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Editorial & Production Offices:

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Suite 400
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Politics of Climate Change Science -- No More Witch Hunts

Ronald Bailey | May 7, 2010

Fresh from trying to cover the bare breast of the Roman goddess Virtu, Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli is now **demanding** that the University of Virginia turn over a broad range of documents relating to the work of climatologist Michael Mann. Cuccinelli claims that he is investigating Mann, who is now a professor at Pennsylvania State University, for the possible fraudulent use of state funds in his research. Mann produced the



notorious "hockey-stick" graph suggesting that recent global average temperatures are unprecedentedly high, and he is one of the leading figures in the Climategate e-mail affair.

The *Washington Post* has properly branded Cuccinelli's ploy as a **witch hunt**. Unfortunately, Virginia is no stranger to climatological witch hunts.

For example, environmental activists, incensed with the skeptical views of then-Virginia state climatologist Patrick Michaels, tried get the General Assembly and governor to cut the funding to the state office of climatology headquartered at the University of Virginia. The attacks on Michaels intensified when he took **\$150,000 to work as a consultant** for an association of coal-fired electric utilities. Conflict of interest? Perhaps. But Michaels freely acknowledged the funding and its source. And as the University Wire news service (via Nexis) reported at the time:

David Hudson, associate vice president for research and graduate studies, said the University actually encourages faculty members to work as consultants if their consulting work will improve their work at the University.

"The University recognizes that work outside the institution broadens the experience base," he said.

In fact, UVA faculty members are permitted to consult up to 52 days per years. And as Michaels **told** the *Washington Post*:

"I was working on climate change long before I was a consultant. and my views have been quite consistent over that period."

I know that to be true because I interviewed him on the topic back in the late 1980s, when I was a staff writer for *Forbes*. Keep in mind that in the policy world, money more often follows opinion, than opinion follows money.

The Daily Progress (Charlottesville, Va.) **reported** that while the activists failed to get Michaels fired, they did persuade Democratic Gov. Tim Kaine to disavow him:

Michaels, state climatologist since 1980, "is not a gubernatorial appointee," said Delaney

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...MICHAELS, STATE CLIMATOLOGIST SINCE 1997, IS NOT A GOVERNMENTAL APPOINTEE, SAID DELANEY Skinner, Kaine's director of communications.

Kaine "considers him a professor at the University of Virginia and the head of the Virginia State Climatology Office," Skinner said Monday in response to inquiries about whether the governor would reappoint him as climatologist.

"Generally, it is safe to say that Pat Michaels doesn't represent the governor's opinion on global warming," she said.

"He doesn't speak for the state. He doesn't speak for the governor," she said. "This is the University of Virginia having this particular faculty member head up their office of climatology."

OK, then. But state climatologist is a job title suggesting some, oh, say, expertise in climatology. Media outlets would cite the title as a shorthand way to indicate his credentials to readers and viewers. Surely few had ever mistaken the scientific views (controversial though they may be) of the state climatologist for the political views of the governor.

In any case, the not unreasonable conclusion is that the activist campaign aimed at Michaels was not about clarifying his exact relationship with the state government; it was chiefly about trying to get him fired for his views. Michaels stepped down in 2007, and now works at the libertarian Cato Institute.

Finally, a colleague of Michaels', climate scientist Chip Knappenberger, tells the Charlottesville weekly, *The Hook*:

"I didn't like it when the politicians came after Pat Michaels," says Chip Knappenberger. "I don't like it that the politicians are coming after Mike Mann."

Making his comments via an online posting under an earlier version of this story, Knappenberger worries that scientists at Virginia's public universities could become "political appointees, with whoever is in charge deciding which science is acceptable, and prosecuting the rest. Say good-bye to science in Virginia."

He's right.

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melman | 5.7.10 @ 2:31PM | #

"whoever is in charge deciding which science is acceptable, and prosecuting the rest. Say good-bye to science"

isn't that what the climate change community has been trying to do to anyone who disagrees with them?

[reply to this](#)

Al Gore | 5.7.10 @ 3:14PM | #

THE SCIENCE IS SETTLED YOU TEABAGGING RACIST!

[reply to this](#)

Stripping for Bureaucrats | 5.7.10 @ 4:18PM | #
STFU, Al.

[reply to this](#)

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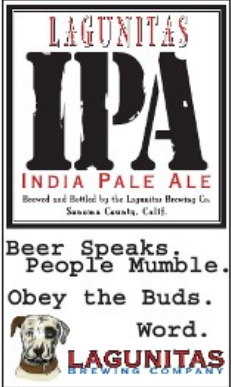
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Nick Gillespie
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SIV | 5.7.10 @ 2:52PM | #

Scientists should read the Bible

"As you sow so shall you reap"

[reply to this](#)

marlok | 5.7.10 @ 4:56PM | #

"Live by the taxpayer; die by the taxpayer."

