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## Scientist: Leaked climate e-mails a distraction

By Brian Winter, USA TODAY

A controversy over leaked e-mails exchanged among global warming scientists is part of a "smear campaign" to derail next month's United Nations climate summit in [Copenhagen](#), one of the scientists, meteorologist [Michael Mann](#), said Tuesday.

Unknown hackers illegally broke into a server last week at the climate institute at Britain's University of East Anglia. The hackers then published hundreds of candid private messages in which top climate change specialists debate how to address recent data showing temperatures leveling off, the university says.

Sen. [James Inhofe](#), R-Okla., called Monday for a congressional investigation into whether the messages demonstrate a deliberate effort by some of the scientists to overstate the effects of man-made global warming.

### U.N. MEETING: Price of global warming cuts may stop deal

Climate change skeptics "don't have the science on their side anymore, so they've resorted to a smear campaign to distract the public from the reality of the problem and the need to confront it head-on in Copenhagen," said Mann, professor of meteorology at [Pennsylvania State University](#) who was the recipient of several of the published e-mails.

Officials from the United States and 191 other nations will meet in Copenhagen from Dec. 7 to Dec. 18 to try to reach a deal to cut greenhouse gas emissions and slow the pace of global warming.

President Obama, who has said he might attend the summit if his presence would add impetus to the talks, has warned it will likely fall short of its original goal of a binding global treaty.

However, he said Tuesday after a meeting with Indian Prime Minister [Manmohan Singh](#), the world's nations are "a step closer" to a less ambitious political agreement.

In one leaked e-mail, the climate institute's director, [Phil Jones](#), wrote to colleagues about a "trick" he said that Mann employed to "hide the decline" in recent global temperatures.

Some recent studies, including one by Britain's Hadley Center for Climate Prediction and Research, indicate that global temperatures have plateaued during the past decade, which could undermine arguments that the Earth is undergoing a long-term warming trend because of the burning of fossil fuels. Jones has denied manipulating evidence and said his comments were taken out of context.

The publication of the e-mails bolsters global warming skeptics and could reduce the odds of the Senate passing a climate bill early next year, said [Patrick Michaels](#), a senior fellow for environmental studies at the [Cato Institute](#), a libertarian think tank.

Richard Somerville of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California-San Diego said the controversy does not fundamentally alter the scientific evidence behind global warming fears.

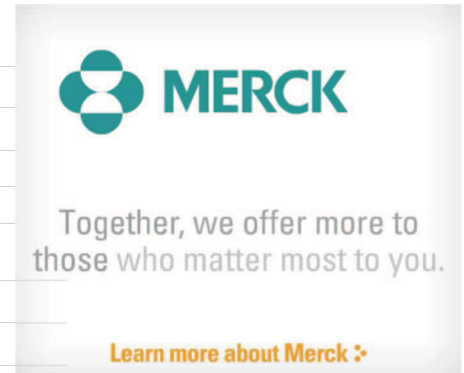
Somerville, Mann and 24 other scientists released a report Tuesday with what they said was new evidence of climate change and its effects. Among their findings:

- Arctic sea ice is melting "far beyond the expectations" of a U.N. report published in 2007.
- The world's seas are rising an average 3.4 millimeters (0.13 inch) a year — 80% above the previously estimated rate — as glaciers and ice caps melt. Sea levels could rise more than 3 feet by 2100 if the trend continues.
- Global carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels last year were nearly 40% higher than those in 1990.

Somerville said a broad range of measures, including greater use of renewable energy and reduced carbon emissions, are necessary to slow the trends.

"There will be no silver bullet," he said.

Contributing: *The Associated Press*



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