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Rebuttal: Climate debate doesn't get stifled

There was a time when a relatively small number of tobacco industry-funded scientists and doctors insisted smoking wasn't a health hazard, even when the larger scientific community concluded otherwise. Taking a page from the tobacco industry's playbook, a minority of scientists and other climate legislation opponents have been trying to manufacture public confusion about the reality of global warming.

Currently they're using stolen e-mails from climate scientists -- which were cited during a Detroit News January debate -- to cast doubt ("Don't stifle global warming debate," Jan. 13).

The fact remains that the evidence is overwhelming that human activity is the primary cause of global warming.

The exchange of information and ideas on this issue has played out in open, rigorous peer-reviewed scientific literature for decades. That's hardly stifling debate.

In 2007, some 2,500 scientists working with the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that human-caused climate change is occurring and threatening our environment.

Last fall, 18 U.S. scientific institutions reiterated that conclusion in a letter to Congress.

Michigan's skilled manufacturing base could help make the state a leader in reducing global warming emissions. Instead of staging a misguided debate featuring climate charlatans Patrick Michaels of the libertarian Cato Institute and Myron Ebell of the Competitive Enterprise Institute -- and failing to cite the financial ties to the oil and coal industries to their institutes -- a debate on the best policies to reduce pollution and create jobs would be time better spent.

Ron Burke,

Midwest Office Director,

Union of Concerned Scientists, Chicago

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