I think that's in there somewhere too.

[reply to this](#)

R C Dean | 5.7.10 @ 2:54PM | #

How is it outside the purview of an Attorney General to investigate fraudulent use of state funds?

Is there not a difference in kind between this and cutting someone's funding or getting them fired because of their views?

I don't know enough about Mann's involvement in Climategate or his funding vehicles to know if the AGs investigation is well-founded, but nothing in the article gives me any basis for saying it is or isn't.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 3:02PM | #

Mann's research and data are being challenged in public forums. He may very well be proving wrong -- probably because of a combination of confirmation bias and sloppy practices.

However, it is far from clear there was a conspiracy of fraud. The Attorney General's actions are premature and apparently motivated by politics.

It is fair to claim that both Cuccinelli and Mann are dickheads?

[reply to this](#)

joshua corning | 5.7.10 @ 3:24PM | #

However, it is far from clear there was a conspiracy of fraud.

Far from clear? Sure

Clear enough after reading a few emails from climategate to get a reasonable suspicion to conduct an investigation? yes.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 3:28PM | #

The emails indicate gross incompetence and smooshing data to fit preconceived ideas. I don't think that equates to criminal fraud.

[reply to this](#)

joshua corning | 5.7.10 @ 5:05PM | #

smooshing data to fit preconceived ideas.

Many a mining speculator or investment firm executive or auditing firm officer have gone to jail just for that.

I admit a scientists should get a little more leeway in their findings and investigations into the unknown...

But when they use it to get public funds that leeway disappears.

I should also note that this does not automatically mean criminal activity or a criminal investigation. no reason why this could not be a civil matter. In fact i think the punishment is not jail time but simply paying back the money spent.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 5:11PM | #

Politics of Climate Change Science -- N...

I used to have lengthy discussions with my wife (business/accounting major) about trying to get raw data to fit curves (basic science) and how to tell the difference between crap data and data that actually contradicts your hypothesis.

She found the "scientific" process horrifying.

I'm still going with "never attribute to conspiracy what can be attributed to incompetence". But I wouldn't be shocked if this collection of clowns crossed the line.

[reply to this](#)

alan | 5.7.10 @ 7:22PM | #

I feel the same. Some of Mann's mistakes such as reversing measured feed backs are just too incredible to account to incompetency alone, but it is the nature of our system and how it breeds political opportunist that a state attorney general is the last person in the world who can ascertain the validity of a criminal charge in a highly public forum given his own stake in the game.

Unless criminal intent can be proven (highly unlikely), I don't even think he should pay anything back as that is an unrealistic expectation costing more to carry through than you would ever receive in return (garnish his wages? Well, maybe. When does the hockey stick turn 18?), those who control the funding need to be more accountable about whom they grant public monies too. In fact, for many of them, I suspect Mann did nothing they would actually disprove of so long as he wasn't caught. Find out who they are, what their expectations were, and if they used their positions to promote junk science than kick them out the door.

[reply to this](#)

Metzger | 5.7.10 @ 2:56PM | #

If you don't want politicians snooping in your "science", don't accept public money to perform it.

[reply to this](#)

Baron von Frankenstein | 5.7.10 @ 3:16PM | #

Yes.

[reply to this](#)

Steff | 5.8.10 @ 12:26PM | #

Unfortunately, then you'll have to deal with people who say they're all skills for accepting corporate donations or private donations from the wealthy.

It's a beastly world like that, especially since there ARE scientists who sell their integrity. Leaves the honest ones in a catch-22, unless they're personally wealthy.

[reply to this](#)

Joshua | 5.7.10 @ 2:56PM | #

Well maybe the state of Virginia shouldn't be in the education business, and they wouldn't have to worry about professors being political appointees.

[reply to this](#)

Old Mexican | 5.7.10 @ 3:10PM | #

Making his comments via an online posting under an earlier version of this story, Knappenberger worries that scientists at Virginia's public universities could become "political appointees, with whoever is in charge deciding which science is acceptable, and prosecuting the rest. Say good-bye to science in Virginia."

Goodbye!

[reply to this](#)

Alan Vanneman | 5.7.10 @ 3:16PM | #

Nice backstory, Ron. But I wouldn't say that accepting a \$150,000 consulting fee was "perhaps" a conflict of interest. If you were taking \$150,000 a year from Exxon, I don't think I'd read your columns as often as I do now.

[reply to this](#)

Kim Jong II | 5.7.10 @ 3:28PM | #

Have you finished that review of Iron Man II yet? What do I pay you for? Did you take my rabbit?

[reply to this](#)

Episiarch | 5.7.10 @ 3:38PM | #

I'm still waiting for his review of *Kick-Ass*! Me first!

