

## Cato's Michaels falsely claims emails show CRU scientists were "silencing" dissent

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In a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, Cato Institute fellow and author Patrick Michaels claimed that recently stolen emails from the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) reveal "a silencing of climate scientists" and "dramatically weakened the case for emissions reductions." Michaels cited emails that show scientists' objections to certain papers being published in journals, however, the scientists do not appear to be in a position "to bias" the scientific literature, because several of the papers they criticized *were* published or cited, and in one paper's case, editors at the journal conceded that it should not have been published as written.

### Michaels claimed scientists involved in CRU emails skewed the literature by "silencing" skeptics

From the December 18 *Wall Street Journal* [op-ed](#):

But there's something much, much worse going on -- a silencing of climate scientists, akin to filtering what goes in the bible, that will have consequences for public policy, including the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent categorization of carbon dioxide as a "pollutant."

The bible I'm referring to, of course, is the refereed scientific literature. It's our canon, and it's all we have really had to go on in climate science (until the Internet has so rudely interrupted). When scientists make putative compendia of that literature, such as is done by the U.N. climate change panel every six years, the writers assume that the peer-reviewed literature is a true and unbiased sample of the state of climate science.

That can no longer be the case. The alliance of scientists at East Anglia, Penn State and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (in Boulder, Colo.) has done its best to bias it.

A refereed journal, *Climate Research*, published two particular papers that offended Michael Mann of Penn State and Tom Wigley of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. One of the papers, published in 2003 by Willie Soon and Sallie Baliunas (of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics), was a meta-analysis of dozens of "paleoclimate" studies that extended back 1,000 years. They concluded that 20th-century temperatures could not confidently be considered to be warmer than those indicated at the beginning of the last millennium.

[...]

Mr. Mann called upon his colleagues to try and put *Climate Research* out of business. "Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues in the climate research community to no longer submit to, or cite papers in, this journal," he wrote in one of the emails. "We would also need to consider what we tell or request of our more reasonable colleagues who currently sit on the editorial board."

After Messrs. Jones and Mann threatened a boycott of publications and reviews, half the editorial board of *Climate Research* resigned. People who didn't toe Messrs. Wigley, Mann and Jones's line began to experience increasing difficulty in publishing their results.

### In fact, *Climate Research* editors and publisher conceded that Soon-Baliunas paper should not have been published as written

**Mann email proposing boycott of *Climate Research* cited specific paper.** Critics have frequently pointed to a March 11, 2003, [email](#) in which Mann wrote that the paper by Soon and Baliunas "couldn't have cleared a 'legitimate' peer review process anywhere. That leaves only one possibility -- that the peer-review process at *Climate Research* has been hijacked by a few skeptics on the editorial board." Mann further stated, "I think we have to stop considering '*Climate Research*' as a legitimate peer-reviewed journal. Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues in the climate research community to no longer submit to, or cite papers in, this journal. We would also need to consider what we tell or request of our more reasonable colleagues who currently sit on the editorial board ..."

***New York Times*: Editors said "the analysis was deeply flawed," and publisher said "the paper should not have been published as written."** *The New York Times* [reported](#) on August 5, 2003

...that the Soon-Baliunas paper "has been heavily criticized by many scientists, including several of the journal editors. The editors said last week that whether or not the conclusions were correct, the analysis was deeply flawed." The *Times* further noted that the "publisher of the journal, Dr. Otto Kinne, and an editor who recently became editor in chief, Dr. Hans von Storch, both said that in retrospect the paper should not have been published as written" and that von Storch resigned, "saying he disagreed with the peer-review policies." The *Times* report further noted that "[t]he study in *Climate Research* was in part underwritten by \$53,000 from the American Petroleum Institute, the voice of the oil industry." Additionally, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* [reported](#) that "scientists contacted by The Chronicle complained about the way their work was cited" in the paper.

**Climate Research publisher: "CR should have requested appropriate revisions of the manuscript prior to publication."** On September 19, 2003, Kinne [stated](#) of the paper's conclusions, "While these statements may be true, the critics point out that they cannot be concluded convincingly from the evidence provided in the paper. CR should have requested appropriate revisions of the manuscript prior to publication."

## Scientists' objections do not prevent papers from being published, included in IPCC report

**Yale climate center: Papers scientists said they would "keep out" of IPCC were "subsequently included."** According to a December 17 [article](#) at the Yale Forum on Climate Change & the Media, one email from CRU director Phil Jones criticizes "two papers, one by Kalnay and Cai (2003) in *Nature* and [one by McKittrick and Michaels](#) (2004) in *Climate Research*, both dealing with effects of land-use change on temperature measurements. Despite Jones' dislike of the papers and his threat to keep them out of the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] Fourth Assessment Report, both papers were [subsequently included](#) in the Assessment, suggesting that no small group of scientists could be final arbiters of what is included in the IPCC reports." In the July 8, 2004, [email](#), Jones had written that he couldn't "see either of these papers being in the next IPCC report. Kevin and I will keep them out somehow -- even if we have to redefine what the peer-review literature is!"

