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How Climate Change Deniers Got Their Groove Back

They're cheering all the "winning" they'll do under Donald Trump.

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Climate change deniers are feeling good.

Nowhere was that more apparent this week than at the Texas Public Policy Foundation's "Energy and Climate Policy Summit," held Thursday at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. The election of Donald Trump — who has called climate change a "hoax," though he has also spewed a bunch of occasionally sympathetic non sequiturs about it — was clearly a sign of better days for those who disagree with the vast majority of scientists about human influence on the climate.

Individual sessions at the all-day event included "Is CO2 Really a Pollutant?" and "A Conversation on Climate Intimidation." They featured the small group of very vocal scientists who dispute the overwhelming evidence that human activity is causing the planet to warm.

The keynote speaker just before lunch was Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), the upper chamber's most vocal climate change denier and the guy who brought a snowball to the Senate floor last year to prove his point.

In her introduction of the senator, the Heritage Foundation's Becky Norton Dunlop praised Inhofe as "one of the great champions for truth in our country today." Inhofe started off with a pitch about a drawing later in the day for a copy of his book, *The Greatest Hoax: How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future*.

Inhofe was particularly happy about Trump's selection of Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to head the Environmental Protection Agency. It's a dream to have his fellow Oklahoman fill that role, Inhofe said, and the audience's applause suggested they felt the same.

"You will love this guy," he said.

Inhofe praised the "army of 200" assembled in the room: "You are voices out there in the wilderness, out there with me." He also praised the scientists there, who included Willie Soon, who has worked at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, and Patrick Michaels of the Cato Institute — both of whom, incidentally, have received fossil fuel funding to support their efforts to undermine climate science.

"All of my heroes are on the program," said Inhofe. He said he felt the climate change deniers "are winning this thing very clearly."

Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), another congressional climate change denier, told the crowd that he, too, is “so encouraged by the nomination” of Pruitt.

“This is a man who understands federalism and separation of powers and has been a warrior, a champion to help restore those things,” said Lee. Pruitt “has spent years being ignored and being pushed around by Washington. So he knows the kind of dangerous bureaucratic mindset he’s up against.”

The afternoon offered presentations from several of Inhofe’s “heroes.”

“I like to call this the CO2 Anti-Defamation League,” said Dr. William Happer, a physicist at Princeton University who said he spoke to counter the “myth that CO2 is a dangerous pollutant.”

“It’s undergone decade after decade of abuse for no reason,” Happer said.

The event also featured Craig Idso, a geographer who argued that the science on climate change is “tenuous at best.”

But Inhofe cautioned against overconfidence, warning that people who agree with him “have to be careful.”

“I don’t want people to think this is over,” he said. “It’s never over.”