[reply to this](#)

Old Mexican | 5.7.10 @ 3:59PM | #

But I wouldn't say that accepting a \$150,000 consulting fee was "perhaps" a conflict of interest.

Depends on what he gave consultation.

[reply to this](#)

Alan Vanneman | 5.7.10 @ 4:05PM | #

I'll probably do Iron Man II. I reviewed the first one here:

<http://www.brightlightsfilm.co.....nneman.php>

As for Kick Ass, it sounds a little lame. For links to reviews of "The Great Dictator" and others, go here:

<http://avanneman.blogspot.com/.....it-is.html>

[reply to this](#)

The Gobbler | 5.7.10 @ 4:19PM | #

Don't you have a Mary Higgins Clark romance novel to finish?

[reply to this](#)

ratman720 | 5.7.10 @ 3:19PM | #

its a tough call the hockey stick graph is being investigated for a large number of reasons.

in order to fully understand why its being investigated you have to know what it is based on.

manns graph is a workup from dendrochronology basically using tree ring size and composition from preserved samples in order to provide some sort of estimate of climactic change over a period that exceeds the first scientific instruments. dendrochronology for all intents and purposes is being thrown out in the scientific community as evidence with a preference for ice core samples amongst other methods.

the probe into manns work is justified. im a scientist and understand the purpose of the article however mann's work is being hunted not solely because of the political shift but also due to gross errors. in short no matter what a data set would purport even one with relatively consistent values the output would still be in the form of a hockey stick when compared with modern temperature data. there was actually a good paper written on the statistical negligence purported by mann's paper.

in short he is being investigated for potential gross errors in his handling of the data set and purposed results. its no different than any other inquiry into why shit hit the fan.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 3:25PM | #

If Mann is grossly incompetent (which I believe) then he should be investigated by his employers and his peers and be thrown out into the streets.

If Mann is intentionally conducting a fraud (presenting data that he knows is wrong as being correct), then there could be a reason for law enforcement to investigate the use of public funds in the commission of that fraud.

I think Mann should be ridiculed in public and demoted to flipping burgers at McD's for the rest of his life.

But I also think he really believes the crap that he publishes so there is no criminal fraud involved.

The Attorney General is just preening for the cameras.

[reply to this](#)

[Stripping For Brureaucrats](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:20PM | <#>

This

[reply to this](#)

marlok | 5.7.10 @ 5:16PM | <#>

"he should be investigated by his employers and his peers and be thrown out into the streets."

Climate scientists don't to my knowledge have a great record of policing their own.

[reply to this](#)

[Gabe](#) | 5.7.10 @ 3:20PM | <#>

Politicians are a-holes...they will keep doing things you don't like long after the climate conspiracy is forgotten about.

[reply to this](#)

¢ | 5.7.10 @ 3:28PM | <#>

Mann produced the notorious "hockey-stick" graph

Which is fraudulent. That matters.

And anyone who works for any public university is a "political appointee" whose presence satisfies "whoever is in charge." It's the government's damn school. Jesus.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 3:29PM | <#>

There is a difference between "wrong" and "fraudulent".

[reply to this](#)

[Metzger](#) | 5.7.10 @ 3:44PM | <#>

Well, considering the whole "hide the decline" brouhaha, in which instrument measurements were artificially grafted onto proxy data at a point in time where the proxy data became inconvenient, I would suggest that fraud cannot be ruled out.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 3:56PM | <#>

The "hide the decline" issue is the most damaging, because it implies that Mann and his compatriots went from publishing crap they believed in to publishing data they knew was false.

However, I am still of the opinion that Mann thinks his results are true. This makes him far more dangerous in my mind than if he was intentionally committing a fraud.

[reply to this](#)

[Metzger](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:06PM | <#>

I am with you 100% on that, except that I think these guys believe so much that any data that refutes their theories is discarded or ignored. That harms Science as a whole and makes them no better than flat-earththers. I guess our main point of

dispute is that I think they would willingly commit fraud if they felt it justified action on a problem they believe exists, but, cannot prove.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 4:16PM | #

From the linked article:

That law, similar to the Federal False Claims Act, is more commonly used to combat Medicaid fraud, said Zachary Kitts, a Fairfax lawyer and expert on the state law. Cuccinelli, however, has "really sent a message that he's going to use the statute more than his predecessors," Kitts said.

*The threshold to be sued under Virginia Fraud Against Taxpayers Act is not as high as a fraud case, Kitts said. Essentially, **"all you got to do is make a knowingly false statement to get paid with government money,"** he said.*

Mann was among the scientists accused in the Climategate e-mail scandal of manipulating climate data to support the idea of man-made global warming. A Penn State panel cleared him of scientific misconduct in February.

