



Cool Heels on Climate Change Actions, Skeptics Say

By Jennifer G. Hickey

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A report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been seized upon by the Obama administration and environmentalists as a reason to demand immediate action to combat global warming, but some scientists and independent analysts say they should cool their heels.

"There is a very interesting inverse relationship over time between the IPCC reports and how well the computer models for global warming have performed. The more reality diverges from their initial projections, the more the IPCC is convinced of the certainty of their conclusions," Pat Michaels, director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute, told Newsmax.

Previous IPCC reports contained notable errors, such as the now widely discredited assertion in a 2007 Working Group II report that Himalayan glaciers could disappear by 2035, and unsubstantiated claims about a reduction in African crop yields.

In addition, computer models cited by the IPCC predicting more warming have turned out to be grossly inaccurate and failed to account for the 17-year pause in global temperature increases.

The reports also have been criticized for including "grey literature" or non-peer-reviewed sources, including from environmental groups.

"We have seen that the rate and the magnitude of surface warming since 1979 has not fallen outside the range of normal natural variability. The alarmists have been claiming the climate debate has been over since the 1990s," Joseph Bast, president of the Heartland Institute, told Newsmax.

"In fact, the IPCC has spent billions, literally billions of dollars researching climate change, and they are no closer to resolving the key question of the debate," Bast said.

The latest IPCC report, released earlier this week, says that to keep the rise in global temperatures below 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit would require vast expenditures by governments and industries around the world.

The IPCC asserts that to achieve climate protection, fossil fuel investments in the power sector would have to decline by \$30 billion annually. Conversely, investments in low-carbon sources would have to increase by \$147 billion, and investments in energy-efficient buildings and industry sectors would need to grow by \$336 billion.

[John Holdren](#), director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, said the IPCC report "highlights in stark reality the magnitude and urgency of the climate challenge" and "shows, even more compellingly than previous studies, that the longer society waits to implement strong measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the more costly and difficult it will become to limit climate change to less than catastrophic levels."

Michaels is concerned about how the Environmental Protection Agency and the Obama administration will use the data to justify a breadth of regulations imposed through executive and regulatory action.

"EPA's usage of what they term the 'social cost' of carbon as a way to justify their regulations and the selective use of science and economic parameters, I believe, is going to wind them up in court," Michaels said. "The debate is anything but settled."

President Barack Obama declared in his State of the Union address that "climate change is fact," representing a further embrace of the notion that the issue is "settled science."

But even Obama's assertion that there is a consensus among scientists about the influence of human behavior on the environment is a matter of debate.

Adherents of the "science is settled" argument often cite a study that tabulated the number of times global warming appeared in abstracts of articles and concluded that 97 percent of climate scientists accept the theory that human activity causes global warming.

In 2013, [Popular Technology](#) contacted some of the scientists cited as part of the 97 percent. Craig D. Idso, chairman of the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change, was one of the scientists whose paper was cited as supporting the argument that humans cause global warming.

Asked by the magazine whether his work was properly represented, he said it was "not an accurate representation of my paper" and that it "would be incorrect to claim that our paper was an endorsement of CO₂-induced global warming."

What is most concerning for critics like Bast and Michaels is the lack of transparency about the data used by IPCC to reach its conclusions and the political nature of the process.

In a June draft of the summary report, the IPCC cited natural variability and the cooling effects of volcanic eruptions as the explanation for the slowdown in the rate of global warming.

However, the [Associated Press](#) obtained comments submitted to the IPCC that appeared to show several governments preferred alternate theories to explain the pause in the warming rate

between 1998 and 2012.

Germans favored simply deleting the entire reference to the slowdown, while the United States urged the authors to include the "leading hypothesis" that it was linked to more heat being transferred to the deep ocean.

"The lead authors review their own material and can reject anything that is critical of their viewpoints. The lack of transparency is most evident in the fact they do not make their data available for outside review because they claim it is proprietary material," Bast said.

Michaels said the repeated claims of a coming environmental apocalypse are resulting in a more skeptical public, as evidenced by recent polling on the issue.

An April [Gallup poll](#) found that only 34 percent of Americans say they worry a "great deal" about global warming — essentially the same as in 1989 and down from 41 percent in March 2007.

Bast said the obsessive focus on global warming is causing policymakers to ignore "genuine environmental problems that are way more important than global warming."

Those problems, he said, include animal extinction and access to clean water.

"In Africa, people are still burning animal dung in huts for heating, which greatly reduces the quality of air in the huts and has resulted in the life expectancy of Africans being 37 years," he pointed out. "Banning fossil fuels will not solve the problem. What will is to start electrifying those rural areas and to build water systems so they have adequate access to clean water."