By Bonner R. Cohen

U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-California), head of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, told reporters at an April 18 National Press Club speech she will push for a European Union (EU)-style national cap-and-trade system to force reductions in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

By James M. Taylor

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must either regulate carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases or give a reasonable explanation for why it cannot or will not do so, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on April 2 in a 5 to 4 decision.

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is charged with setting emission standards for any air pollutant, from any class of new motor vehicles, that in EPA’s judgment causes or contributes to air pollution reasonably anticipated to endanger public health or welfare. EPA has consistently rejected calls by environmental activists to regulate CO2 under the act.

In response, the State of Massachusetts led a coalition of activist groups and other states in challenging EPA’s refusal to regulate carbon dioxide.

Standing Issues
The first issue before the Court was whether Massachusetts had standing to sue EPA. To demonstrate standing, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the majority, a plaintiff must show it suffered a concrete and particularized injury that is either actual or imminent, that the injury is fairly traceable to the defendant, and that a favorable decision will likely redress the injury.

The Court ruled Massachusetts suffers a concrete and particularized injury by EPA’s refusal to regulate CO2. “The harms associated with

By James Hoare

Bedbug infestations have nearly doubled nationwide since the year 2000, according to pesticide companies, and a ban on DDT and other effective pesticides is to blame.

Bedbugs were a notorious risk for those staying in hotels and motels until the 1950s, when scientists learned DDT is to blame.

By James M. Taylor

Ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica are losing little if any ice mass, thus having very little impact on global sea level, results from several recent studies show.

Andrew Shepherd of the University of Washington, a leader of the 11-member team that performed the study, said the ice losses were too small to be inferred with scientific confidence. She noted that Greenland’s ice sheet has lost about 100 billion tons, an area the size of Delaware, since 1992, and Antarctica’s has lost about 300 billion tons during the same period.

At the same time, the global average temperature has increased 0.7 degree Celsius since 1951. This has come about because the earth’s population has grown from 2.5 billion in 1951 to 6.3 billion in 2004, while the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has climbed from 280 parts per million to 380 parts per million.

The scientists are setting the stage for a major new study that will attempt to determine whether human activities are responsible for the recent warming. The new study will be larger and more detailed than previous studies and will combine data from satellites, ships, and buoys and 50 to 100 ground stations around the world. The final report is expected in 2008.

By James M. Taylor

Warming Brings a Greener Planet

By James M. Taylor

Organic Foods Put Health at Risk

By James M. Taylor

Rachel Carson No Hero

By James M. Taylor

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—Frederick Seitz, former president, National Academy of Sciences

Fred Singer and Dennis Avery have put together an impressive collection of ‘reasons to believe that global warming may not be as bad as some people are telling us’—in other words, that natural variations, rather than human-emitted greenhouse gases, have tended to control climate. Their exhaustive list of scientific references, mostly from refereed journals, only underscores their statements. Bravo for a job well done!”

—George H. Taylor, state climatologist, Oregon Climate Service

S. Fred Singer was the founding dean of the School of Environmental and Planetary Sciences at the University of Miami, the first director of the U.S. National Weather Satellite Service, and served five years as vice chairman of the U.S. National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmospheres.

Dennis T. Avery has been a senior fellow of the Hudson Institute since 1989. Prior to that, he was a senior analyst in the U.S. Department of State (1980-88), where he won the National Intelligence Medal of Achievement in 1983.

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Record April Freeze Hits U.S.

By John Dale Dunn

Hundreds of cities across most of the eastern United States suffered record cold and snow throughout much of April. Analysts pointed out the unexpected cold spell illustrates the unpredictability of both weather and longer-term climate conditions.

The seemingly endless cold spell had baseball fans and Easter celebrants wondering when global warming would arrive, as repeated blasts of cold and snowy Arctic air forced the cancellation or change in venue for springtime celebrations dependent on spring-like weather.

Easter Services Affected

Easter morning, April 8, saw record lows for much of the Southeast and Midwest and an unseasonably cold weekend for much of the Northeast. Snow extended from the Upper Midwest to New England.

In Morrison, Colorado, officials were forced to cancel an annual sunrise service scheduled for Sunday at the Red Rocks Amphitheater because seats and stairways were covered in ice.

In Chicago, kids were bundled in winter clothing for an Easter egg hunt at the Glessner House Museum. The high temperature in the city reached 32 degrees on Saturday, April 7, matching a record set in 1936 for lowest high temperature on the date.

In early April, the Windy City’s average high is 54 degrees.

Baseball Snowed Out

In Washington, DC, visitors to the nation’s capital awoke the day before Easter to see cherry blossoms coated with snow. Snow also fell in metro Atlanta and parts of Texas on Good Friday.

Heavier snow in Ohio postponed four consecutive days of professional baseball games scheduled in Cleveland. Ultimately, the Indians moved a home game against the Los Angeles Angels to a roofed stadium in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to escape the cold and snow. Games in numerous other cities were also cancelled because of snow or sleet.

“Hundreds of cities across most of the eastern United States suffered record cold and snow throughout much of April.”

Global Cooling?

