

GWPF funder Lord Leach – relying on unreliable sources of global warming information

A funder of the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), Lord Leach relies upon sources of climate information with a long history of being wrong.

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[DeSmog UK has found that](#) libertarian banker Lord Leach is a likely funder of the anti-climate political advocacy group Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF). In May of 2009, [Lord Leach gave a long speech in Parliament](#) detailing his beliefs about global warming.

The speech was full of inaccuracies, myths, and misinformation. Known as a [Gish Gallop](#), the sheer number of false claims in the speech would require tremendous effort to debunk. Most telling were the sources that Lord Leach relied upon to support his statements. For example,

Probably the best climatologist in the world is Professor Lindzen and another good one is Professor Singer.

While [Richard Lindzen](#) is a climate scientist, he's also the climate scientist who's been [the wrongest, longest](#). Throughout his climate science career, Lindzen consistently took positions that were contrary to the climate science mainstream. For example, Lindzen claimed that global warming over the 20th century was minimal, that humans have an insignificant impact on global temperatures, and that water vapor will act to dampen global warming. All of these claims and many more have proven to be completely wrong. In another contrarian position, [Lindzen has disputed the link between secondhand smoke and lung cancer](#).

So has the other source Lord Leach cited in the above quote, [Fred Singer](#). Unlike Lindzen, [Singer doesn't conduct climate science research](#). Instead, Singer is essentially a professional contrarian. On behalf of various industries, [Singer has disputed the links between](#) ultraviolet radiation and skin cancer, between chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and ozone depletion, between passive smoking and lung cancer, and of course between human activity and global warming. As with Lindzen, Singer has been proven wrong on every point.

Political advocacy are another commonality between the two. [Fred Singer is affiliated with numerous fossil fuel-funded political think tanks](#), including the Heartland Institute and Cato Institute. When he retired from academia last year, [Richard Lindzen likewise joined the Cato](#)

[Institute](#). Their lifelong contrarianism, history of being consistently wrong, and affiliation with political organizations should make anyone question their climate credibility, let alone relying on them exclusively or claiming they're the world's best climatologists.

Later in his speech, Lord Leach continued his reliance on dubious sources.

The world's leading expert by far on sea levels is Professor Axel Mörrer

In reality, Nils-Axel Mörrer is arguably the world's least credible person when it comes to sea levels. [Actual sea level experts have taken efforts to distance themselves from him](#) after Mörrer has misrepresented their positions. Mörrer has repeatedly disputed the accuracy of the sea level record by [resorting to conspiracy theories, claiming](#) for example that the satellite record has been falsified. Instead, [Mörrer has invented an alternate reality](#) without any supporting evidence. He also [claims to be an expert in dowsing](#).

Joining the group of those who Lord Leach relies upon for climate information,

Professor Carter, a distinguished economist specialising in climate economics in Australia

I was unable to find a record of an Australian economist named Carter who made the arguments attributed by Lord Leach. There is however a Bob Carter – an Australian marine geologist and widely-known climate contrarian who has made [statements exaggerating the costs of reducing carbon pollution](#) similar to those advanced by Lord Leach. Like Fred Singer, [Bob Carter is affiliated with various fossil fuel-funded political think tanks](#). He also has a nearly nonexistent climate science publication record, and certainly is no economist.

However, these sources of climate misinformation pale in comparison to this last one cited by Lord Leach in his speech,

If you immerse yourself in the blogosphere, which is as good a place as any to study the science — and where sceptics are much more courteous and open to dissent than believers — you will find that scientific opinion is very divided, and that there are at least as many sceptics as believers.

The blogosphere is absolutely not as good a place as any to study climate science. If you want to study climate science, you should read the peer-reviewed climate literature. True to form, [Lord Leach has spoken highly of anti-science blogs](#), which are the most inaccurate and unreliable sources of information about climate change.

How can one reject the consensus of climate experts in favor of a few habitually wrong, biased, cherry-picked individuals? As Lord Leach illustrates, by denying that the consensus exists.

It is widely believed that there is a universal consensus. If that is so, why have 33,000 scientists—the number grows so fast that I may be out of date, and it may be 35,000 or 40,000 — signed a protest against the climate extremism expressed in the Kyoto Protocol? There is no scientific consensus.

Here Lord Leach undoubtedly refers to [the Oregon Petition](#), which can be signed by anyone with any college science degree ([and even by some fictional characters](#)). This is not a list of climate experts. Moreover, study after study after study has proven the existence of the approximately [97% expert consensus on human-caused global warming](#).

In his speech, Lord Leach discussed the importance of being open-minded. However, [as the saying goes](#),

Do not be so open-minded that your brains fall out.

It's also important to consider the credibility of one's sources, and their history of accuracy (or in Lord Leach's case, lack thereof). It should go without saying that rejecting the conclusions of 97% of experts in favor of a few individuals with a history of contrarian thinking that's been proven consistently wrong is a bad idea.

While the implications of climate research may be inconvenient (i.e. pointing to the need for government action to tackle the global threat of rapid climate change), denying the science and expert consensus won't make the problem go away. Even if you doubt the expert consensus and supporting evidence, basic [risk management](#) principles dictate that we need to take action to mitigate the high probability that the experts are right and you and your cherry picked sources are wrong.