Cuccinelli's subpoena mentions five state-funded studies involving the climatologist, who worked at the Virginia university from 1999 to 2005.

So the key question is whether or not the "hide the decline" trick occurred before or after Mann left Virginia in 2005.

[reply to this](#)

Coeus | 5.7.10 @ 4:24PM | #

"Hide the decline"

November 16, 1999

<http://www.assassinationscienc.....777075.txt>

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 4:30PM | #

Well then, Mr Mann could well be fucked.

[reply to this](#)

Cotton Mather | 5.7.10 @ 3:32PM | #

if they're going to call it a witch hunt anyway, can we at least give Mann a trial by ordeal?

[reply to this](#)

pashley | 5.7.10 @ 3:35PM | #

something about bricks and glass houses here.

If you working obscurely away in, say, the electrical characteristics of ceramics, you can really goof your data and have nothing to lose but your reputation. But everyone knows that climatology as practiced by many is not "science", it has become the fig-leaf for an economic totalitarian creed, rife with set-asides and favorite industries. If Mr. Mann wanted to fly so close to the sun, he has no reason to complain about being burned.

[reply to this](#)

Episiarch | 5.7.10 @ 3:42PM | #

Just to be a pedant, when Icarus flew too close to the sun, he wasn't burned, but rather the wax that Daedalus had used to construct his wings melted and he fell from the sky.

[reply to this](#)

Warty | 5.7.10 @ 3:48PM | #

"Now Kyle, don't fly too close to the sun or it'll burn your wings and you'll crash into the ocean."

[reply to this](#)

Episiarch | 5.7.10 @ 3:48PM | #
SHUT UP BUTTERS

[reply to this](#)

marlok | 5.7.10 @ 5:18PM | #
I wish I knew mythology.

[reply to this](#)

Michael Ejercito | 5.7.10 @ 6:10PM | #
Just to be a pedant, when Icarus flew too close to the sun, he wasn't burned, but rather the wax that Daedalus had used to construct his wings melted and he fell from the sky.

But does not the air get *colder* at higher altitudes?

[reply to this](#)

cynical | 5.7.10 @ 8:06PM | #
Maybe he meant that if he tried to control the sun and failed miserably, setting the earth on fire, he would have no reason to complain about being struck by a lightning bolt?

[reply to this](#)

Tony | 5.7.10 @ 3:43PM | #
Everyone should read [this](#) before saying something embarrassing.

[reply to this](#)

Warty | 5.7.10 @ 3:47PM | #
A letter to the editor? Really, Tony?

[reply to this](#)

Tony | 5.7.10 @ 3:50PM | #
Yes really. If you don't understand the basic realities outlined in that letter, which is signed by 255 of the world's leading climate experts, then you ought not to flap your pie hole on the subject.

[reply to this](#)

Tyler Florence | 5.7.10 @ 3:52PM | #
Mexican Grilled Corn

Ingredients

4 ears corn
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 1/2 cups sour cream
1/4 cup freshly chopped cilantro leaves
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan
1 lime, juiced
Red chili powder, to taste
2 limes cut into wedges, for garnish

Directions

Remove the husks of the corn but leave the core attached at the end so you have something to hold onto. Grill the corn on a hot grill or cast iron griddle pan until slightly charred. Turn it so it gets cooked evenly all over. Mix the mayonnaise, sour cream and cilantro together. Grate the Parmesan in another bowl. While the corn is still warm slather with mayonnaise mix. Squeeze lime juice over the corn and shower with Parmesan. Season with chili powder and serve with extra lime wedges.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 3:58PM | #

Someone is going to have to publish the definitive Reason Recipe Book.

[reply to this](#)

Ragin Cajun | 5.7.10 @ 4:08PM | #

As long as we never have to see the Reason Swimsuit Calendar.

[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 4:17PM | #

ouch

[reply to this](#)**Stripping For Brureaucrats** | 5.7.10 @ 4:23PM | #

12 months of Lobster Girl.

[reply to this](#)

wylie | 5.7.10 @ 4:27PM | #

That was my assumption too. I mean, they'd actually want people to buy the calendars, right?

[reply to this](#)

Ragin Cajun | 5.7.10 @ 4:30PM | #

I guess I should have said the "Reason **Commenter** Swimsuit Calendar".[reply to this](#)

kinnath | 5.7.10 @ 5:13PM | #

That's why I said "ouch". I'm too much of a pessimist to think we'd get 12 months of lobster girl.