“This shows how little we know about short-term weather events, let alone long-term events,” said Sterling Burnett, a senior fellow with the Heartland Institute, nor as an attempt to marshal evidence to support every short-term heat spell to global warming, then the protracted cooling alarmists attempt to attribute every short-term heat spell to global warming, then the protracted cooling conditions this spring must be evidence of global cooling, according to their hypothesis.

“But of course, neither is truly the case,” Burnett explained. “There is extreme variability to short-term weather events, and even to decades-long climate patterns. Not every heat wave or cold spell can be cited as proof of any predicted long-term trends.”

Major Crop Damage

Farmers suffered substantial crop damage and economic loss.

Stanley Scarborough, production manager of Georgia’s Sunnyridge Farms, said the state’s blueberry crop, which is normally harvested around June 1, had to be prematurely harvested in early April before the freezing weather hit, according to an April 7 Associated Press story. “At 26 or 27 degrees, you would probably lose half of the Georgia crop,” valued at $20 million to $25 million, Scarborough was quoted as saying.

In South Carolina, 90 percent of the peach crop was destroyed in a mid-April deep freeze. “This is comparable to a hurricane,” state Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers told the media. “Growers will be fortunate to get 10 percent of a crop.”

In Georgia, more than half the peach crop was lost.

Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer asked Gov. Ernie Fletcher (R) to seek federal disaster relief as a result of the prolonged blasts of Arctic air. Fletcher reported as much as 90 percent of the state’s apple and peach crops were destroyed.

Contradicted Alarmists’ Predictions

“Even after some [expected] late month moderation, April 2007 will likely keep the month in the top seven coldest in history,” Weather Trends International reported as this article went to press.

“How ironic that the protracted spring cold spell follows premature claims that this past winter would be one of the warmest on record,” Burnett said.

John Dale Dunn, M.D. J.D. (jddmdjd@web-access.net) is a member of the Science and Policy Advisory Board of the American Council on Science and Health and teaches emergency medicine at CR Darnall Army Medical Center, Fort Hood, Texas.
Scientists Urge Gore to Cool His Global Warming Rhetoric

By Bonner R. Cohen

While basking in the afterglow of having his movie, An Inconvenient Truth, awarded an Oscar, former vice president Al Gore is finding his rhetorical flourishes on the subject of global warming aren’t always welcome, even among his supporters in the scientific community.

Scientists Cite Inaccuracies

“I don’t want to pick on Al Gore,” Don J. Easterbrook, an emeritus professor of geology at Western Washington University, told an audience at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America, “but there are a lot of inaccuracies in the statements we are seeing, and we have to temper that with real data.”

Easterbrook is one of several scientists quoted in the March 13 issue of the New York Times as being uncomfortable with some of Gore’s statements on global warming. Gore—whose movie and other statements on global warming invariably depict a planet heading toward catastrophe unless emissions of greenhouse gases are substantially reduced—is provoking a backlash among scientists who see his alarmism as harmful to public discourse.

Some scientists who are not necessarily hostile to the notion that humans should take action to halt global warming nevertheless shy away from many of Gore’s dire predictions of an impending “climate crisis.”

Kevin Vranes, a climatologist at the Center for Science and Technology Policy Research at the University of Colorado, told the Times of growing unease among his colleagues with Gore’s exaggerations. While praising Gore for “getting the message out,” Vranes wondered whether the former vice president’s presentations were “overselling our certainty about knowing the future.”

“[F]ormer vice president Al Gore is finding his rhetorical flourishes on the subject of global warming aren’t always welcome, even among his supporters in the scientific community.”

Gore, who regularly invokes a “scientific consensus” on global warming when conjuring up visions of melting ice caps and rising sea levels brought on by the burning of fossil fuels, routinely dismisses his critics as either uninformed or industry shills.

Irritating Real Scientists

One of Gore’s key advisors on global warming is James E. Hansen, director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Hansen, who is widely credited with bringing the issue to the public’s attention at a carefully staged Senate hearing in 1988, acknowledges Gore’s presentations contain “imperfections” and “technical flaws,” although he praises Gore’s overall performance on the issue.

Gore’s predictions of a planet doomed by greenhouse gas emissions have gotten under the skin of more than a few scientists, however. “He’s one of these guys that preach the end-of-the-world type of things,” observed hurricane expert Dr. William Gray at the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans in April. “I think he’s doing a great disservice and he doesn’t know what he’s talking about,” said Gray.

No Basis in Fact

In an interview for this story, Dr. Patrick Michaels, visiting climate scientist at Virginia Tech University and a past president of the American Association of State Climatologists, noted, “the major theme in Gore’s book is that we will have a crisis caused by the rapid melt of ice in Greenland. I don’t think it has any real basis in an objective read of the refereed literature.”

“The models that predict a melting of Greenland’s ice take about 1,000 years to get rid of just half the ice, even assuming carbon dioxide levels four times higher than pre-industrial levels,” Michaels added. “Keep in mind that carbon dioxide levels are currently less than 40 percent above pre-industrial levels,” Michaels continued. “Does anybody really believe that we will be a fossil fuel economy long enough to reach the carbon dioxide levels necessary to melt Greenland in a thousand years?”

