

CRU data loss account in dispute

By **Essex County Conservative Examiner**, Terry Hurlbut

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The accounts of the accidental or willful loss of weather-station data by the [East Anglia Climatic Research Unit \(CRU\)](#) came into fresh dispute yesterday, after *The Sunday Times* (London) published their [article saying that most of the data that form the basis of their climate-change models had been lost or discarded](#) during a move to new quarters.

Times Environment Editor Jonathan Leake published his report on Sunday (November 29),

and cited past statements on the CRU's own website to support his report. For example, he cited a statement attributed to Phil Jones, CRU's director. But in the last thirty-six hours, blogger Daniel Cressey at the journal *Nature* has [disputed that account](#) and chosen to rely instead on [CRU's Saturday statement](#) saying that 95% of all their raw data were already available, and the rest would be made available as soon as CRU could renegotiate certain non-publication agreements. Cressey also chose to cast aspersions on certain parties, most notably the Competitive Enterprise Institute, who had complained much earlier about the loss of data. Cressey complained in his last post that CEI, for example, receives funding from "automotive industries and oil companies." Cressey did not elaborate on why that should present a problem, but in fact those industries would be among the first to face additional regulation, if not punishment, for contributing to any cataclysmic change in the earth's climate, if such change were proved. (Rajendra Pachauri, head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said as much over the weekend, [as discussed here](#).)

Roger Pielke, Jr., who has followed this controversy for years, [is not completely satisfied](#). Neither is Lucia Liljegren, publisher of *The Blackboard*.

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The original statement by Phil Jones on the data loss, in its full context, [as cited earlier by Patrick J. Michaels](#) of the CATO Institute on the website of *National Review*, appears here:

Since the 1980s, we have merged the data we have received into existing series or begun new ones, so it is impossible to say if all stations within a particular country or if all of an individual record should be freely available. Data storage availability in the 1980s meant that we were not able to keep the multiple sources for some sites, only the station series after adjustment for homogeneity issues. We, therefore, do not hold the original raw data but only the value-added (i.e., quality controlled and homogenized) data.

Roger Pielke, Jr., [took note of that statement](#) when it was first made, and was sharply critical:

Say what?! CRU has lost track of the original data that it uses to create its global temperature record!? Can this be serious? So not only is it now impossible to replicate or reevaluate homogeneity adjustments made in the past -- which might be important to do as new information is learned about the spatial representativeness of siting, land use effects, and so on -- but it is now also impossible to create a new temperature index from scratch. CRU is basically saying, "trust us." So much for settling questions and resolving debates with empirical information (i.e., science).

The CEI, as previously reported, [formally requested that the EPA reopen its public-comment period](#) on proposed regulations to treat carbon dioxide as a pollutant. Eight days later (October 14), Robin Bravender at E&E [attempted to refute the criticism](#). But that report merely accepted statements from Phil Jones at CRU and Tom Karl, director of the National Climate Data Center (NOAA). Independent verification of the assurances by these men appears lacking.

This lack is especially problematic in light of the contents of multiple e-mails sent by, addressed to, copied to, or mentioning various key players in the CRU Archive scandal. They include Jones, Michael E. Mann of the Earth Science Research Center (Penn State), Eugene R. Wahl, a climatologist at NCDC, and scientists Gavin Schmidt, Ben Santer, and Tom Wigley. This Examiner has [discussed these e-mails previously](#). In that light, the present statement by CRU to the effect that 95% of the raw data are already available is unsubstantiated and appears contradicted by the record. Nor has anyone yet explained why raw scientific data, on an issue of importance to the formation of public policy on national and international scales, should ever be subject to the sort of covenants-not-to-publish that are commonly associated with the research and development of proprietary products and processes by private industry.

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