



Climate Science Denier Richard Lindzen's List of 300 "Scientists" Sent to Trump Is the Usual Parade of Non-Experts

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Beware climate science deniers bearing gifts or, in the case before us right now, bearing open letters claiming to have hundreds of signatures from “eminent” scientists.

Last week, long-time climate science contrarian and retired MIT professor Richard Lindzen dusted off his contacts book one more time.

Lindzen, who is with the conservative think tank the Cato Institute, sent a letter to President Donald Trump urging him to pull the United States entirely from the United Nations international convention on climate change, known as the UNFCCC.

Trump has previously promised to pull the U.S. from the deal signed by almost 200 countries in Paris in late 2015 as part of that convention.

“In just a few weeks, more than 300 eminent scientists and other qualified individuals from around the world have signed the petition below,” wrote Lindzen.

Carbon dioxide, wrote the petitioners, “is not a pollutant but a major benefit to agriculture and other life on Earth” — a statement at odds with every major science academy around the world.

Media outlets including Fox News, The Hill, and Daily Caller took Lindzen’s word that the list did indeed have “eminent scientists” and “qualified individuals” without bothering to check, or even ask if this qualified as news.

Because in reality, Lindzen’s list is a rehash of previous “open letters” and petitions going back almost a decade, carrying many of the same names and making the same worn-out arguments that CO2 is good for the planet.

What Kind of Who's Who?

So who is on the list? Who are these “qualified individuals” and “eminent scientists” who have suddenly scrambled to make their voices heard?

There are medical doctors, mystery men, coal executives, petroleum engineers, economists, and think tank members. Only a small handful could be considered even remotely “qualified” or “eminent” — but not in the field of climate science.

According to the list, there are people who are “interested in climate” and one resident of Sweden who is identified only as an “emailer who wished to sign the petition” which, judging by the quality of the rest of the list, is totally good enough.

Some signers have no affiliation or address whatsoever (please step forward, Roger Bee, Barry Beetham, Geoffrey Billard, David Boothby, Claude Brasseur, Simon Breeze, Ray Cullen, Joan Gerner, Kurt Granberg and at least a dozen other mystery people, whoever you are).

Dozens of people on Lindzen’s list seem to act like central casting for these PR stunts, lending their names to many “open letters” and petitions over the years.

Names like William Happer (reported to be in the running as Trump's science adviser), Tim Ball, Viv Forbes, and Heartland Institute–affiliate Madhav Khandekar will, it seems, sign anything that comes across their mailbox.

When they sense a political moment, climate science deniers are nothing if not opportunistic.

For example, shortly after the UK had voted to leave the European Union in 2016, one group of climate science deniers called for a “Clexit” — declaring “man does not and cannot control the climate.” (Man does.)

More than half of the signers of that Clexit declaration also appear on Lindzen’s latest warmed-up list of “eminent scientists.”

Back in 2009, Lindzen, Happer, and other “skeptics” were trying to pressure the American Physical Society (APS) to change its position statement on climate change.

At least 15 on Lindzen’s new list also signed a petition sent to the APS (there could have been more, as this archived list only goes up to the letter L).

Two years earlier the APS had updated its position statement on climate change. Lindzen and others were not happy, and wanted the APS to instead declare the recent changes to the Earth’s climate were “neither exceptional nor persistent” and that there was “an extensive scientific literature that examines beneficial effects of increased levels of carbon dioxide for both plants and animals.”

Later in 2009 in the run-up to the failed UN climate talks in Copenhagen, the deniers were again checking their contacts to come up with a petition to do nothing. Some 30 of those signers back in 2009, which included Lindzen himself, also appear on Lindzen’s list eight years later.

There are several Australians on Lindzen's new list, including former coal miner and now One Nation Senator Malcolm Roberts, coal company director Viv Forbes, and blogger and gold trader David Evans, who is part of efforts to start up the "world's first anti-global warming hedge fund."

There's a Colin Brooks who, it turns out, joined The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy in 1955. There's Reg Brownell, an anti-wind farm activist, and Alan Moran, an economist who used to be with the "free market" Institute of Public Affairs think tank until someone read his Twitter feed.

Dr. Wes Allen is a family doctor from northern New South Wales.

Lindzen's list also includes several members of Principia Scientific International — a UK-based group that has claimed carbon dioxide is not even a greenhouse gas.

Climate science denier and British peer Lord Christopher Monckton once described a founder of that group, John Sullivan, as "confused and scientifically illiterate."

This is terrifically ironic because Monckton is also on Lindzen's latest list, except his name is spelled "Mockton."

Given what we now know about Lindzen's list, that typo is a thing of beauty.