Bonner R. Cohen (bonnercohen@comcast.net) is a senior fellow at the National Center for Public Policy Research in Washington, DC and author of The Green Wave: Environmentalism and its Consequences, published by the Capital Research Center.
Associate State Climatologist Fired for Exposing Warming Myths

By James M. Taylor

University of Washington climate scientist Mark Albright was dismissed on March 12 from his position as associate state climatologist, just weeks after exposing false claims of shrinking glaciers in the Cascade Mountains.

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, pictured above, has claimed the snow pack in the Cascade Mountains has fallen dramatically since 1950. Climate scientist Mark Albright has been sharing data that prove the mayor wrong... and has lost his job because of it.

Mountains have fallen dramatically since 1950. Climate scientist Mark Albright has been Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, pictured above, has claimed the snow pack in the Cascade Mountains has fallen dramatically since 1950 and will be cut in half again in 30 years if we don't start addressing the problems of climate change now.

Albright knew from his research that the Cascade Mountains snow pack had not declined anywhere near what Nickels asserted, and that the snow pack has actually been growing in recent years.

"University of Washington climate scientist Mark Albright was dismissed on March 12 from his position as associate state climatologist, just weeks after exposing false claims of shrinking glaciers in the Cascade Mountains."

Embarrassing Data
Albright sent emails to his colleagues informing them of the factual data. At most, according to reliable data sets, the Cascade Mountains snow pack declined by 35 percent between 1950 and 2000. Moreover, even that number is misleading. Nickels and other global warming alarmists deliberately choose 1950 as the "baseline" for Cascade Mountains snow pack because 1950 was a year of abnormally heavy snowfall resulting in an uncharacteristically extensive snow pack.

Albright noted in his emails the current snow pack is only marginally lower than the long-term average since 1943. Moreover, the Cascade Mountains snow pack has been growing since the late 1970s.

Albright's emails were particularly embarrassing to Philip Mote, the Washington state climatologist.

Mote had become well-known within the scientific community through his work documenting an asserted decline in Cascade Mountains glaciers. In late February, University of Washington atmospheric scientist Dennis Hartmann agreed to referee the brewing dispute.

Review Supported Albright
After reviewing the data, Hartmann concluded on February 22, "While some stations show a 50 percent downward trend in April snow water equivalent between 1950 and present, we believe the overall observed trend for the Cascade Mountains of Washington and Oregon is smaller.

"One set of observations using all of the Cascade mountain stations in Washington State ... from 1945 until the present shows a snow water equivalent decrease of about 30 percent," Hartmann noted. "If an earlier starting date is chosen, the trend is smaller, but the number of stations available before 1945 is relatively small and their average altitude is high.

"If a shorter record is chosen, starting in about 1975 for example, there is a small increase in snow water equivalent," Hartmann concluded (emphasis added).

Censored, Fired
After Hartmann announced his conclusions, Mote became increasingly upset that Albright was distributing emails keeping his colleagues informed of the latest developments regarding the Cascade snow pack.

In early March, Albright was told he would have to submit any emails connected with his associate state climatologist position to Mote for pre-approval prior to distribution.

When Albright refused to submit to Mote's censorship, Mote stripped him of his associate state climatologist title.

Mote asserted he was not trying to censor Albright's views, but that Albright's emails simply needed to go through proper quality checks.

Politics Triumphant
Cliff Mass, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, told the March 15 Seattle Times, "In all my years of doing science, I've never seen this sort of gag-order approach to doing science."

"Anytime politics intrudes on science, science is degraded and society as a whole is the loser," said Sterling Burnett, senior fellow at the National Center for Policy Analysis. "That is why the whole global warming issue is a mess right now. Scientists have not reached a scientific conclusion yet, but the politicians want to jump the gun and be seen as saviors on the issue. This is a recipe for disaster."

"In all my years of doing science, I've never seen this sort of gag-order approach to doing science."

CLIFF MASS
PROFESSOR OF ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Burnett continued, "The reputation of science as an independent and nonpartisan source of knowledge is put at risk whenever scientists are censored for sharing scientific knowledge. Scientists should never be pressured to come up with predetermined conclusions or punished for challenging the status quo.

"The essence of science is reasoned skepticism and the courage to either be wrong or show that others are wrong—all in the bold pursuit of truth. The bold pursuit of truth should never be discouraged," Burnett noted.

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Oregon Considers Adopting Costly Renewable Power Mandate

Few consumers voluntarily buy renewable power already available

By James M. Taylor

The Oregon legislature is currently considering Senate Bill 838, which would force consumers to purchase 25 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025.

Although state legislators generally favor encouraging consumers to purchase more renewable power, many are leery of committing to expensive mandates with unpredictable costs.

Wind Power Expensive
If S.B. 838 becomes law, analysts expect wind power to provide the majority of renewable power generation in the state. However, even with substantial government subsidies, wind power cannot yet compete economically with conventional power generation.

“The Oregon legislature would do well to look to the poor record in California from a similar renewable power mandate,” said Tom Tanton, vice president of the Institute for Energy Research. Because wind power costs are so high, “while California has seen many contracts signed for renewable sources to meet the State’s RPS [renewable power standard], no significant new facility generation has come to fruition, nor is likely to do so,” Tanton noted.

Shaky Promises Offered
Such facts pose a problem for supporters of S.B. 838, who are telling Oregon voters renewable power mandates will not cause an increase in electricity prices.

