes and federalism will help produce regulatory certainty, which will be good for business: 'The greatest threat we've had to economic growth has been that those in industry don't know what is expected of them. Rules come that are outside of statutes. Rules get changed midway. It creates vast uncertainty and paralysis, and re-establishing a vigorous commitment to rule of law is going to help a lot.'

"His focus on jobs and the economy sets him apart from some past EPA administrators. 'I reject this paradigm that says we can't be both pro-environment and pro-energy,' he says several times during the interview. 'We are blessed with great national resources, and we should be good stewards of those. But we've been the best in the world at showing you do that while also growing jobs and the economy. Too many people put on a jersey in this fight. I want to send the message that we can and will do both.'

According to Pruitt,

"'Most lawsuits against the EPA historically have come either because of the agency's lack of regard for a statute, or because the EPA failed in an obligation or deadline,' he says. 'But we protect ourselves by hewing to the statutes. It will prove very difficult for environmental groups to sue on the grounds that they think one priority is more important than another—because that is something that really is at the discretion of agency.'

"Speaking of lawsuits, Mr. Pruitt says he plans to end the practice known as 'sue and settle.' That's when a federal agency invites a lawsuit from an ideologically sympathetic group, with the intent to immediately settle. The goal is to hand the litigators a policy victory through the courts—thereby avoiding the rule-making process, transparency and public criticism. The Obama administration used lawsuits over carbon emissions as its pretext to create climate regulations.

"'There is a time and place to sometimes resolve litigation,' Mr. Pruitt allows. 'But don't use the judicial process to bypass accountability.' Some conservatives have suggested the same tactic

“might be useful now that Republicans are in charge. ‘That’s not going to happen,’ he insists. ‘Regulation through litigation is simply wrong.’ Instead, Mr. Pruitt says, the EPA will return to a rule-making by the book. ‘We need to end this practice of issuing guidance, to get around the rule-making procedure. Or rushing things through, playing games on the timing.’

“For similar reasons, Mr. Pruitt plans to overhaul the agency’s procedure for producing scientific studies and cost-benefit analyses. ‘The citizens just don’t trust that EPA is honest with these numbers,’ he says. ‘Let’s get real, objective data, not just do modeling. Let’s vigorously publish and peer-review science. Let’s do honest cost-benefit work. We need to restore the trust.’”

2. If You Kill a Migratory Duck, Your Goose May Be Cooked

A century-old law stymies development to protect common fowl like crows and hummingbirds.
By Allysia Finley, WSJ, Feb 15, 2017

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/if-you-kill-a-migratory-duck-your-geese-may-be-cooked-1487203949>

SUMMARY: Arguing that the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act has outlived its usefulness the reporter gives specific examples of absurd enforcement. The examples include a hummingbird’s nest stopping renovations on the Richmond-San Rafael bridge north of San Francisco, nesting cormorants stopping demolition of Oakland’s Bay bridge.

“The 1918 migratory-bird law was originally crafted as a treaty with Canada—Mexico, Japan and Russia later signed—to protect migratory birds from poachers who made a bundle selling their feathers. Recall the ornate feathered hats worn by actresses in the 1913 play ‘Pygmalion.’

“Under the act, it’s a federal crime to ‘pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill’ migratory birds. The list of protected species has soared to 1,026, including common fowl like crows, ducks and finches. President Obama alone extended protections to nearly 200 species.

“Meanwhile, what constitutes criminal conduct has become decidedly fuzzy. Taking an egg is blatantly illegal. Prosecutors have argued that the law also covers subtler activities that inadvertently cause harm to birds.

“The legal ambiguity has businesses and contractors walking on eggshells. When five black-crowned night herons were injured after a contractor trimmed trees outside of an Oakland post office in 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service launched an investigation. A public outcry rescued the worker from prosecution.”

“Other, less sympathetic defendants haven’t been so fortunate. In 2011 federal prosecutors charged seven oil companies in North Dakota after 28 birds, mainly ducks, flew into their tar pits. Fish and Wildlife argued that the waste pits should have been covered. A U.S. district judge in 2012 dismissed the charges, holding that the 1918 law did not apply to “incidental and unintended” deaths that occur during “legal, commercially-useful activity.”

“The judge also wondered why prosecutors hadn’t targeted windmills, which kill about a half million birds each year. Rather than accept the rebuke, they declared open season on wind farms. In 2013 prosecutors charged Duke Energy Renewables after its wind turbines in Wyoming were found to have mauled 163 birds. Duke pleaded guilty and paid a \$1 million penalty. In 2015

PacifiCorp Energy was charged and fined \$2.5 million after 38 golden eagles and 336 other protected birds were killed at its wind farms.'

The journalist gives examples that some federal appeals courts consider accidental avian deaths a crime, others do not.

"Prosecuting inadvertent activity has no limiting principle. A 2014 study performed for the Fish and Wildlife Service found that communication towers kill an estimated 6.6 million birds each year. Building collisions cause between 365 million and 988 million bird deaths annually. Should building owners be charged when a bird flies into a window or wall?"

"Government agencies, businesses and contractors have been taking legal precautions to avoid disturbing migratory birds, which has delayed and increased costs for hundreds of infrastructure projects. In 2010 TransCanada delayed construction of a pipeline in Wyoming until migratory birds cleared the construction zone. Ospreys stalled 700 Sprint cell sites in 2012. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has even ordered all state buildings to turn off inessential outdoor lighting after 11 p.m. during peak migratory season for birds."

"The Migratory Bird Treaty Act has outlived its purpose and been superseded by the Endangered Species Act. Let it go the way of the dodo."

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