

## Trump taps former Cato researcher as chief scientist

Scott Waldman

September 22, 2020

The Trump administration's pick to become NOAA's new chief scientist is a meteorologist who frequently criticizes "climate alarmists," according to media reports and a source with knowledge of the appointment.

Ryan Maue acknowledges that humans contribute to climate change, but he is a frequent critic of those who push for more aggressive climate policy.

Maue has a robust Twitter following where he posts colorful weather maps from his company — and the occasional partisan attack. Targets include climate scientists and activists with whom he disagrees.

Maue's appointment, which does not require Senate confirmation, was first reported by *The Washington Post*. A source with knowledge of the appointment confirmed the move.

Maue is now the developer of [weathermodels.com](http://weathermodels.com).

He routinely challenges scientists who connect global warming to real-world consequences, such as more intense hurricanes. This area of study — known as attribution science — is a relatively new but growing field.

"If you question the efficacy of attribution science, then you risk being smeared and censored," he wrote on Twitter earlier this year.

Maue occasionally delves into politics. He baselessly accused reporters of giving Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden questions ahead of a recent press conference.

"He has the questions ahead of time and is using his notes to answer," Maue tweeted.

But Maue has dinged Trump administration officials as well — notably those who were involved in a mini-scandal known as "Sharpiegate."

Last year, Trump falsely said on Twitter that Hurricane Dorian was projected to strike Alabama. Soon after, National Weather Service forecasters in Birmingham corrected the president's claims.

But Trump didn't let up. He displayed a hurricane tracking map that was altered with a marker to show it hitting Alabama. And top NOAA officials provided cover for the president.

That bothered Maue. "Whoa! Nothing like throwing your 'Alabama' NWS office under the bus," Maue tweeted.

The current acting chief scientist of NOAA is Craig McLean, who initiated the yearlong investigation into Sharpiegate. That investigation found that political pressure from the White House resulted in the agency attacking its own researchers.

Maue's appointment comes a week after NOAA appointed a climate science denier to a key position.

David Legates, a geography professor at the University of Delaware, was hired as deputy assistant secretary of Commerce for observation and prediction. Legates has a long history of questioning fundamental climate science and has suggested that an outcome of burning fossil fuels would be a more habitable planet for humans.

Maue worked as an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute for years until the think tank abruptly shut down its climate policy shop last year. The Cato Institute was founded by billionaire industrialist Charles Koch and has received millions of dollars from the Koch network, the Mercer Family Foundation, Exxon Mobil Corp. and other foundations that oppose regulations.

At Cato, Maue worked with Pat Michaels, a climate researcher who rejects mainstream scientists' concerns about rising temperatures. Michaels is now a part of the CO2 Coalition, which promotes the idea that the world benefits from burning more fossil fuels and adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

Last year, Maue told E&E News that he agreed with Michaels' concept of "lukewarming," which rejects dire predictions of global warming.

"Lukewarming is not climate denial," Maue said, adding, "Most of us on this side of the issue believe in lower climate sensitivity. We don't believe there's going to be 5 degrees of warming; we figure it's at the lower end of 1.5 degrees."

The vast majority of climate scientists believe the world could warm 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels within the next two decades and accelerate through the end of the century, with some estimates placing warming above 5 C.