

TBD

From the ABC 7 Weather team

Climate change doesn't matter: The biggest global-warming skeptics in D.C.

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Members of the Arlington-based Americans for Prosperity square off with environmental protesters outside an Exxon Mobil shareholders meeting in 2004. (Photo: Associated Press)

Climate change is global. But climate-change skepticism has a particularly local dimension. A dense cloud of global-warming deniers has descended on the D.C. region, dumping buckets of disbelief and golf ball-sized qualms on those who say we're danger close for rising sea levels and vengeful storms and droughts.

Some argue that man-made global warming is a myth. Others say man-made warming is real, but it will be good for the planet – surfing in Alaska! Still others assert that man-made global warming is real but it's too expensive to do anything about it.

There are the usual suspects in Congress, of course. [Nearly every state](#) in the U.S. has an elected denier. And then there are those who thrive in the city's fertile university and think-tank environment. Why have they all come here? Mike Tidwell, head of the [Chesapeake Climate Action Network](#), hazards a guess: "It's easier for the fossil fuel lobby to influence national policy by supporting deniers and encouraging them with funding to be noisy in the federal capital. It's the only explanation."

Here are some of the biggest, noisiest and most influential skeptics of "gorebull warbling" around town:

Marc Morano

Morano was the mouthpiece for Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), one of the biggest skeptics in Congress. Morano helped draft a list of like-minded scientists that basically became the official Republican policy position on global warming for 2007 and 2008. Morano is now working at the website [Climate Depot](#), a project of the free-market group Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow. On the site, the ex-flack pitilessly skewers the prevailing climate science, linking to stories like "[Pig bites Seoul resident; CO2 blamed.](#)" "All of the stories about global-warming science being something other than a clear reason that we need to reduce fossil fuels have been processed through him," says Brad Johnson, a climate researcher at the left-leaning Center for American Progress. "He's been relentless at hammering reporters, helping move stories up from blogger to Fox News up into the halls of Congress."

Fun fact: Morano also was behind the Swift Boat campaign used to demolish John Kerry's presidential hopes.

Myron Ebell

The [Competitive Enterprise Institute](#) [wonk](#) is perhaps the only global-warming denier to have been officially censured by the British government, right after he said the country's chief scientist knew nothing about the climate. He has been dubbed a "climate criminal" by Greenpeace and a global-warming "misleader" by Rolling Stone. Some credit Ebell with helping turn the D.C.-based CEI toward its current anti-alarmist, anti-regulation climate philosophy, which may have something to do with ExxonMobil giving the institute [\\$2 million](#) in funding. He has testified before Congress and sparred with environmentalists including heads of the Sierra Club and Chesapeake's Tidwell, who walked off stage during one post-Katrina debate. "That's when I made a decision that I will not debate deniers. I just won't debate them," says Tidwell.

Tim Phillips

Phillips' group, the Arlington-based [Americans for Prosperity](#), follows climate-change conferences around North America like a bunch of ungroovy Deadheads. The Hot Air Tour, on the road since 2008, attacks global-warming hysteria while the Regulation Reality Tour attacked EPA regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. Last year, Phillips dreamed up the No Climate Tax Pledge against cap-and-trade energy regulation, which 83 incoming members Congress [apparently signed](#). Americans for Prosperity was founded by David Koch of Koch Industries, a gigantic plastics, lumber and oil-refining company.

Fun fact: The nifty "Tweet a Bureaucrat" feature on Phillips' Web site lets you write messages like "This is America! Many soldiers have died to protect our freedom; freedom to use energy WITHOUT RATIONING! NO UN CONTROL!!!"

Ken Cuccinelli

Cuccinelli, [Virginia's attorney general](#), is suing both his own state university and the federal government in a legal jihad against environmentalists who believe in fighting climate change. In the first suit, he accuses former University of Virginia scientist Michael Mann – the guy who proposed that historical heat levels are peaking in a [hockey stick-shaped pattern](#) – of committing fraud. Cuccinelli lost the first round of that court battle, but his spokesperson promises he will appeal. The prosecutor has also sued the EPA for trying to limit greenhouse gas emissions, saying that the so-called Climategate e-mail scandal last year casts doubt on the EPA's determination that we probably should do something about emissions, soon.