Those promises are on shaky ground, The Oregonian pointed out on March 21. “Backers of Senate Bill 838 ... have been selling the bill as cost-neutral to ratepayers,” the Oregonian reported. “They concede, if pressed, that rates could go up in the short term as utility load winds up and that power is added into the regional supply system.”

Price uncertainties are exacerbated by wind power’s failure to live up to previous cost forecasts. A 2004 study by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council provided cost estimates legislators have used in the past to justify renewable power mandates. However, wind farm construction costs have increased by more than 40 percent since the study was completed. Wind turbines alone have increased in cost 60 percent to 100 percent since 1983, according to the Oregonian.

Consumers Reject It
Meanwhile, Oregon citizens already have the option of voluntarily purchasing government-subsidized wind power. But even though the state passes along subsidies to consumers in the form of reduced prices, wind power still costs up to 10 percent more than conventional power.

As a result, only about 6 percent of Oregon consumers who have the option of buying renewable power currently choose to do so.

“There is a reason why consumers do not willingly purchase renewable generation in large amounts—it is costly and unreliable,” Tanton explained. “Legislation cannot change that.”

“The Oregon legislature is currently considering Senate Bill 838, which would force consumers to purchase 25 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025.”

Coal Plants Still Necessary
The shortcomings of wind power were further underscored in a March report by the Bonneville Power Administration, a federal agency that markets wholesale electrical power from renewable sources.

According to the report, the construction of new wind farms will not result in fewer natural gas or coal-fired power plants. Wind power is intermittent, the report notes, and wind farms therefore will not eliminate the need to build new coal-fired power plants to ensure adequate power when the wind is not blowing.

Moreover, when the wind does blow, utilities will reduce relatively clean-burning natural gas generation before reducing coal generation, because their use of natural gas is more expensive than their use of coal.

Also, the report notes, existing transmission lines are insufficient to distribute wind-generated electricity to consumers. Expensive new transmission lines will have to be built on what is currently undeveloped land.

“The drive to generate more power from renewable sources is putting pressure on transmission lines,” Tanton explained. “Building more transmission lines will not only be expensive but will also encroach on endangered habitat areas.”

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

INTERNET INFO


When Will We Tire of the Fear Mongers?

By Jay Lehr Ph.D.

I have noticed throughout my life that there barely has been a day the news media was not trumpeting a foreboding event, an impending environmental danger, or some risky food or technological hazard clearly intended to generate fear.

Some of us are old enough to remember when cranberries were driven from supermarket shelves by a phony fear campaign. More of us remember the Alar apple scare. For weeks we thought twice about putting a cell phone to our ear or passing beneath a power line.

Radon gas has yet to harm anyone, yet EPA still supports scary radio ads. Asbestos coatings on the pipes in our public schools never caused lung problems among our children, but all those coatings have been removed now. Asbestos levels in the schools remain unchanged.

Properly using insecticides in our homes never made anyone ill, but fewer are available to us today thanks to bans. Freon is gone from our aerosol cans and air conditioners but ozone levels above the polar regions thicken and thin with the seasons as always, and skin cancer rates depend, as they always have, on how far we live from the equator and our exposure to mid-day sun.

“[B]arely has been a day the news media was not trumpeting a foreboding event, an impending environmental danger, or some risky food or technological hazard clearly intended to generate fear.”

Babies were never sickened by TRIS, the fire retardant in their jammies. DDT never caused cancer or thinned a single bird egg. It did stop malaria in its tracks and saved millions of lives, but it is not available much any more. As a result, millions die or become sick each year.

Sea level may rise a foot this century, according to a new report from that font of unvarnished truth, the United Nations. But seas have been rising seven inches a century for at least the past 800 years. No one knows where former vice president Al Gore gets his scary 20 foot prediction for sea-level rise.

Moderate trans fat in our diets causes no harm, but lacks of exercise does. Yet we are outlawing trans fat, I suppose because we cannot mandate exercise. You can no longer take Vioxx for your arthritis because folks with known heart disease might get their hands on it and minimally increase their chance of a heart attack.

Not one person has ever become ill from a genetically modified food or one irradiated to reduce bacteria, yet both of these healthful technologies are impeded by the fear mongers and their partners, the risk-averse bureaucrats.
Great Lakes Water Compact Foundering

Big government proposal encounters strong opposition

By James Hoare

An agreement by the governors of eight Midwestern states to create a joint compact that would treat the Great Lakes as a shared resource unavailable to communities outside the Great Lakes drainage basin is struggling to remain intact in regional state legislatures.

WON’T BE RATIFIED SOON

The proposed compact, agreed to by the governors of the eight Great Lakes states in 2005, is being dodged by concerns that it gives too much power to government and unfairly cuts off reasonable access to 20 percent of the world’s surface supply of fresh water.

As a result, the compact has been ratified in just one state—Minnesota—while legislation to ratify it continues to stagnate in the legislatures of most of the other Great Lakes states.

The Illinois House endorsed the compact in late March, and at press time the state Senate was expected to do likewise in the very near future. The compact is languishing in the Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin state legislatures.

To take effect, the compact must win the approval of all eight states plus Congress. Analysts see little chance of it being ratified any time soon.

