



The irrational legacy of COP21

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In 1688, British author Aphra Behn penned the literary couplet "*The World ran Mad, and each distempered Brain, Did Strange and different Frenzies entertain.*"

This poetic verse could well serve as an accurate description of the apparent scientific absurdity associated with the climate alarmist movement of today. A case in point is illustrated in negotiations currently wrapping up at the United Nations climate conference in Paris (COP21), where despite much data and many observations to the contrary, delegates are holding fast to the assertion that human emissions of carbon dioxide are causing dangerous climate change.

One of the most bizarre claims to come out of the conference is the assertion that global temperatures must be kept from rising a mere seventy five-hundredths of a degree Celsius (0.75°C) above present day values (they are to be kept within a *total* increase of 1.5°C since pre-industrial times) or climate Armageddon will result. This narrative includes melting glaciers and ice sheets, rising sea levels, inundated coastlines, more frequent and severe hurricanes, droughts, floods and other types of extreme weather events, crop failures, plant and animal extinctions, and widespread human suffering, diseases and death.

Such a claim is preposterous. It exists only in the deranged output of computer model projections that are derived from the most extreme and frenzied future scenarios. Data and observations provide no hint whatsoever that such a catastrophe would occur if the world warmed another 0.75°C or more. Temperatures were likely at least that warm, if not warmer, a thousand years ago during the Medieval Warm Period, and another thousand years before that during the Roman Warm Period. Additionally, global temperatures were approximately 2°C warmer than present some 5,000 years ago during the peak warmth of the current interglacial period. Yet in none of these time periods did climate Armageddon occur.

Despite these and many other observational facts that challenge and discredit each and every tenant of the apocalyptic narrative of human-induced climate change, delegates to the Paris meeting have continued to press forward in a deranged attempt to reduce and ultimately

eliminate *all* carbon-emitting sources of energy just a few short decades from now. If they weren't so serious about this endeavor it would be laughable — but they *are* serious. In their view, carbon dioxide is a perilous "pollutant" whose emission into the atmosphere must be regulated and halted at all costs.

Nothing, however, could be further from the truth.

Carbon dioxide is a well-known aerial *fertilizer*, and many thousands of studies have proven the growth-enhancing, water-saving and stress-alleviating benefits it provides for plants. The reality is that rising atmospheric CO₂ concentrations are providing a multitude of benefits to the biosphere. One recent [study](#) conducted by my Center calculated that over the 50-year period ending in 2001, the direct monetary value conferred by rising CO₂ since the Industrial Revolution on global crop production amounts to a staggering \$3.2 trillion. And projecting this positive externality forward in time reveals it will likely bestow an additional \$9.8 trillion in crop production benefits between now and 2050. And those figures do not include all the CO₂-induced benefits that are accruing in unmanaged, natural ecosystems.

Sadly, rather than acknowledging these verities, delegates at the Paris conference simply disregard them. Such actions speak truth to Mrs. Behn's 17th century couplet. The people behind the Paris climate negotiations care little for the truth, little for fossil fuels, little for affordable energy and little for the *millions* of unfortunate people who will suffer the negative consequences of their misguided plans to eliminate carbon-based energy.

We live in a time when half the global population experiences some sort of limitation in their access to energy, energy that is needed for the most basic of human needs, including the production of clean water, warmth and light. One-third of those thus impacted are children. And an even greater portion finds its ranks among the poor.

As a society, it is high time to recognize and embrace the truth. Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. Its increasing concentration only minimally affects earth's climate, while it offers tremendous benefits to the biosphere. Efforts to regulate and reduce CO₂ emissions will hurt far more than they will help.

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