Patrick Michaels

Patrick Michaels had an odd moment in 2006 as head of the Virginia State Climatology Office, when ex-governor Tim Kaine declared under pressure from environmental groups that Michaels [didn't speak for the state or the governor](#). A senior fellow at George Mason University, Michaels is less a denier than a hem-hawer – he accepts that global warming is real but says we shouldn't draft regulation to try to curb it. He said as much when he testified before Congress this month. Michaels faced a rough patch in 2006 when he nearly ran out of money to scrutinize the data of other climate scientists, but luckily a Colorado utility company [raised about \\$150,000](#) so he could keep working. Michaels also authored the climate-change chapter of the Cato Institute's "Handbook For Policymakers," writing, "Does the most recent science and climate data argue for precipitous action? (No.) Is there a suite of technologies that can dramatically cut emissions by, say, 2050? (No.) Would such actions take away capital, in a futile attempt to stop warming, that would best be invested in the future? (Yes.)"

Steven Milloy

The concept of global warming amuses Milloy so much he won't spell it properly on his website, [Junk Science](#), preferring instead to write "global weirding" or "gorebull warbling." An adjunct scholar at the Competitive Enterprise Institute who lives in Potomac, Milloy spreads his anti-warming message through lectures and on FoxNews.com. His website included a Cap-and-Trade Death Clock that ticked toward the moment the new Congress is installed. Although the title of his book makes it pretty clear what he feels – Green Hell: How Environmentalists Plan to Control Your Life and What You Can Do to Stop Them – a quick peek inside confirms it: "Whether they're demanding that you turn down your thermostat, stop driving your car, or engage in some other senseless act of self-denial, the Greens are envisioning a grim future for you marked by endless privation."

Fun fact: Did you know that, according to Milloy's [GoreFacts.com](#), "Al Gore allowed an innocent man to be prosecuted for a 1989 car accident in which Gore's son was severely injured"?

S. Fred Singer

Singer is the granddaddy of skeptics, with real research cred: He's been professor emeritus of environmental science at the University of Virginia and chief scientist at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Now, he's president of the Arlington-based Science & Environmental Policy Project, a group of scientists who have provided information to Congress suggesting that humans are not threatened by climate change. When the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Al Gore snared a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, Singer blasted back by forming a Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change, which released a report saying climate change is a [natural phenomenon](#).

Fun fact: Singer is a skeptic on other things, too: After the BP oil spill, he noted while government crews had found 1,826 visibly oiled dead birds, that "statistic does not mean the oil killed the birds."

And here are some who are just passing through:

Texas Rep. Joe Barton

To prepare for global warming, buy more sunscreen, suggests Barton. Or maybe find a tree. "When it's hot, we get in the shade," the Texas congressman said in a hearing last year. Barton is BFFs with companies that produce greenhouse gas, receiving about \$2.8 million over the years from the oil, gas and utility industries. In 2006, Barton commissioned an influential

Congressional report blasting scientists believed that there were possible man-made warming trends last century. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, the report was “integral to congressional hearings about climate scientists” and “preceded a lot of conspiratorial thinking polluting the public debate today about climate scientists.” However, the author, George Mason University statistician Edward Wegman, is [being investigated](#) by his own school over charges that he cobbled together the study by plagiarizing textbooks and Wikipedia.

Fun fact: Barton doesn't believe oil spills are bad for you either, apologizing to BP this year for the Obama administration's gall at asking the company to compensate victims of the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

Sen. James Inhofe

Half of the Republicans now in Congress deny that climate change poses a threat, but Inhofe was pooh-poohing global warming before it became cool. In 2003, as chairman on the Committee on Environment and Public Works, Inhofe called global warming the "greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people." He's helped jam up legislation like the Climate Security Act, which would have imposed emission limits on power companies and manufacturers, and has personally rushed to a distant part of the globe to protest at a United Nations climate summit, like a cranky Batman called by a Bat signal composed of the floating lit-up head of Al Gore. Inhofe's position is that the U.N. and climate-change scientists are perpetuating the warming scare as a way to tap a faucet of grant money because, you know, they just give academic funding to anybody nowadays.

Fun fact: Inhofe's whole family [made a big igloo on the National Mall](#) during the 2009 blizzard, and decorated it with a cardboard sign reading “Honk if you [HEART] global warming.”