

Patrick Michaels, senior fellow in environmental studies at The Cato Institute, talks about climate change Saturday at the Steamboat Grand Resort Hotel during the Steamboat Institute's inaugural Freedom Conference. [Enlarge photo](#) — Photo by [Matt Stensland](#)

Scientists: Global warming conversation is one-sided

Panel experts say extremists are dominating the climate debate

By [Blythe Terrell](#) ([Contact](#))

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STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — Part of the problem with the climate change debate, William Gray said, is that it isn't a debate.

Gray, a professor emeritus of atmospheric sciences at Colorado State University, said the conversation has become intensely political and has left no room for dialogue. He and Patrick Michaels, a senior fellow in environmental studies at the Cato Institute, spoke about climate change Saturday morning at the Steamboat Institute's Freedom Conference.

The Freedom Conference is the first for the Steamboat Institute, which supports limited government, lower taxes, free markets, strong national defense, and individual rights and responsibilities.

Gray said the global warming issue has developed into a hoax.

"Scientific objectivity on this topic has long ago been suspended," he said.

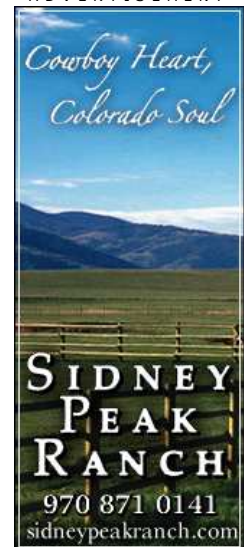
That's partly because scientists compete for government grants to do research. The young scientists who don't believe the hype aren't speaking up for fear of not getting funded, Gray said.

The earth is getting slightly warmer, he said, but that pattern is common. Temperatures increased slightly between 1910 and the 1940s, Gray said.

"The globe started cooling, ... and the Ice Age people were coming out of the closet, and it changed again," he said. "We have had warming from the middle '70s to around 2000. In the last nine or 10 years, things have been getting slightly cooler."

Gray hypothesized that changes in the circulation of the Atlantic Ocean have created slight warming, rather than carbon dioxide emissions. But he said his theory and others are being ignored as people bemoan a crisis in greenhouse gases.

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Those who disagree struggle to be heard, Gray said, adding that the community is being "brainwashed."

"What's happened is, people like Al Gore and all these environmentalists have said, 'I know the answer, I know the answer. I took a course at Harvard and got a 'C' and took another course at Harvard and got a 'C,' and I know what's happening,'" Gray said.

Michaels also said the people making statements about climate change weren't doing their research. The way to win an argument on the topic is to check the facts, he said. Temperatures on Earth are increasing, Michaels said. But it's modest, and little can be done to prevent change, he said.

Michaels displayed a chart showing that carbon emissions have been declining since 2005, which he attributed to an economic slowdown. As carbon emissions have increased, so have human life expectancy and the U.S. gross domestic product, Michaels said.

Other positive changes can be linked to global warming, he said. As the earth warms, the growing season increases. With it comes more vegetation. People think the South American rainforests are disappearing, Michaels said.

"That is the area where the vegetation is increasing the most on the planet," he said, showing satellite images of increases in vegetation across the world.

"This is a horrible thing," Michaels joked. "We really, really, really need to stop this, OK?"

Another concern bandied about is that when the climate warms, more people will die from heat-related incidents. Michaels showed research indicating that fewer people die from heat in warmer cities. Tampa, a warm city with an older population, sees few heat-related deaths, Michaels said.

The public also has misleading information about hurricanes as they relate to global warming, he said. Michaels provided a chart of the frequency of Category 4 and Category 5 hurricanes throughout several decades.

"There are a fair number of them right now," he said, "and there were a fairly larger number of them in the western Pacific in the 1950s and 1960s, same in the North Atlantic. That was before global warming."

Gray and Michaels stressed that people need to be skeptical of media reports and informed about the facts. Part of the problem is the news media reporting the line of climate extremists, Gray said.

"That's the story of global warming," Michaels said. "It's a climate of extremes where people don't bother to check the facts. All I suggest you do is check the facts, and you'll win the argument."

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Gray said that globe warming skeptics get no funding from the government. Studies that do not toe the line, usually come from private sources and are branded as biased.
