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Environment & Climate News

The Heartland Institute's national monthly outreach publication for common-sense environmentalism.

Scientists, Economists Challenge Alarmism at Climate Conference

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Written By: Dan Miller
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Global warming skeptics, who for a decade have emphasized hard-science evidence to refute doomsday predictions from alarmists, added new ammunition to their arsenal June 2 at the Third International Conference on Climate Change.

More than 250 people crowded into Washington Court hotel meeting rooms to hear a dozen elite scientists refute media claims that global warming is manmade and would have harmful effects on the planet.

Economic Costs Documented

While the scientists reported on a vast array of peer-reviewed literature that cast doubt on the causes and severity of global warming, the economists produced data showing the cap-and-trade scheme not only wouldn't halt the release of greenhouse gases but would add huge costs to business activity, which inevitably would be passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices.

Dr. Jeff Kueter, an economist and president of the George C. Marshall Institute, referred to the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill as "a dismal down-payment on injuries more intrusive into our lives and economy" than ever seen before.

Kueter cited independent economic studies showing the diversion of capital to emission permits from the investment in new plant and equipment in the U.S. economy would, among other things, reduce employment by 1.1 million jobs a year from 2012 to 2030 and more than double that job loss in 2035, while reducing average global temperatures by an insignificant 0.36 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100 and 0.09 degrees F by 2050.



Similar costs with negligible benefits in Waxman-Markey were cited by other economists and public officials, including Dr. David Tuerck, president of the Beacon Hill Institute and chairman of the economics department at Suffolk University in Boston, and U.S. Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK).

Congressmen Rise in Opposition

U.S. Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), a veteran global warming skeptic, urged attendees to call Waxman-Markey a "cap-and-tax plan" that amounts to "unilateral disarmament in the economic sphere" for American businesses and workers.

Another longtime skeptic, Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), provoked sustained applause when he declared the partisans of Waxman-Markey are "stampeding the public and elected officials in the biggest power grab in the history of humankind."

'Green Jobs' Myths Busted

Economist Dr. Gabriel Calzada of King Juan Carlos University in Madrid reviewed the dismal performance of cap-and-trade mandates in Spain, where unemployment has reached a daunting 18 percent, carbon emissions are higher today than before cap-and-trade was imposed, and fraud and misrepresentation of emission abatement programs are rampant. In Spain, he said, two jobs have been lost or never created in the regular economy for every one job created in the "green economy."

Energy industry scholar Ben Lieberman of The Heritage Foundation rounded out the economists' dire projections, showing that by 2035 Waxman-Markey would add 58 percent to the price of gasoline at the pump, 90 percent to the typical family of four's annual cost of electricity, 55 percent to the price of natural gas, and 56 percent to the price of heating oil.

In all, Lieberman said, the tax impact for a family of four would average \$4,618 a year through 2035, creating a total additional outlay of more than \$110,000 with no added benefit to the family's quality of life or personal consumption.

Science Contradicts Alarmists

Several prominent climatologists and scientists during the conference challenged the science, causes, and severity of global warming.

Dr. Richard Lindzen, a professor of meteorology at MIT, recounted premises underlying global warming alarmism, such as allegedly dangerous increases in carbon dioxide emissions since the Industrial Revolution, rising global mean temperatures, and the slackening of the sex drive in butterflies. Such worries, he said, "are meaningless except in the propaganda war" being waged by a compliant mainstream media and a scientific community that finds it easier "to accept authority than disputing questions that are at issue."

Dr. Patrick Michaels, a Cato Institute scholar and research professor of environmental studies at the University of Virginia, blamed some of the success of doomsday alarmism on the absence of fact-checking by mainstream media when alarmists go on a sortie.

'Battle Will Be Won'

Lord Christopher Monckton, former science advisor to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who had closed each of the two previous international climate conferences, once again brought the crowd to its feet in a cheering standing ovation when he concluded his typically witty speech with the observation, "the highly placed conspirators who seek to ride the climate

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scare to world domination have reckoned without one thing. You. You are here, and you will not let the truth go. ...

“In the end, it will be here, in the United States, that the truth will first emerge. ... Not in Europe, for we are no longer free. ... It is here, in this great nation founded upon liberty, that the battle for the world’s freedom will be won.”

Dan Miller (dmiller@heartland.org) is executive vice president and publisher of The Heartland Institute.

For more information ...

Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Climate Change, June 2, Washington, DC: <http://www.heartland.org/events/dc09/proceedings.html>.