RUNAWAY GOVERNMENT POWER

Opposition to the compact was initially expected to be strongest in distant states, particularly those west of the Mississippi River, that would be concerned about losing future access to Great Lakes water. However, the most vocal opposition has mounted in the Great Lakes states themselves.

Ohio state Sen. Tim Grendell (R-Chesterland) strongly opposes language declaring Great Lakes waters are held in public trust. The proposed compact claiming authority over not just the lakes themselves but also the Great Lakes watershed, Grendell fears the compact will encroach upon the preexisting private property rights of Ohioans who own farm ponds, wetlands, and private water wells.

“The government is being encouraged to take people’s property without paying for it. That is flat-out un-American,” Grendell told the Associated Press for a March 31 story.

Grendell also questioned the wisdom of Ohio giving up its sovereignty over the substantial amount of Lake Erie water within its boundaries.

“An agreement by the governors of eight Midwestern states to... treat the Great Lakes as a shared resource unavailable to communities outside the Great Lakes drainage basin is struggling to remain afloat in regional state legislatures.”

LOCAL COMMUNITIES ABANDONED

Another contentious issue is the proposed compact’s refusal to make Great Lakes water available to communities outside the watershed, even if those communities are very near to the Great Lakes themselves.

For example, the Milwaukee suburb of Waukesha sits just 15 miles west of Lake Michigan but is outside the Great Lakes watershed because of a natural divide of the land. Local officials fear the growing community will face severe water shortages if it is cut off from nearby Lake Michigan.

Waukesha’s complaints have fallen on deaf ears when presented to activist groups such as the Alliance for the Great Lakes, however. Cameron Davis, president of the alliance, believes no water should leave the Great Lakes basin. He says the side effect of choking off suburban sprawl is a benefit rather than a detriment to the compact.

WHO CONTROLS THE WATER?

“The Great Lakes are a resource for us to use and protect, not a commodity to sell to the highest bidder,” Davis said in March testimony to the Executive Committee of the Illinois House of Representatives.

“They are not a resource to be squandered by any one industry, person, or community at the expense of all of us,” Davis continued. “We all have a responsibility to protect the lakes, not for a single interest, but for our families and future generations.”

“The attempt of the Great Lakes States to commandeer what has always been considered a national resource treasure is outrageous,” countered Heartland Institute Science Director Jay Lehr, who received the nation’s first Ph.D. in groundwater hydrology.

“All communities within the Great Lakes States should be able to share in the wonderful wealth of this resource, and I strongly oppose the strong-arm tactics being exhibited today by power brokers in the Great Lakes States,” Lehr said.

James Hoare (jahoare@aol.com) is an attorney in Rochester, New York.

“I recognize now that we are all programmed to fear the unknown with unbridled conviction.”

I recognize now that we are all programmed to fear the unknown with unbridled conviction. I suspect this condition was passed down from our ancestors who once lived in caves, hiding from the wild beasts outside, which could readily devour them. Those cave dwellers who ventured out with little discretion often did not return to advance the human race with their progeny. Those who hid quietly in the caves, controlled by their fears, lived to bear children, who passed on their fear genes to their children and so on until, many generations later, we have them.

Geneticists are actually on track to locate those genes in our DNA, but it is not likely we will ever want to remove them. They play an important role in our survival, not to mention inclining most of us to heed our mom’s admonitions not to touch our tongue to a frozen pipe, or venture out onto thin ice, or touch the hot burner on a stove, and of course to look both ways when crossing the street.

“Shouldn’t we notice that past environmental and public health ‘crises’ never were true, and shouldn’t that realization lead us to stop overreacting each time a new doomsday scenario appears in the daily newspapers?”

But now that we are grown up, shouldn’t we be able to distinguish between real and unwarranted fears? Shouldn’t we notice that past environmental and public health ‘crises’ never were true, and shouldn’t that realization lead us to stop over-reacting each time a new doomsday scenario appears in the daily newspapers?

Skepticism isn’t a bad thing when it comes to dealing with con men, telephone marketers ... and environmentalists and “public health advocates.” Should we not, by now, know to wait until additional, more credible information comes our way?

There apparently are people who gain pleasure and often money from watching us cringe in fear of the unknown. When, if ever, will we show them that we’re made of sterner stuff than that?

Jay Lehr, Ph.D. (lehr@heartland.org) is science director for The Heartland Institute.
**GLOBAL SATELLITE TEMPERATURES**

**IS THIS GLOBAL WARMING?**

Each month, Environment & Climate News updates the global averaged satellite measurements of the Earth’s temperature. These numbers are important because they are real—not projections, forecasts, or guesses. Global satellite measurements are made from a series of orbiting platforms that sense the average temperature in various atmospheric layers. Here, we present the lowest level, which climate models say should be warming. The satellite measurements are considered accurate to within 0.01°C. The data used to create these graphs can be found on the Internet at [http://vortex.nsst.cri.edu/public/msu/t2lt/tltgimam_5.2](http://vortex.nsst.cri.edu/public/msu/t2lt/tltgimam_5.2).

**MARCH 2007**

The global average temperature (top) for March was 0.38°C above normal. The Northern Hemisphere’s temperature (middle) was 0.59°C above normal. The Southern Hemisphere’s temperature (third) was 0.16°C above normal.