**GRL told Mann it would publish McIntyre paper despite his "concerns."** In an [email](#), Steve Mackwell, then-editor in chief at *Geophysical Research Letters* (*GRL*), wrote to Mann that he would move ahead with publishing a manuscript written by Canadian mathematician Steve McIntyre despite Mann's "concerns." Mackwell wrote that three reviewers had "recommended publication" and that he was "satisfied by the credentials of the reviewers," and that he did "not feel that we have sufficient reason to interfere in the timely publication of this work." The [paper](#) was published on February 12, 2005.

**IPCC chair: "[N]o individual or small group of scientists is in a position to exclude a peer-reviewed paper from an I.P.C.C. assessment."** In a statement on the hacked emails, IPCC chairman Rajendra Pachauri stated that "no individual or small group of scientists is in a position to exclude a peer-reviewed paper from an I.P.C.C. assessment," and added that the assessment process "ensure[s] the elimination of any possibility of omissions or distortions, intentional or accidental." From Pachauri's [statement](#):

In summary, no individual or small group of scientists is in a position to exclude a peer-reviewed paper from an I.P.C.C. assessment. Likewise, individuals and small groups have no ability to emphasize a result that is not consistent with a range of studies, investigations, and approaches. Every layer in the process (including large author teams, extensive review, independent monitoring of review compliance, and plenary approval by governments) plays a major role in keeping I.P.C.C. assessments comprehensive, unbiased, open to the identification of new literature, and policy relevant but not policy prescriptive.

The unfortunate incident that has taken place through illegal hacking of the private communications of individual scientists only highlights the importance of I.P.C.C. procedures and practices and the thoroughness by which the Panel carries out its assessment. This thoroughness and the duration of the process followed in every assessment ensure the elimination of any possibility of omissions or distortions, intentional or accidental.

## Contrary to Michaels' suggestion, GRL editor said scientists had "nothing to do" with his resignation

From Michaels' *Wall Street Journal* op-ed:

GRL is a very popular refereed journal. Mr. Wigley was concerned that one of the editors

was "in the skeptics camp." He emailed Michael Mann to say that "if we can find documentary evidence of this, we could go through official ... channels to get him ousted."

Mr. Mann wrote to Mr. Wigley on Nov. 20, 2005 that "It's one thing to lose 'Climate Research.' We can't afford to lose GRL." In this context, "losing" obviously means the publication of anything that they did not approve of on global warming.

Soon the suspect editor, Yale's James Saiers, was gone. Mr. Mann wrote to the CRU's Phil Jones that "the GRL leak may have been plugged up now w/ new editorial leadership there."

**Saiers: "My departure had nothing to do with attempts by Wigley or anyone else to have me sacked."** In a November 28 post on his blog, Roger Pielke Jr. [wrote](#) that he contacted Saiers to inquire about Wigley's [statement](#) that "we could go through official ... channels to get him ousted." Pielke posted Saiers' response:

I haven't looked for, and don't intend to look for, my name in the CRU emails, but one of my colleagues did alert me to an email written by Wigley in which he suggested that, if I were a climate skeptic, then steps should be taken to get me "ousted." Wigley's suggestion stems, I believe, from the publication of a GRL paper (by McIntyre and McKittrick) that criticized certain elements of Michael Mann's Hockey Stick paper. This paper caused a bit of a stir and because I oversaw the peer review of this paper, I assume that Wigley inferred (incorrectly) that I was a climate-change skeptic. I stepped down as GRL editor at the end of my three-year term, long after the excitement over the McIntyre and McKittrick paper had passed. My departure had nothing to do with attempts by Wigley or anyone else to have me sacked.

## Climate experts, fact-checkers dispute notion that emails undermine climate change consensus

**Michaels: CRU emails mean "the EPA has lost the basis for its finding."** In the op-ed, Michaels claimed that the CRU emails "have dramatically weakened the case for emissions reductions" and that "[t]he EPA claimed to rely solely upon compendia of the refereed literature such as the IPCC reports, in order to make its finding of endangerment from carbon dioxide. Now that we know that literature was biased by the heavy-handed tactics of the East Anglia mob, the EPA has lost the basis for its finding."

**PolitiFact: "The e-mails do not prove that climate change is a hoax."** Addressing Sen. James Inhofe's (R-OK) claim that the emails show the science behind climate change "has been pretty well debunked," [PolitiFact.com](#) rated the claim "False," noting that "[i]ndependent of CRU's data, agencies and academics all over the world are coming to essentially the same conclusion: Climate change is happening."

