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Al Gore's claim about Hurricane Florence doused by scientists

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Another climate-change claim by former Vice President Al Gore is coming under fire, this one involving Hurricane Florence.

Mr. Gore said Friday that two major storms from the Atlantic and Pacific oceans had never made landfall at the same time, referring to Hurricane Florence, the Category 1 hurricane that struck North Carolina on Friday, and Super Typhoon Mangkhut, which hit the Philippines early Saturday.

“This is the first time in history that two major storms are making landfall from the Atlantic and the Pacific simultaneously,” Mr. Gore told the crowd at the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, which wrapped up Friday.

He cited the storm activity on opposite sides of the globe as an example of climate change driving unusual and extreme weather, but meteorologist Ryan Maue was quick to dump cold water on Mr. Gore’s assertion.

“Al Gore just (fraudulently) claimed without any evidence that we’ve never had hurricanes in both the Atlantic and Pacific making landfall at the same time,” tweeted Mr. Maue, an adjunct scholar at the free-market Cato Institute.

University of Colorado Boulder meteorologist Roger A. Pielke Sr. also took issue with the claim by Mr. Gore, known for his 2006 climate-change film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and the 2017 follow-up, *An Inconvenient Sequel*.

“Such statements show that he is not familiar with the history of tropical cyclone landfalls,” said Mr. Pielke in an email.

Numerous articles and even books have been written fact-checking and challenging Mr. Gore’s climate predictions and pronouncements, including meteorologist Roy Spencer’s *An Inconvenient Deception*, and “Al Gore’s Science Fiction: A Skeptic’s Guide to an Inconvenient Truth,” a 154-page paper by the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Marlo Lewis Jr.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gore’s defenders, including some scientists, have praised his work for bringing climate change to the forefront and dismissed the fact-checks as nitpicks.

CleanTechnica's Michael Barnard called the criticisms "straw men that have been erected since 2006 by skeptics" in a Friday post headlined, "Hurricane Florence is Part of What Al Gore Got Right in An Inconvenient Truth."

In his Friday remarks, Mr. Gore also blamed climate change for driving wildfires, drought, floods, mudslides, "rain bombs," the May water shortage in Cape Town, South Africa, and record dead trees in California.

"Even without the cyclonic storms, we're putting so much heat into the oceans. We're using the sky as an open sewer," said Mr. Gore. "This is literally insane."

Mr. Maue said the "first time in history" claim appeared to originate with an NBC News report last week headlined, "In rare event, Atlantic, Pacific storms churn at the same time."

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The article cited Colorado State University meteorologist Phil Klotzbach, who described the busy storm season in the Pacific and Atlantic as uncommon but said nothing about simultaneous landings being unprecedented.

"The thing that's interesting now is the Pacific is still active, but the Atlantic is very active, which isn't normal," Mr. Klotzbach told NBC. "I'm surprised to see the Pacific and Atlantic active at the same time."

The article continued, "The researcher said this happened to a lesser extent in 2016, but notes that this time around the Atlantic is displaying unusual fury after being slated for relative hibernation."

Mr. Maue, whose comments were first reported in the Daily Caller, said the NBC article "completely missed the mark on ongoing hurricanes and their rarity."

The weeklong climate summit, hosted by California Gov. Jerry Brown, featured appearances by Mr. Gore, Democratic megadonors Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer, celebrities Harrison Ford and Alec Baldwin, while also drawing throngs of anti-capitalist protesters.