**GLOBAL AVERAGE**

![Graph showing global average temperature variation](source: Jouzel et al., 1996, www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/image/vostok-t.gif.)

**NORTHERN HEMISPHERE**

![Graph showing northern hemisphere temperature variation](source: Jouzel et al., 1996, www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/image/vostok-t.gif.)

**SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE**

![Graph showing southern hemisphere temperature variation](source: Jouzel et al., 1996, www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/image/vostok-t.gif.)

219,000 years of Temperature Variation

**COMMENTARY**

**British Documentary Counters Gore Movie**

*By S. Fred Singer*

A Gore’s movie *An Inconvenient Truth* (AIT) has met its match—an international documentary recently shown on British television.

In spite of its flamboyant title, *The Great Global Warming Swindle* (TGGWS) is based on sound science, presenting the statements of real climate scientists, including myself. AIT, by contrast, consists mainly of the personal beliefs of Al Gore.

**Warming Probably Natural**

The scientific arguments presented in TGGWS can be stated quite briefly:

There is no real proof that the current warming is caused by the rise of greenhouse gases from human activities, such as the generation of energy from the burning of fuels. On the contrary, the evidence we have supports natural causes.

**“Al Gore’s movie An Inconvenient Truth has met its match—a major documentary recently shown on British television.”**

The current warming is likely part of a natural cycle of climate warming and cooling that has been traced back almost a million years. It accounts for the Medieval Warm Period around 1100 AD, when the Vikings were able to settle Greenland and grow crops. It also accounts for the Little Ice Age, from about 1400 to 1850 AD, that brought severe winters and cold summers to Europe, accompanied by failed harvests, starvation, disease, and general misery.

If the cause of warming is mostly natural, then there is little we can do about this. We cannot influence the inconstant sun, which is the likely origin of most climate variability. None of the schemes of mitigation currently bandied about will do any good—they are all useless and wildly expensive.

**Warmer Climate Beneficial**

The film goes on to point out that schemes such as carbon dioxide rationing, a government-directed switch to alternative energy sources, or carbon sequestration would all be ineffective even if carbon dioxide were responsible for the observed warming trend—unless we can persuade every nation, including China, to cut fuel use by 80 percent! Ironically also, most global warming worries oppose nuclear power, the only realistic alternative to energy from fossil fuels.

Finally, no one can show that a warmer climate would produce net negative impacts. In fact, many economists argue the opposite is more likely—they say warming creates net benefits that will raise incomes and standards of living.

 Virtually all economists agree a colder climate would be bad. So why would the present climate necessarily be the optimum? Surely, the chances for this must be vanishingly small.

**Resources, Efforts Wasted**

The main message of TGGWS is much broader: Why should we devote our scarce resources to what is essentially a non-problem and ignore the real problems the world faces?

We would have a much more positive impact by devoting our resources to reducing hunger, disease, human rights violations, and restrictions on human freedom. Yet so many politicians and environmental activists prefer to toy with and devote our limited resources to fashionable issues rather than concentrate on real ones.

I imagine that in the not-too-distant future all of the hype will have died down, particularly if the climate should decide to cool as it did during much of the past century. We should take note that the planet has not warmed since 1998.

Future generations will look back on the current madness and wonder what it was all about. They will have movies like AIT and documentaries like TGGWS to remind them.

S. Fred Singer (singer@sepp.org) is professor emeritus of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia. He served as founding director of the U.S. Weather Satellite Service and was vice chairman of the U.S. National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere. His latest book, Unstoppable Global Warming—Every 1,500 Years, co-written with Dennis T. Avery, is on the New York Times bestseller list. This article was first published on the Science and Environmental Policy Project Web site (http://sepp.org) and is reprinted with permission.
WHY POOR COUNTRIES FIND OUR SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL WARMING HARD TO SWALLOW.

For the projected cost of Kyoto in just the year 2010, the biggest health problem facing mankind could be fixed. We could provide clean drinking water and sanitation for every person in the world. Permanently.

Currently one billion people in the world use unsafe sources of drinking water. As a result of this contaminated water and lack of basic sanitation, 4,500 children die each day.

Worrying about deaths from global warming is, at best, a case of misplaced priorities. Obviously, we can’t ignore any real global warming threats. But, with limited resources, we need to make smart, moral choices about what we do.

Technological advancement is the key to controlling environmental pollution. And it takes wealth to make those advancements. If saving lives is our goal, we must advocate policies that will help developing countries prosper.

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IPCC Fourth Assessment Dampens Global Warming Alarmism

By Patrick J. Michaels


The summary was authored by a committee of 33 scientists, many of whom have differing views and expertise on the subject. The parent document, which will weigh in at nearly 1,000 pages, is scheduled to be released in May.

I was an official reviewer of the overall report. Because various versions of the document have leaked onto the Internet in recent months, I’ll take the liberty of using it as a reference guide for the forthcoming summary.

Nothing New

Want my candid opinion about the summary? Ho-hum.

Despite breathless news reports, there’s very little in it that’s new to anyone involved in global warming science.

There have been dozens of stories about how scientists now believe there is a definite human influence on mean global surface temperature, and that, in recent decades, much of the warming can be attributed to the effect of increasing amounts of carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere.