[reply to this](#)

Maverick | 5.7.10 @ 4:45PM | #

Dear Jackass,

Here are the first 20 signatories to that editorial:

Robert McAdams – Division of Social Sciences, UCSD
 Richard M Amasino – Biochemist, UW Madison
 Edward Anders – Geologist, University of Chicago
 David J. Anderson - Biologist, Cal Tech
 Luc Anselin - Geographer, ASU
 Mary Kalin Arroyo – Biologist, University of Chile
 Dr. Berhane Asfaw – Palaeoanthropologist, Rift Valley Research Service
 Francisco J. Ayala – Professor of Biological Sciences, UC Irvine
 Dr. Ad Bax – Physics, NIH
 Anthony Bebbington – Professor of Nature, University of Manchester
 Gordon Bell – Computer Pioneer
 Michael Vander Laan Bennett – Neuroscientist, Albert Einstein College of Medicine
 Jeffrey Bennetzen - Geneticist, University of Washington
 May R. Berenbaum – Entomologist, UIUC
 Overton Brent Berlin – Anthropologist, University of Georgia
 Pamela Bjorkman – Biologist, Cal tech
 Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn – Biologist, UCSF
 Jacques Blamont – Astrophysicist
 Michael Botchan – Biochemistry, Berkeley
 John S. Boyer – Marine Biosciences, University of Delaware

See any climatologists? I don't, but I bet that Social Sciences guy from UCSD would have some keen insight into intricacies of climate. Maybe that computer pioneer can

explain how Michael Mann's computer models are so fucked up. You might as well cite [LOLcats](#).

[reply to this](#)

[Stripping For Brureaucrats](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:01PM | <#>

He pwn'd ya, Tony.

[reply to this](#)

[Michael Ejercito](#) | 5.7.10 @ 6:12PM | <#>

He pwn'd ya, Tony.

You would think he would get used to it by now.

[reply to this](#)

[Tony](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:14PM | <#>

Sorry, I mistyped, they are all members of the U.S. National Academy of Science but aren't necessarily climatologists.

But if you want to put up lists of scientists who would agree with the letter vs. the scraps of veterinarians and Bob Jones U. astronomy teachers who deniers routinely come up with I promise you my list would be longer and more convincing.

[reply to this](#)

[kinnath](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:18PM | <#>

Robert McC. Adams – Division of Social Sciences, UCSD

I'm am more qualified than this twat to give an opinion on climate science.

[reply to this](#)

[Tony](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:27PM | <#>

I'm not qualified as a scientist and even I'm aware that disagreeing with an established scientific consensus means you're likely wrong.

[reply to this](#)

[Marc](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:35PM | <#>

In that case, simply agreeing with the consensus amounts to nothing more than a "me too". You don't get to have it both ways.

[reply to this](#)

[Tony](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:40PM | <#>

On the contrary, if you're not an expert the best chance you'll have of being right is agreeing with what the experts say. And it's hardly 50/50 on this issue.

All of this denier bullshit is nothing more than the intelligent design campaign repackaged for climate science.

[reply to this](#)

[Maverick](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:48PM | <#>

Dude, it' Friday. I'm making myself a margarita and kickin' it.

[reply to this](#)

[Michael Ejercito](#) | 5.7.10 @ 6:14PM | <#>

Sorry, I mistyped, they are all members of the U.S. National Academy of Science but aren't necessarily climatologists.

So you would trust them to perform neurosurgery?

[reply to this](#)

Tony, simplified | 5.7.10 @ 6:52PM | #

When liberals speak, just shut the fuck up, do what you're told, and don't ask any fucking questions. Because we're smarter than everyone, and we know what's best for all.

Oh, and don't you fucking dare call us elitists.

[reply to this](#)

Enyap | 5.7.10 @ 7:54PM | #

WTF is a Professor of Nature.

[reply to this](#)

Coeus | 5.7.10 @ 8:46PM | #

Apparently, one of the "worlds leading climate experts."

[reply to this](#)

wylie | 5.7.10 @ 10:51PM | #

Dr. Berhane Asfaw – Palaeoanthropologist, Rift Valley Research Service

BWHAhah

But any, us rubes are too dumb to understand climate. You need atleast a Ph.D. in paleoanthropology, duh.

[reply to this](#)

joshua corning | 5.7.10 @ 5:11PM | #

which is signed by 255 of the world's leading climate experts

I guess we need to prove once again Tony that you are an idiot a hack and a liar.

Here is the list of the first 20 none of whom are climate scientists.

