

Editorial: Climate Change: Junk In, Junk Out

Posted 01/12/2011 06:55 PM ET

Environment: We can hardly dig out of one snowstorm before another hits, yet the believers keep telling us global warming is here. A new climate model, however, is showing that the projections of doom have been wrong.

No matter what happens, the political forces that tell us human activities are heating the planet will blame it on man-made global warming.

This winter's heavy snows are no exception. In its Dec. 26, issue, the New York Times gave Judah Cohen, the director of seasonal forecasting at Atmospheric and Environmental Research, several column inches to tell us to "Bundle Up, It's Global Warming."

"The not-so-obvious short answer is that the overall warming of the atmosphere is actually creating cold-weather extremes," Cohen wrote. "Last winter, too, was exceptionally snowy and cold across the Eastern United States and Eurasia, as were seven of the previous nine winters."

Cohen, who dismisses natural cycles such as "El Nino/Southern Oscillation, solar variability and global ocean currents" as possible causes of weather variations, finishes his one-eyed screed with this howler:

"The reality is, we're freezing not in spite of climate change but because of it."

Cohen is not a lone wolf crying across a hot, dry plain. His position is representative of the political left that is trying to use the global warming scare to dictate the terms of society to the world.

Liberals claim to be guided by science, but as blogger Ann Althouse noted just before Christmas, "When everything is evidence of the thing you want to believe, it might be time to stop pretending you're all about science."

The science, or more appropriately the religion that the global warming believers have been clinging to, derives from climate models that have predicted warming, some of it catastrophic.

While the models' projections are good for scary headlines and propping up a political agenda, they have been found wanting in the real world.

Almost two years ago, Roy Spencer, a climate scientist with unimpeachable credentials who has never taken research dollars from an oil company, noted on his blog that "the

main reason the models produce so much warming depends upon uncertain assumptions regarding how clouds will respond to warming."

The models, according to Spencer, don't follow the path of nature but instead use the assumptions the researchers plug in.

"One would think that understanding how the real world works would be a primary concern of climate researchers, but it is not," wrote Spencer.

"Rather than trying to understand how nature works, climate modelers spend most of their time trying to get the models to better mimic average weather patterns on the Earth and how those patterns change with the seasons."

More recently, a study found that models have been unable to accurately predict past climate.

"In a nutshell, theoretical models cannot explain what we observe in the geological record," oceanographer Gerald Dickens, a co-author of the study, told the scientific journal *Nature Geoscience*.

"There appears to be something fundamentally wrong with the way temperature and carbon are linked in climate models," said Dickens, a professor of earth science at Rice University.

Like carmakers, the scientists keep rolling out new models. One that has "a more realistic simulation of the way clouds work" has emerged from Japan, says Patrick Michaels, a former president of the American Association of State Climatologists who now is a fellow at George Mason University.

This "more sophisticated climate model," Michaels wrote recently on the Cato Institute's @liberty blog, reduces the amount of expected warming by 25% from earlier models.

The old wisdom that feeding junk into a computer will cause it to spit out junk explains why the public has been hectored about a nonexistent global warming threat for almost 20 years.

Researchers need to be more careful about what they load into their models. Until then, we have no choice but to respectfully consider their work and the political activism that goes with it to be junk science.