

THE HUFFINGTON POST

A Modest Hurricane Proposal for Honoring Climate Change Deniers

BY: KEVIN WELNER – OCTOBER 29TH, 2012

For almost 70 years, we have given tropical cyclones names. We now, for example, are focused on Hurricane Sandy. The "S" in Sandy means that this is the 18th tropical storm of the season. Next year, the first ten will be named Andrea, Barry, Chantal, Dorian, Erin, Fernand, Gabrielle, Humberto, Ingrid and Jerry.

This practice is, alas, boring and not the least bit instructive. We should turn to a much better option.

Because the odds of extreme weather conditions have increased due to man-made climate change, we owe it to the climate change deniers (and to the world's population) to use these naming opportunities as a reminder of how we got here. As with NASCAR, we should give credit to the proud sponsors who make these disasters possible. Even if the wusses at the World Meteorological Organization are too timid to take on this new practice, it's something that the rest of us can do.

So here are my suggestions...

The season should start off with Hurricane AEI, named for the American Enterprise Institute, in honor of that free-market think tank's offer to scientists of "\$10,000, plus travel and other expenses, to highlight the shortcomings in a report from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group widely considered to be the authority on climate change science."

Next up, we would be drowned in the tears of Hurricane Boehner. Hurricane ConocoPhillips would follow, although the Competitive Enterprise Institute really deserves the recognition here as well.

For "D" I'd go with Hurricane DTE Energy, in honor of the Michigan company's campaign against renewable energy targets. Alternatively, there are plenty of climate-change denying members of Congress to choose from. Next up, inevitably, is ExxonMobil, followed by either FreedomWorks or perhaps FACES of Coal (Federation for American Coal, Energy and Security).

For "G," Hurricane Gingrich has a telling ring to it. And for "H" we have both the Heartland Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

The strongest claim to "naming rights" for the letter I undoubtedly belongs to Congress's most renowned climate change denier, Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe. He explained during a radio interview that his climate change denying comes from the Bible:

Well actually the Genesis 8:22 that I use in there is that 'as long as the earth remains there will be seed time and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night,' my point is, God's still up there. The arrogance of people to think that we, human beings, would be able to change what He is doing in the climate is to me outrageous.

For his devout work, the ninth tropical storm every year should bear Inhofe's name. This is perhaps unfair to the Institute for Energy Research (aka the American Energy Alliance), but so be it.

For the tenth tropical storm, I suggest the name Johnson, in honor of The Three Johnsons, members of the House of Representatives who voted in 2011 in favor of H.R. 910, which would have prohibited the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating greenhouse-gas emissions from stationary sources as a way to help address climate change: Sam Johnson of Texas, Timothy Johnson of Illinois, and Bill Johnson of Ohio.

Hurricane Koch would be next, in honor of Koch Industries, the Koch Family Foundations and other Koch-related entities for their support of coal and coal-friendly politicians.

Two House members make strong claims to "L": Rep. Dan Lungren (California) and Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (Missouri).

But the most competition will generally be found when we get around to the thirteenth tropical storm each year. Fox News columnist Steve Milloy and Sen. Mitch McConnell have stellar credentials. But so do the Mercatus Center, the Manhattan Institute and the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Sen. John McCain, Gov. Bob McDonnell, and Gov. Susana Martinez also have strong claims for their contributions to climate change. Prof. Pat Michaels of the Cato Institute and Lord Christopher Monckton from across the Pond are also extraordinarily deserving.

And so it goes. Here in the U.S., at least, the explosion of climate-change deniers has given us a wealth of names to choose from. No more Doriens and Humbertos! Bring on Hurricane Lungren and Tropical Storm Milloy.

Alternatively, we can name to the storms after the untold numbers who have died and will die because of the more extreme weather conditions. But where's the fun in that?