Robert McC. Adams – Division of Social Sciences, UCSD

Richard M Amasino – Biochemist, UW Madison

Edward Anders – Geologist, University of Chicago

David J. Anderson - Biologist, Cal Tech

Luc Anselin - Geographer, ASU

Mary Kalin Arroyo – Biologist, University of Chile

Dr. Berhane Asfaw – Palaeoanthropologist, Rift Valley Research Service

FRANCISCO J. AYALA – Professor of Biological Sciences, UC Irvine

Dr. Ad Bax – Physics, NIH

Anthony Bebbington – Professor of Nature, University of Manchester

Gordon Bell – Computer Pioneer

MICHAEL VANDER LAAN BENNETT – Neuroscientist, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Jeffrey Bennetzen - Geneticist, University of Washington

May R. Berenbaum – Entomologist, UIUC

Overton Brent Berlin – Anthropologist, University of Georgia

Pamela Bjorkman – Biologist, Cal tech

Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn – Biologist, UCSF

Jacques Blamont – Astrophysicist

Michael Botchan – Biochemistry, Berkeley

John S. Boyer – Marine Biosciences, University of Delaware

[reply to this](#)

Tom | 5.9.10 @ 5:22PM | #

Goddammit. How many times do I have to say it: There are very few people who actually have the title "climatologist". Most climatologists are geologists, geographers, or physicists, who specialize in climate.

That said, perusing the qualifications of a few random names from that list, only about 2 in 5 have done any work on anything climate related. I'm noticing some big names that are missing...I wonder why.

Tony hears '255 scientists' and thinks that's a consensus. There are thousands of glaciologists, physicists, dendrochronologists, chemists, statisticians, etc who are examining climate and have not come to the same conclusion as the above-cited geneticist Elizabeth Blackburn who studies the telomere or Pamela Bjorkman who studies the "structures of the proteins mediating immune response". How the hell does that qualify them?

[reply to this](#)

Tony | 5.10.10 @ 2:03AM | #

Just compare the numbers. Any credentialed scientists. You'll find deniers a small minority.

[reply to this](#)

[Old Mexican](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:17PM | #

Tony,

"WE ARE DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE RECENT ESCALATION OF POLITICAL ASSAULTS ON SCIENTISTS in general [sic] and on climate scientists in particular.

Accusing some scientists of practicing sham science is NOT a political attack on ALL scientists.

All citizens should understand some basic scientific facts.

Well, all citizens should understand some basic economics, but they still vote for the same assholes that promise them free lunches. If we want to talk about *wishes*, let's talk about that.

There is always some uncertainty associated with scientific conclusions[...]

No!

[...][S]cience never absolutely proves anything. When someone says that society should wait until scientists are absolutely certain before taking any action, it is the same as saying society should never take action.

First of all, that conclusion is a non-sequitur, stemming from an equivocation: Nobody demands absolute certainty, otherwise nobody would play in the office pool. Second, it is not "society" that acts, it is individuals.

For a problem as potentially catastrophic as climate change, taking no action poses a dangerous risk for our planet.

Wow - talk about certainty. How do they know that? It is one thing to have evidence of global warming, quite *another* to say that "doing nothing" could destroy the planet. Another non-sequitur.

These flim-flam artists sure are fond of non-sequiturs . . .

[reply to this](#)

Tony | 5.7.10 @ 5:25PM | #

Accusing some scientists of practicing sham science is NOT a political attack on ALL scientists.

What deniers are doing is blowing something way out of proportion involving specific scientists in order to discredit an entire field of science, and to cast doubt on the work of science in general. There is so much dishonest hackery going on and it's not coming from scientists.

Well, all citizens should understand some basic economics

A lot of the problems in the world today have to do with the fact that influential economists think basic economics can describe and inform the workings of the entire world. We need more economists who understand economics.

First of all, that conclusion is a non-sequitur, stemming from an equivocation: Nobody demands absolute certainty, otherwise nobody would play in the office pool. Second, it is not "society" that acts, it is individuals.

You deny that people have been arguing against taking action on climate change because "the science isn't settled"? Give me a break. There is no fallacy here, this is basic stuff.

I know you're not demanding absolute certainty, but you are pretending that we have a lot less certainty than we do.

Societies act via their governments. I don't understand why you can't wrap your mind around the idea that people can act in groups. I mean it's just silly.

Wow - talk about certainty. How do they know that? It is one thing to have evidence of global warming, quite another to say that "doing nothing" could destroy the planet.

For someone who likes to toss out names of logical fallacies like a freshman philosophy major you sure do have a hard time avoiding the most egregious of them. They didn't say anything about the planet being destroyed. They said the evidence strongly suggests that taking no action "poses a dangerous risk for our planet." There is no significant dispute about this. These aren't flim-flam artists, they are leading scientists. What are you?

[reply to this](#)

Michael Ejercito | 5.7.10 @ 6:17PM | #

They said the evidence strongly suggests that taking no action "poses a dangerous risk for our planet." There is no significant dispute about this. These aren't flim-flam artists, they are leading scientists. What are you?

Leading scientists in a field *that has nothing to do with then issue* .

Andrew Wiles is a brilliant mathematician, who completed the proof of Fermat's Last Theorem. Do you think that qualifies him as an authority on creating pasta recipes?

[reply to this](#)

wylie | 5.7.10 @ 10:54PM | #

Do you think that qualifies him as an authority on creating pasta recipes?