Scientifically, this is tantamount to concluding that Las Vegas is awash in poker chips.

For longer than any active climate scientist has been alive, it has been known that increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide should result in a preferential warming of winter (versus summer) temperatures, a warming of the coldest nights of the winter more than the hottest days of summer, and a general cooling of the global stratosphere.

All three have been observed for well over a decade. So much for the big “news” in the IPCC summary.

Reduced Sea-Level Predictions

Nor should this surprise: The biggest story in the summary was largely missed by the environmental media. The IPCC now projects, in its mid-range scenario for carbon dioxide emissions, that the maximum-scenario rise in global sea level in this century will be around 17 inches.

That’s a reduction of 30 percent from what was in the Third Scientific Assessment, published just six years ago.

That’s huge news, or at least it should be.

But instead of listening to what the IPCC is saying, people are opting for the science fiction of Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth, whose central disaster scenario is that Greenland sheds the majority of its ice this century, raising sea level as much as 20 feet. Much of Florida disappears, and the Mall in Washington goes underwater.

Greenland Melting Unlikely

Even the much lower IPCC sea-level predictions may be overstating future sea-level rise. This is because IPCC’s sea-level projections “include a contribution due to increased ice flow from Greenland and Antarctica, but these flow rates could increase or decrease in the future.”

That’s excellent hedging by the IPCC, because the authors of the summary surely knew that a paper was about to appear in the journal Science showing that an increase in the loss of ice from Greenland’s big glaciers in 2004 had stopped and reversed by 2006.

And was the loss of ice ever as gargantuan as Gore’s imagery? Hardly. Satellite data, also published in Science last October, show Greenland was losing a total of only 25 cubic miles of ice per year.

That’s tiny. There are 630,000 cubic miles of ice up there. Dividing 25 into 630,000 and multiplying by 100 gives the rate of loss: 0.4 percent of Greenland’s ice per century.

Implausible Scenario Assumed

It is unfortunate that the summary didn’t take on Gore’s Greenland science fiction head-on. It would have been as simple as highlighting the temperature history of southern Greenland—the region of greatest ice loss—in the UN’s own climate history.

Temperatures in the most recent decade aren’t at all warm compared with the 10 years between 1915 and 1965. If Greenland didn’t raise sea level appreciably then (and it didn’t), why will it suddenly do so now?

Instead, climate models in the upcoming report take an awfully long time to shed the majority of Greenland’s ice: After 1,130 years, 60 percent disappears if we maintain the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide at four times the year 2000 level.

Right now, we’re only about 1.3 times that value, and there’s a reasonable debate about whether we will ever get to twice that figure, because in the time frame required, technology is likely to change dramatically, in ways we can’t imagine today.

“I was an official reviewer of the overall [IPCC Fourth Assessment] report. Because various versions of the document have leaked onto the Internet in recent months, I’ll take the liberty of using it as a reference guide for the forthcoming summary.”

Things Will Change

For an interesting thought experiment, consider how technology has changed in a century. Between 1800 and 1900 technology progressed from horse power and hand-carried letters to iron-horse power and the telegraph.

Then consider the changes from 1900 to today. With this in mind, does anyone seriously believe we will be a fossil fuel-powered society, industrially respiring massive amounts of carbon dioxide, in the year 2500?

IPCC estimates of maximum sea-level rise also may be too high as a result of methane projections. All of IPCC’s scenarios for the future include an increase in atmospheric methane, a potent global warming gas, at least through 2050, and most increase it even beyond then.

However, methane increases in the atmosphere began to slow some 20 years ago, and in recent years the concentration has actually declined.

Snomevelt Oversated

While it’s hard to disagree with the IPCC’s broad conclusions about human-induced warming and sea-level rise, there are some places where the summary misses some obvious and important findings.

For example, it asserts, “mountain glaciers and snow cover have declined on average in both hemispheres.” While that is generally (but not specifically) true for glaciers, data from the Global Snow Laboratory at Rutgers University show total Northern Hemisphere snow cover has been unchanged for the past 20 years.

Recent Developments Ignored

A very important part of the IPCC summary talks about how the top 10,000 feet of “the ocean has been absorbing more than 80 percent of the heat added to the climate system.”

Last summer, however, after the IPCC drop date, J.M. Lyman of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration demonstrated a remarkable change between 2003 and 2005 that “represents a substantial loss of heat over a two-year period, amounting to about one-fifth of the long-term upper-ocean heat gain between 1955 and 2003.”

In two years, somehow the vast expanse of the upper ocean suddenly lost the equivalent of a decade’s worth of warming!

Furthermore, most of the ocean’s warming is centered in a band in the middle of the Southern Hemisphere. As the esteemed Roger Pielke Sr. of the University of Colorado recently wrote, “The actual global ocean warming reported in the IPCC [summary] over the last several decades occurred in just a relatively limited portion of the oceans.”

This is certainly not indicated in the climate models that serve as much of the basis for the upcoming Fourth Assessment.

So let’s give the IPCC somewhere around two cheers. That’s probably about the best that can be expected when 18 pages, written by a committee of 33 contentious scientists, are supposed to summarize about 1,000 succeeding pages, which themselves were not afforded the most recent science.