**FactCheck.org: "[T]here's still plenty of evidence that the earth is getting warmer and that humans are largely responsible."** FactCheck.org [concluded](#) that claims that the emails show climate change science is fraudulent are "far wide of the mark," adding that "many of the e-mails that are being held up as 'smoking guns' have been misrepresented by global-warming skeptics eager to find evidence of a conspiracy. And even if they showed what the critics claim, there remains ample evidence that the earth is getting warmer." FactCheck.org further noted that the IPCC report "incorporates data from three working groups, each of which made use of data from a huge number of sources -- of which CRU was only one."

**Associated Press analysis: "[T]he messages don't support claims that the science of global warming was faked."** After "an exhaustive review" of the emails, the AP [concluded](#) that "[e]-mails stolen from climate scientists show they stonewalled skeptics and discussed hiding data - but the messages don't support claims that the science of global warming was faked, according to an exhaustive review by The Associated Press." The AP analysis further stated, "None of the e-mails flagged by the AP and sent to three climate scientists viewed as moderates in the field changed their view that global warming is man-made and a threat."

**1,700 scientists sign statement reaffirming position that warming is "unequivocal."** Following the release of the reportedly stolen emails, more than 1,700 scientists from the United Kingdom signed a [statement](#) responding "to the ongoing questioning of core climate science and methods." It said: "We, members of the UK science community, have the utmost confidence in the observational evidence for global warming and the scientific basis for concluding that it is due primarily to human activities. The evidence and the science are deep and extensive. They come from decades of painstaking and meticulous research, by many thousands of scientists across the world who adhere to the highest levels of professional integrity. That research has been subject to peer review and publication,

providing traceability of the evidence and support for the scientific method." It continued:

The science of climate change draws on fundamental research from an increasing number of disciplines, many of which are represented here. As professional scientists, from students to senior professors, we uphold the findings of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, which concludes that 'Warming of the climate system is unequivocal' and that 'Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations'.

**Nature: "Nothing in the e-mails undermines the scientific case that global warming is real."** A December 2 [editorial](#) in the science journal *Nature* stated: "Nothing in the e-mails undermines the scientific case that global warming is real -- or that human activities are almost certainly the cause. That case is supported by multiple, robust lines of evidence, including several that are completely independent of the climate reconstructions debated in the e-mails." Also from the editorial:

The stolen e-mails have prompted queries about whether *Nature* will investigate some of the researchers' own papers. One e-mail talked of displaying the data using a 'trick' -- slang for a clever (and legitimate) technique, but a word that denialists have used to accuse the researchers of fabricating their results. It is *Nature's* policy to investigate such matters if there are substantive reasons for concern, but nothing we have seen so far in the e-mails qualifies.

**AMS: Impact on climate change science of emails "very limited."** Following the release of the stolen emails, the American Meteorological Society (AMS) [reaffirmed](#) its [Statement on Climate Change](#), stating that it "is based on a robust body of research reported in the peer-reviewed literature." AMS further stated: "For climate change research, the body of research in the literature is very large and the dependence on any one set of research results to the comprehensive understanding of the climate system is very, very small. Even if some of the charges of improper behavior in this particular case turn out to be true -- which is not yet clearly the case -- the impact on the science of climate change would be very limited."

**AAAS reaffirms position on climate change.** In a December 4 [statement](#), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) reaffirmed its position, "based on multiple lines of scientific evidence" that "global climate change caused by human activities is now underway, and it is a growing threat to society." AAAS chief executive officer Alan I. Leshner stated, "The vast preponderance of evidence, based on years of research conducted by a wide array of different investigators at many institutions, clearly indicates that global climate change is real, it is caused largely by human activities, and the need to take action is urgent."

**Prominent scientists send letter to Congress "to set the record straight."** In a December 4 [letter](#) to Congress, 29 prominent scientists, including 11 members of the National Academy of Scientists, stated, "The body of evidence that human activity is the dominant cause of global warming is overwhelming. The content of the stolen emails has no impact whatsoever on our overall understanding that human activity is driving dangerous levels of global warming." Noting the "multiple independent lines of evidence" supporting the case for manmade climate change, the scientists stated, "Even without including analyses from the UK research center from which the emails were stolen, the body of evidence underlying our understanding of human-caused global warming remains robust."

**UCS: "The e-mails provide no information that would affect the scientific understanding of climate change."** The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) has [stated](#) that "[t]he e-mails provide no information that would affect the scientific understanding of climate change, as many contrarians are falsely claiming. For years, thousands of scientists working at climate research centers around the world have carefully and rigorously reached a consensus on the extent of climate change, the urgency of the problem, and the role human activity plays in causing it." UCS further stated: "The findings of the USGCRP, IPCC and other scientific bodies are based on the work of thousands of scientists from hundreds of research institutions. The University of East Anglia's Climate Research Unit (CRU) is just one among many such research institutions. Even without data from CRU, there is still an overwhelming body of evidence that human activity triggering dangerous levels of global warming."