



Trump Administration Picks Colorado Scientist To Lead Its Next Climate Assessment

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A well-respected Colorado scientist will lead the next national report on the causes and consequences of climate change.

The Washington Post reports Betsy Weatherhead, a Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric scientist, will direct the next National Climate Assessment. A government webpage describes the report as the “State of the Union” on climate change, written to give the country the best possible picture of what’s happening to the atmosphere and where it’s headed.

The last National Climate Assessment, released in 2018, found it’s “extremely likely” humans are responsible for climbing global temperatures since the mid-20th Century, mainly due to the release of greenhouse gas emissions.

Weatherhead not only has a great name for the job, she also has experience helping assemble other larger reports on global warming, including the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change assessments. The work earned her a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

Weatherhead currently works for **Jupiter Intelligence**, a private company that advises businesses and governments about climate risks. The company is headquartered in Silicon Valley with offices in Boulder and New York City. While at CU Boulder, Weatherhead worked with the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, where she studied Arctic climate change and climate forecast models.

Weatherhead did not respond to requests for comment, but the Post reports she sees climate change as a serious threat primarily caused by human activity.

That’s isn’t as clear with some other climate scientists recently appointed by the Trump Administration. Last week, the administration removed Craig McLean, the acting chief scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. His replacement is Ryan Maue, who has previously worked for the libertarian Cato Institute and **has argued** actual global temperature increases haven’t matched dire predictions from some climate scientists.

David Legates, a University of Delaware geography and climatology professor, joined the agency in a new deputy director role. He has also worked with free-market think tanks and questioned human-caused warming.

Brenda Ekwurzel, director of climate science at the Union of Concerned Scientists and a co-author of the 4th climate assessment, said it was “really good news” some like Weatherhead will lead the next national assessment.

“Her role of looking at how science interfaces with businesses...is really, really important,” Ekwurzel said. “I like that aspect.”

The next National Climate Assessment is set to be released in 2022.