

CLIMATE CHALLENGES

by Representative John Linder



SPPI COMMENTARY & ESSAY SERIES ♦ December 4, 2009

CLIMATE CHALLENGES

by Rep. John Linder | December 3, 2009

For the last several years, when people have instructed me that human activity was causing a dangerous increase in global temperatures, my response has been, "Then tell me, what should the temperature be?" Should it be the temperatures that the planet experienced a thousand years ago, during which Greenland was settled as a farming community and during which wine grapes were grown in Scotland? Should it be the temperatures of three hundred years ago, when the Little Ice Age ended the inhabitation of Greenland and the Thames iced over? Should it be the temperatures of 829 A.D., when the Nile River froze? No response!

We are told, based on computer models, that human beings burning fossil fuels -- and exhaling -- is increasing the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. This, in turn, is trapping heat, which is responsible for the modest temperature increase between 1976 and 1998. The conclusion is that we must alter our entire lifestyles to avoid a planetary catastrophe.

For computer models to be accurate, inputs must include all of the factors that can impact climate. Knowing this, as well as believing it likely that the majority of factors that do impact climate are yet unknown, how can we trust the models?

To begin with, CO₂ is not driving temperature as claimed. We know from core samples taken from the Vostok glacier in Antarctica that while CO₂ and temperatures do increase and decrease in consonance, the temperature changes precede the CO₂ changes by about a thousand years.

We currently have about 388 parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere by volume. That is at the lower end of the historical comfort scale. The most fertile time that our planet has ever seen was during the Cambrian Period, about 542 million years ago. In a very short period of time, all of multicellular life that has ever existed was deposited into the fossil record. That occurred because the planet was warm. The CO₂ level in the atmosphere was twenty times higher than it is today. The entire planet was green with growth, and oxygen levels were unusually high.

Likewise, during the period of dinosaur dominance, CO₂ levels were five times higher than today, enabling the planet to grow enough greenery to keep those giant animals alive.

Even today, the most diverse part of our planet in both plant and animal life is around the equator -- the warmest area of the globe.

We are told that the calving of ice shelves on the Antarctic Peninsula is proof that the world's largest ice pack, which comprises about 90% of the globe's ice, is melting. The

Antarctic Peninsula constitutes 2% of the continent. The other 98% of the continent has been growing by about 27 gigatons of ice per year. This comes not from computer models, but from thirty years' worth of satellite measurements. Those same empirical observations show that the concentration of sea ice surrounding Antarctica is at a record high.

What's more, every computer model shows that greenhouse warming is associated with a "hot spot" located four to six miles above the equator. We have been monitoring that very spot for fifty years. It doesn't exist. Thus, whatever warming we see is unlikely to be due to the greenhouse effect as the models explain it.

We are told that the melting of arctic ice is endangering the future of polar bears. There were five thousand polar bears fifty years ago. There are twenty-five thousand today. This does not seem like extinction to me. Additionally, Captain Roald Amundsen of Norway explored that entire region in 1905, sailing through the North-West Passage in a sailboat! Today, there is usually ice blocking his route.

In his movie *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore says that sea levels will rise by twenty feet in the next century, putting much of the world's oceanfront land and islands at risk. Real science tells us that the last glaciation ended about 11,000 years ago. Oceans have risen since then by about four feet per century. In the 20th century, sea levels rose by about eight inches. Indeed, Dr. Nils-Axel Moerner from the University of Stockholm, who has written 520 peer-reviewed articles on sea levels and is considered a world authority, recently declared that sea levels have been unchanged for the last three years.

Years ago, Dr. Richard Lindzen, the Alfred P. Sloan professor of meteorology at MIT, theorized that higher temperatures over the equator caused the cirrus clouds to disappear and venting heat up over the atmosphere. That theory is now a proven fact, quantified by NASA. It begins when the surface temperature of the ocean exceeds 28 degrees centigrade. This fact is not considered on the computer models.

This is what this whole discussion comes down to. In science, only two conditions exist. One is theory, and the other is fact. The entire notion of human-caused global warming is a theory based on computer models. None of it has been proven through rigorous empirical observation to be a fact.

On December 7, 2009, President Obama will send a delegation to Copenhagen, Denmark, for the U.N. Climate Conference. So what exactly is the goal of this conference? A few months ago, Al Gore explained the ultimate goal: global governance. If the climate alarmists get their way, the U.S. economy would be subject to the whims of a U.N.-led climate government, unaccountable to American taxpayers but most certainly using American taxpayer funds to operate. Since so many countries are happy to blame the U.S. for the vast majority of what they amusingly claim is a catastrophic slide into global devastation, I am sure that a new U.N. Climate Government will be all too eager to call on the American taxpayer to foot the bill. In fact, the two-hundred-page draft document says just that. We will be billed by an unelected bureaucracy for our "climate debt." And we will yield our sovereignty to international law.

I noted earlier that this has been a discussion. Unfortunately, it has not been a debate. The alarmists refuse to debate; they say that the science is settled. Nonsense! There is no such thing as settled scientific theory -- only settled scientists. If Al Gore believes his science is settled, he should agree to debate and prove the skeptics wrong. Yet he has been running from debate for years.

To those who ask who would be hurt if we were wrong about CO₂ and reduced the amount in the atmosphere, I say only the 1.6 billion most vulnerable people in the world. They are desperate for more CO₂ so they can grow food. Their lives are brutal and short. They desperately need what we have enjoyed over the past hundred years.

Over the last two million years, this planet has experienced about twenty glaciations. They last about a hundred thousand years, and they are interrupted by warming periods of about ten thousand years. It has been about eleven thousand years since the last glaciation ended. During the last century, we saw one of the longest periods of high solar activity since the last glaciation. Temperatures rose. We have seen less sun activity in the last eleven years than we have seen for a very long time. The temperature has also been either steady or declining for eleven years. (By the way, not one of the computer models, which so confidently predict what will happen in one hundred years, predicted that cooling.) Let us pray that all this is not a signal of the next glaciation -- one that actually kills people.

There is no need for any climate treaty at Copenhagen. It is time to disband the U.N.'s self-serving and serially dishonest climate panel. Officially sponsored environmental extremism is a danger to our national security.



Representative John Linder (R-GA) sits on the House Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Waxman-Markey bill, jurisdiction over the Boxer-Kerry bill should it pass in the Senate, and authority over all carbon taxes generally.

Source: http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/12/climate_challenges.html.



Science & Public Policy Institute

"Science-based policy for a better world."

Robert Ferguson

SPPI President

bferguson@sppinstitute.org

202-288-5699

P.O. Box 209

5501 Merchants View Square

Haymarket, VA 20169

www.scienceandpublicpolicy.org

