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## James Lenfestey: The truth: Still there, still inconvenient

On July 7, the last of three independent British commissions exonerated prominent climate scientists at the University of East Anglia of any wrongdoing in the so-called "Climategate," in which mysterious (and still anonymous) hackers trashed their reputations and confused public understanding of important climate science. Meanwhile, back in America, prominent climatologist Michael Mann, also reviled by critics for his "Climategate" e-mails (and for his solid climate science), was similarly exonerated by a full review panel at Penn State University, where he teaches. Most important, all review panels affirmed the underlying science, and thereby the established scientific consensus that human activity is warming the planet. "The rigor and honesty of the scientists in not in doubt," the British panel concluded.

This should put to rest any remaining public "skepticism" of the scientific facts of climate change. If it doesn't, two new books will.

"Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming," by science historians Naomi Oreskes and Erik

Conway, forcefully debunks the handful of credentialed scientists, such as S. Fred Singer, who continue to beat the drum against the mainstream consensus. Singer, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, publishes his virulent skepticism on the hospitable opinion pages of the Wall Street Journal and from his own foundation. The authors prove him to be practicing science outside his realm of expertise as an antiregulation ideologue.

A second book, "The Lomborg Deception" by Howard Friel, is as devastating. Lomborg's two big books, "The Skeptical Environmentalist" and "Cool It," are the bibles of climate-change nonbelievers. Lomborg, a Danish statistician who portrays himself as a reasonable apostate from excessive environmentalism, argues in heavily footnoted texts that the threat of manmade global warming is "exaggerated," and that in any event a warmer planet may be good for us.

Reputable scientists immediately smelled something fishy in Lomborg's work. Now Freil, a journalist, has found the source of the stink. He painstakingly tracks down every one of Lomborg's thousands of endnotes and finds that his citations are a sea of deception. In many cases, the sources cited

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by Lomborg say exactly the opposite of what he states in his text. In others he leaves out or distorts inconvenient evidence. Sometimes there is no source at all to be found.

Pseudo-scientists like Lomborg or hypocrites like Singer are not honest scientific skeptics --skepticism is a valuable and necessary part of the scientific process -- but are ideologues who believe nothing should be done about climate change and who argue from that premise.

With these reports and books, the public debate on climate change should finally be over.

No Americans, including conservatives, have an excuse now to say that it is not happening, or to continue to argue that is caused by volcanoes (fully taken into account by scientists) or by natural climate variation (the observed evidence is way outside of historic natural variation) or that the cause is variable solar radiation (again outside the range of the sun's variable radiation). The only scientific explanation for the temperature increases observed here and now is the simultaneous dramatic increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide and methane as a result of human activities, including the waste carbon from the burning of fossil fuels.

So I challenge conservative commentators Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Katherine Kersten; the editors of the Weekly Standard, the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Times, and the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the Hudson Institute, the Heartland Institute, the George C. Marshall Institute, the Cato Institute, the Center of the American Experiment and other vehicles of opposition to mainstream climate science to face the facts. Stop allowing yourselves to be deceived and therefore to deceive the people who trust and depend on you.

Put the phony crisis of "Climategate" away, along with your criticism of the vast consensus of honest scientists working around the globe to bring us the truth of our changing climate. Face the facts so that your public, and the politicians who work for them, can face the facts.

The evidence is irrefutable: Global warming is upon us, and it is primarily caused by human activities. Now what are we as one people, and the family of nations, going to do about it?

James P. Lenfestey, Minneapolis, is a former editorial writer for the Star Tribune.

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