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Mythical Climate Change Consensus Hits An Iceberg

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Junk Science: Climate change "deniers," as global warm-mongers call those who think empirical evidence is more reliable than computer models, may soon count among their number a 50,000-strong body of physicists.

At the risk of being accused of embracing what alarmists call the flat-earth view of climate change, the American Physical Society has appointed a balanced, six-person committee to review its stance on so-called climate change that includes three distinguished skeptics: Judith Curry, John Christy and Richard Lindzen. Their credentials are impressive.

Christy is director of the Earth System Science Center at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, and was a lead author of the 2001 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Curry is a professor and chairwoman of the School of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Lindzen, an Alfred P. Sloan professor of meteorology at MIT from 1983 to 2013, is currently a distinguished senior fellow in the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute.

A question the American Physical Society panel will address is one we ask repeatedly: Why wasn't the current global temperature stasis, with no discernible change in the past 15 years, not predicted by any of the climate models used by the IPCC, part of the United Nations?

The APS announcement lists among its questions to be answered: "How long must the stasis persist before there would be a firm declaration of a problem with the models?"

In a nod to the likelihood that nature, not man, calls the shots, another APS audit question asks the panel: "What do you see as the likelihood of solar influences beyond TSI (total solar irradiance)? Is it coincidence that the stasis has occurred during the weakest solar cycle (i.e., sunspot activity) in about a century?"

The other three American Physical Society members, reports Quadrant Online, maintain that climate change is real, disaster is imminent and man is at fault. They are long-time IPCC stalwart Ben Santer (who in 1996 drafted, in suspicious circumstances, the original IPCC mantra about a "discernible" influence of man-made CO₂ on climate), IPCC lead author and modeler William Collins, and atmospheric physicist Isaac Held.

The APS, to its credit, is addressing the chasm between computer models that cannot even predict the past and actual observations suggesting that warming is on hold and largely influenced by natural factors.

Computer models are simply not adequate to address the infinite number of variables, natural and man-made, that contribute to climate, often leading to wild-eyed predictions.

One such prediction noted that summer in the North Pole could be "ice-free by 2013." That was what former Vice President Al Gore insisted in his 2007 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, a call that was off by about 920,000 square miles of ice.

In an article on the website Hockey Schtick, APS panelist Christy says he analyzed the "tropical atmospheric temperature change in 102 of the latest climate-model simulations covering the past 35 years" and found that "102 model runs overshoot the actual temperature change on average by a factor of three."

Panelist Curry thinks computer models place too much emphasis on current CO₂ levels and not enough on long-term cycles in ocean temperature that have a huge influence on climate. She suspects we may be approaching a period similar to 1965-1975, when there was a clear cooling trend.

Climate is affected by an infinite number of variables, the relative importance — and complexity of their interactions — of which aren't fully understood.

Put too much weight on one and not enough on the other, and you have the computer phenomenon known as GIGO — garbage in, garbage out.

The American Physical Society hopes to take out the garbage. If it succeeds, climate alarmism and its mythical consensus, not the ice caps, will melt away.