



Lawsuit: White House Won't Show Evidence To Back Up 'Polar Vortex' Claims

By [Michael Bastasch](#)

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A free-market think tank is suing the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy over its withholding of documents linked to the claim that global warming caused last winter's polar vortex.

[The free-market Competitive Enterprise Institute filed a lawsuit on Wednesday](#) demanding documents related to the White House's polar vortex video. The suit comes after CEI previously petitioned the White House to correct the video, which was criticized by climate scientists and ran counter to peer-reviewed studies.

But the White House said the video, in which White House science czar John Holdren connected global warming to the harsh winter, was based on Holdren's "personal opinion" and exempt from data quality laws. When CEI tried to obtain federal documents related to the video, officials said they were part of the "deliberative process" and exempt from records requests.

"If this video really represented Dr. Holdren's personal opinion, then it's bad enough that OSTP spent taxpayer dollars to produce and post it on the White House web site," said CEI general counsel Sam Kazman. "But for the agency to refuse to disclose documents related to the video in order to protect what it claims are internal deliberations is doubly ridiculous."

The White House released its polar vortex video last January. [In the video, Holdren claimed a](#) "growing body of evidence suggests that the kind of extreme cold being experienced by much of the United States as we speak is a pattern that we can expect to see with increasing frequency as global warming continues."

The idea is that melting Arctic ice sheets weakens the swirling mass of cold air in the polar region, called the polar vortex. As the vortex weakens, its pattern becomes more erratic and pushes cold air farther south. But the video was quickly debunked by climate scientists and peer-reviewed studies showing the polar vortex is not a product of global warming (or climate change, or whatever).

"While perhaps it could be argued that Holdren's statement is not an outright lie, it is, at its very best, a half-truth and even a stretch at that," [wrote scientists Pat Michaels and Chip](#)

[Knappenberger with the libertarian Cato Institute](#). “For in fact, there is a larger and faster growing body of evidence that directly disputes Holdren’s contention.”

“It’s an interesting idea, but alternative observational analyses and simulations with climate models have not confirmed the hypothesis, and we do not view the theoretical arguments underlying it as compelling,” [five top climate scientists wrote in a letter published in Science Magazine in the wake of Holdren’s claims](#).

Studies done before Holdren’s claim that global warming is causing frigid winters also cast doubt on the integrity of the White House polar vortex video.

[Research by Colorado State University’s Elizabeth Barnes](#) in 2013 found that claims that “amplified polar warming has led to the increased occurrence of slow-moving weather patterns and blocking episodes, is unsupported by the observations.”

[A study published before Barnes’s by Australian scientists James Screen and Jan Simmonds](#) found that statistically significant changes in the jet stream depended largely on the methodology used by scientists. Screen and Simmonds noted their findings have “different and complex possible implications for midlatitude weather, and we encourage further work to better understand these.”

[A recent study from Japanese scientists](#), however, claims that melting Arctic ice will bring colder winter with it. The study found that severe winters happening in Europe and Asia have doubled due to melting ice sheets.

Despite the conflicting evidence on the Arctic’s role in cold winters, the White House has not backed off from its claims that global warming is driving frigid weather. Even though Holdren purportedly espoused his opinion in the video, that has not been disclosed nor has the video been changed.

“Perhaps OSTP should give us a new video titled ‘The Holdren Document Vortex Explained in 2 Hours,’” Kazman quipped.

The White House did not respond to The Daily Caller News Foundation’s request for comment.