How could it? You NEED to be a climate scientist, or else you're just not edumacated enough to understand the feedback loops and balls of timey-wimey stuff.

Oh, but wait, how does that work for Tony's argument....oh, ok, i see what you did there *highfive*

[reply to this](#)

Old Mexican | 5.7.10 @ 6:24PM | #

Tony,

What deniers are doing is blowing something way out of proportion involving specific scientists in order to discredit an entire field of science

You have it *exactly* backwards: it was a few scientists blowing a phenomenon out of any reasonable proportion that is discrediting the science of climatology, not the so-called "deniers."

and to cast doubt on the work of science in general.

Really? Last time I saw, the evidence against phlogiston did not result in the wholesale ruin of the science of physics. Or did it?

There is so much dishonest hackery going on and it's not coming from scientists.

Not from scientists, for sure - from *some* scientists, like Mann.

A lot of the problems in the world today have to do with the fact that influential economists think basic economics can describe and inform the workings of the entire world.

Sure - I mean, wars and politics play so little a role these days...

You deny that people have been arguing against taking action on climate change because "the science isn't settled"?

No, that's not the point. The letter clearly insinuates that not taking action is potentially detrimental to the earth *EVEN IF* the science is not settled (as they go out of their way to state that science does not give certainty.)

I know you're not demanding absolute certainty, but you are pretending that we have a lot less certainty than we do.

That's not what I am saying - I am not demanding certainty, I am demanding EVIDENCE for what amounts to an extraordinary claim. That's all.

Societies act via their governments.

Ohh, don't tell me - through the "democratic process" . . . *right?*

I don't understand why you can't wrap your mind around the idea that people can act in groups. I mean it's just silly.

That's not the same as saying that societies act through their governments.

For someone who likes to toss out names of logical fallacies like a freshman philosophy major you sure do have a hard time avoiding the most egregious of them. They didn't say anything about the planet being destroyed. They said the evidence strongly suggests that taking no action "poses a dangerous risk for our planet."

Read the letter again - that's not what they said. They say "for **a problem** as potentially catastrophic..." They are already CERTAIN that it is a problem. That's some claim: What if it is NOT a problem, but a blessing?

There is no significant dispute about this. These aren't flim-flam artists, they are leading scientists.

Bow to the Volcano God priests.

What are you?

What are *you*?

[reply to this](#)

Bruce | 5.7.10 @ 4:47PM | #

If you add up all the grants those 250 have received that mention "Global Warming", my guess is that would be close to 1 billion dollars.

They are NOT unbiased parties. Well, maybe they have partied with their ill-gotten gains ...

[reply to this](#)

Tony | 5.7.10 @ 5:28PM | #

Thanks for your random guess and baseless speculation. I'm totally convinced.

[reply to this](#)

Bruce | 5.7.10 @ 5:49PM | #

You are welcome.

And I thank you for Michael Mann's random guesses masquerading as science ... just kidding. I don't thank you.

[reply to this](#)

Tony, simplified again | 5.7.10 @ 6:55PM | #

Everyone right-of-center just needs to shut the fuck up and pay ten bucks a gallon for gas and be fucking happy with it.

[reply to this](#)

Chad, stupified | 5.7.10 @ 6:55PM | #

What Tony said!

[reply to this](#)

Al Gore | 5.7.10 @ 8:01PM | #

That's right, my minions... spread My Word!

[reply to this](#)

Ghost of Schrödinger's cat | 5.7.10 @ 4:57PM | #

Don't eat the cat.

Is that what the sign said?

He read it again. It did. It said, "Don't eat the cat."

He looked inside the cage. It was about ten inches high and three feet deep. It was just a regular cage. Some old newspaper lined the bottom of the cage, along with a half eaten crusty bun, and a red plastic bowl filled with water. There was no cat.

[reply to this](#)

Ken Shultz | 5.7.10 @ 3:48PM | #

"I know that to be true because I interviewed him on the topic back in the late 1980s, when I was a staff writer for Forbes."

A-ha! So you admit you used to work at Forbes, eh?

...very interesting.

[reply to this](#)

Deep Pro Libertate | 5.7.10 @ 4:02PM | #

Psst. Follow the money.

[reply to this](#)

Bill Melater | 5.7.10 @ 4:06PM | #

What if it's just tied to a string?

[reply to this](#)

Deep Pro Libertate | 5.7.10 @ 4:17PM | #

[*Whispers*] Ignore the man with the string.

[reply to this](#)

wylie | 5.7.10 @ 4:26PM | #

No no, a stack of bills with a dangling string, just sitting there.

