

- John Stossel - <http://stossel.blogs.foxbusiness.com> -

Climate "Consensus"?

Posted By [John Stossel](#) On December 14, 2009 @ 9:53 am In [Global Warming](#) | [20 Comments](#)



Some of you complained that I did not address the science of climate change in my first show last week, especially that I did not challenge the "consensus" view of the IPCC ([International Panel on Climate Change](#) ^[1]). Adam Wildavsky ([bridge expert](#) ^[2] and son of Aaron Wildavsky, author of the book, [Searching for Safety](#) ^[3], which changed my life) was in the audience. He emailed me afterward to say:

I gave Jerry Taylor a hard time after the show for accepting the IPCC claim that increased CO2 emissions will lead to measurable temperature increases. He explained to me that he's accepting their claim only for the sake of argument, not being a scientist himself. That wasn't clear to me from what he said for broadcast, but I know one

can only get so much in. I understand his point, but I don't agree that the science can't be understood intelligent laymen.

That's a good point. President Obama, like many Americans, is absolutely convinced that global warming is a serious problem that requires tremendously expensive carbon emissions caps. But if you start by challenging their gold standard of science, the IPCC, many people are likely to just ignore you from the start. By taking the IPCC position as a given, Jerry engaged people who share Obama's point of view. They may be more willing to listen to what he had to say. And that's one thing I find compelling about what Jerry says: Even taking the IPCC at its word, the case for carbon emission caps is weak.

But there are still plenty of questions about the IPCC's position that deserve to be asked. I hope to devote a show to it next year.

Earlier this year, the [Heartland Institute](#) ^[4] released an 880-page critique of the IPCC's latest report, "[Climate Change Reconsidered](#)" ^[5]. Written by 40 scientists, it offers a detailed account of dissent from the IPCC position. (My producer objects to some phrasing in the [Executive Summary](#) ^[5], such as the claim that satellite data shows "no net warming" over the past 29 years. It's true that some months in the past year reported average temperatures at or below temperatures in 1979, but overall, there is a slight warming trend. Still, it makes several excellent points, including those on the IPCC's use of "projections" rather than scientific forecasts.)

There is [another school](#) ^[6] that accepts man's position driving climate change, but argues that the IPCC is too focused on carbon emissions alone. As they wrote in the *Journal Eos*:

"The evidence predominantly suggests that humans are significantly altering the global environment, and thus climate, in a variety of diverse ways beyond the effects of human emissions of greenhouse gases, including CO2. Unfortunately, the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment did not sufficiently acknowledge the importance of these other human climate forcings in altering regional and global climate and their effects on predictability at the regional scale."

And [my college newspaper](#) ^[7], where I had my first job, reports:

Two Princeton physics professors are leading a campaign for the withdrawal of the 2007 statement of the American Physical Society (APS), which claims that the evidence for global warming represents an immediate national emergency...APS' 2007 statement, which claimed that the evidence for global warming is "incontrovertible," used data produced by the University

of East Anglia's Climate Research Unit.

... “I am unaware of any incontrovertible evidence in science,” [William] Happer explained. “I think the APS and other scientific societies will come to regret their statements on global warming as the shakiness of the science becomes clearer.”

... The temperature increase will be “at most 1.5 [degrees] Celsius over the next 100 years,” which is “hardly an imminent threat,” [Robert] Austin said .

There is plenty more to be said about the science of climate change. We will return to the subject. But this week, it's either Atlas Shrugged, or health care.

Article printed from John Stossel: <http://stossel.blogs.foxbusiness.com>

URL to article: <http://stossel.blogs.foxbusiness.com/2009/12/14/climate-consensus/>

URLs in this post:

[1] International Panel on Climate Change: <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

[2] bridge expert: <http://www.tameware.com/adam/bridge/>

[3] Searching for Safety: <http://www.amazon.com/Searching-Safety-Aaron-Wildavsky/dp/0887387144>

[4] Heartland Institute: <http://www.heartland.org/>

[5] Climate Change Reconsidered: <http://www.heartland.org/publications/NIPCC%20report/PDFs/NIPCC%20Final.pdf>

[6] another school: <http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2009/11/alternative-hypotheses-about-climate.html>

[7] my college newspaper: <http://www.dailyprincetonian.com/2009/12/11/24729/>

Copyright © 2009 John Stossel. All rights reserved.