



Global Warming Policy Foundation admits claim of global cooling was based on 'erroneous' information

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The British think tank Global Warming Policy Foundation admitted this week that a claim made by their founder Lord Nigel Lawson that the average global temperature was cooling was untrue.

Last Wednesday, the BBC interviewed Lawson about the release of former United States Vice President Al Gore's new film on global warming, *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. Lawson told reporters that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had "confirmed that there has been no increase in extreme weather events" and "during this past 10 years, if anything, mean global temperature, average world temperature, has slightly declined."

They blame a chart provided by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank founded by American Charles Koch: "It has been brought to our attention that a temperature chart prepared by US meteorologist Ryan Maue and published by Joe Bastardi and which was referred to in the Today programme appearance of Lord Lawson is erroneous", the organization said via Twitter. "This has been acknowledged in recent days by those responsible for the dataset. We are therefore happy to correct the record." They continued to maintain, however, that extreme weather events had not become more common: "In addition, there has been considerable comment about Lord Lawson's statements on the IPCC and extreme weather events. These were correct, despite attempts by the Met Office to claim otherwise."

The BBC has drawn criticism having for Lawson on the *Today* programme in the first place and for not providing a rebuttal until the following day. Michael Marshall of the *New Scientist* cited the backfire effect: "If you present someone with misinformation, and later debunk it, the person often carries on believing the original misinformation. Their belief may even be reinforced by the rebuttal."

NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, the Met Office of the United Kingdom, and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association have all concluded that the average global temperature has gone up, not down, since 1900. Regarding weather events, the IPCC has stated "There are likely more land regions where the number of heavy precipitation events has increased than where it has decreased. The frequency or intensity of heavy precipitation events has likely increased in North America and Europe."

The Koch brothers, Charles and David, are the wealthy owners of Koch Industries. They believe in low taxes, few social services, and minimal industrial and environmental regulation. They often funnel campaign funds and other monies to conservative candidates and causes, such as think tanks and political groups that oppose climate change legislation. Koch Industries was once named among the top ten producers of air pollution in the United states by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's Political Economy Research Institute and as a "kingpin of climate science denial" by Greenpeace.