Wait, nevermind, i didn't see any stack of cash here. *bolts*

[reply to this](#)

[James Ard](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:04PM | <#>

Cuccinelli should wait until Mann fries himself with his lawsuit against the Minnesotans for Global Warming. "Hide the Decline is a stake through the heart of the climate frauds. You can tell they're guilty by the way they have reacted, like the cornered rats they are.

[reply to this](#)

[Hayne Crum](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:07PM | <#>

Dr. Mann's work has been brought into question. It is natural that those groups that supported the work investigate to see if there was malfeasance. Did Dr. Mann suppress data that would bring doubt upon his theories? It appears that he did. Was this a mistake or a political decision. That should be investigated.

[reply to this](#)

[Spartacus](#) | 5.7.10 @ 6:01PM | <#>

Sure, the *scientific* agencies that funded him can do an investigation, and if their findings are that there was a misuse of funds, *then* the AG can open his piehole.

We don't really have any detail about what those "state funds" are. "State funds" could be his salary.

[reply to this](#)

[Pro Libertate](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:21PM | <#>

You know, people talk about banning trolls, but I disagree. I think, rather, they should be restricted to one-word comments.

[reply to this](#)

[Stripping For Brureaucrats](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:25PM | <#>

Maybe.

[reply to this](#)

[Silent Cal](#) | 5.8.10 @ 12:51PM | <#>

You lose.

[reply to this](#)

[wylie](#) | 5.7.10 @ 4:24PM | <#>

Finally, a witchhunt i can support?

[reply to this](#)

[R C Dean](#) | 5.7.10 @ 5:41PM | <#>

Keep in mind that fraud can consist not only of affirmative misstatements, but of material ommissions.

In looking at Mann's funding applications in light of the Climategate emails, the question becomes "what did he know, and when did he know it"?

Think of those funding applications as stock prospectuses, and see what you think his chances are.

[reply to this](#)

[TheOtherSomeGuy](#) | 5.7.10 @ 8:41PM | <#>

Knappenberger worries that scientists at Virginia's public universities could become "political appointees, with whoever is in charge deciding which science is acceptable, and prosecuting the rest. Say good-bye to science in Virginia."

Sir, I would like to point out that science is pretty much already a political appointment, and that people in government (and in the private world as well) *do* decide what science is acceptable or not.

All of these guys work to get grants. Science wouldn't happen without funding for experiments, and the people with the money decide what gets researched, how it gets researched, and what results get generated.

You're fooling yourself if you don't think that scientists wouldn't fudge research results for more funding. They are human.

[reply to this](#)

Victor | 5.9.10 @ 6:56AM | #

The various arms of these climate change denial efforts are united by their loathing of environmentalism. Environmentalism is variously seen to be the enemy of individual freedom, an ideology of smug elites, an attack on the consumerist basis of capitalism, or the vanguard of world government.

For deniers, accepting climate science would mean admitting that unrestrained capitalism has jeopardized humanity's future. But this painful admission would mean more than that environmentalists were right all along, it would initiate a demand for comprehensive and urgent government intervention. This would be intolerable. It's easier to reject climate science and conduct business as usual even though it means humanity's future is "harsh, brutish and short."

[reply to this](#)

Tom | 5.9.10 @ 5:58PM | #

Victor,

Stop pretending like you understand our thought processes. Some of us realized that climate change (actually environmentalism in general) is bullshit after years of lapping it up happily, establishing careers in the field, and then uncovering the truth. I've come to see that the academic literature all along disproved climate change and other overblown fears of environmental degradation.

Do yourself a favor: next time you read a peer-reviewed article on climate change, stop reading after the results section...Before you go on to the discussion/conclusion, think about what you've read and see what conclusions you can logically infer from the results. Then read the discussion. I guarantee you the author's conclusion is a non sequitur.

While you're at it, take note of what results were omitted. Recently I read an article on the supposed divergence of the tree-ring and climate records; the author went out of their way to discuss statistically insignificant support for divergence in half of the dataset. Then I thought, well why aren't they talking about the other half of the dataset? What happened there? The text said to refer to table 5 to see the total output. You know what? There was no table 5.

Nevertheless, the conclusion section of the article supported divergence...even though the data clearly didn't.

I know that's just one example, but this is everywhere.

Recently I needed to find a citation for a well-known environmental problem in my area (about which I refuse to be specific in order to maintain my anonymity). I soon realized that a single researcher had ever found support for this "problem". Literally two dozen other scientists had flocked to the issue after his initial report, and they all concluded (in journals such as Forest Ecology and Management, Canadian Journal of Forestry, Forestry, and American Midland Naturalist...just to name a few) that there was no problem whatsoever. Yet for the past twenty years this sole researcher has generated enough noise to keep the media playing his tune. His lies have made their way into textbooks, activist pamphlets, and even the IPCC report.

All I'm saying is don't listen to what Greenpeace, Al Gore, and CNN say about the academic literature; read it yourself.

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