Patrick Michaels (pmichaels@cato.org) is senior fellow in environmental studies at the Cato Institute, and a research professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia. An earlier version of this article appeared in the March 11 San Diego Union-Tribune, and it is reprinted with permission.
Study: ‘Global Warming’ Making Northern Hemisphere Greener

By James M. Taylor

Rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, together with moderately warming temperatures, have caused a substantial greening of the Northern Hemisphere. That’s according to Craig Idso, founder and former president of the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change, reporting in the March 14 issue of CO2 Science.

CO2, Climate Dominant Factors

Idso’s article summarizes research first reported in the December 2006 Geophysical Research Letters. In that study, five scientists at universities in France and the United States studied the spatial patterns of vegetation growth north of 25 degrees latitude (a line running east-west just south of the Florida Keys) between 1980 and 2000.

The five scientists reported, “The results indicate that changes in climate and atmospheric CO2 likely function as dominant controllers for the greening trend during the study period.” Prior studies on variations in northern hemisphere vegetation had increased by 8 to 12 percent across North America and Eurasia during the time period.

The continental-scale, atmospheric CO2, temperature, and precipitation account for 49%, 31%, and 13% of the increase in growing season LAI [Leaf Area Index], respectively,” the five scientists found.

Carbon Dioxide Benefits

Looking more deeply into the study, Idso reported, “In response to what climate alarmists describe as unprecedented increases in the air’s CO2 content and temperature, which they characterize as phenomena worse than nuclear warfare and global terrorism, the bulk of the terrestrial vegetation of the Northern Hemisphere north of 25ºN has not only not suffered because of them, it has actually grown more robust.”

There are “a number of biological consequences of elevated atmospheric CO2 concentrations,” Idso wrote.

“The best known of these important impacts is probably CO2’s aerial fertilization effect, which works its wonders because of the rules of major biochemical pathways of photosynthesis (C3 [typical photosynthesis], C4 and CAM [C4 and CAM are photosynthetic pathways adopted to arid conditions]).” Idso continued.

“In the case of herbaceous plants,” Idso noted, “this phenomenon typically boosts their productivities by about a third in response to a 300 ppm increase in the air’s CO2 content, while it enhances the growth of woody plants by 50% or more.”

Tropical Forest Trends

The new study reinforces prior scientific findings regarding a greening of the Earth during moderate warming since the late 1970s.

In 2005, NASA scientist Kazuhito Ichii led a team of scientists that reported in Global and Planetary Change on the interannual variability and trends in the productivity of tropical forests from 1982 to 1999.

After studying tropical forests in Africa, Asia, and the Amazon, the Ichii team reported, “recent changes in atmospheric CO2 and climate promoted terrestrial GPP [gross primary productivity] increases with a significant linear trend in all three tropical regions.”

Benefits Overlooked

“This is one of the little-talked about benefits of global warming,” said Iain Murray, a senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

“Agricultural experts have long reported that the optimum temperature is actually warmer than it is today. They have also long told us that an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide would benefit global plant life.”

“The benefits of warmer temperatures are not restricted to plant life, either,” Murray added. “Another benefit is lower human mortality, [which is] associated with warmer temperatures. A warmer planet means fewer weather-related premature deaths.”

“Global warming presents opportunities as well as challenges. Our goal should be to capitalize on the benefits of warmer weather while mitigating the potential challenges. It is an entirely realistic idea to capitalize on the benefits of a warmer climate,” Murray explained.

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

INTERNET INFO


Ever Feel Like Government Needs a Reboot?

**Governing Principles**

1. Government exists to protect rights, not to create them.
2. The legitimate power of government begins and ends with the people, while its authority comes from the Creator.
3. Just because a problem exists doesn’t mean government should try to solve it.
4. Long-term and cumulative consequences should be considered more carefully than short-term benefits.
5. Government has nothing to give anyone except what it first takes from someone else.
6. Individuals are ultimately responsible for governing themselves and for the consequences of their decisions.
7. Free enterprise, not government, is the engine of personal economic prosperity.
8. The free market should not be distorted by government-designed dictates or advantages.
9. Government has the high honor and responsibility to protect, fortify, and advance the marriage-based two-parent family, which is the foundational unit of society.
10. Parents, not government, are responsible for the education and upbringing of their children.

Regardless of how much the world changes, some things remain the same.

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Supreme Court Decision Provokes Sharp Reactions

The U.S. Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision in Massachusetts v. EPA provoked sharp reactions from the four justices in the minority and from legal observers. Chief Justice John Roberts, in a sharply worded dissent, noted global warming “is not a problem … that has escaped the attention of policymakers in the Executive and Legislative Branches of our Government, who continue to consider regulatory, legislative, and treaty-based means of addressing global climate change.”

“The redress of grievances of the sort at issue here ‘is the function of Congress and the Chief Executive,’ not the federal courts,” Roberts added.

Moreover, the asserted harm claimed by Massachusetts “is pure conjecture,” Roberts noted. “Accepting a century-long time horizon and a series of compounded estimates renders requirements of immi-

necne and immediacy utterly toothless,” he observed.

Proposed Solution Won’t Work

Roberts strongly took issue with CO2 regulation as a proposed remedy.

“The Court contends that regulating domestic motor vehicle emissions will reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and therefore redress Massachusetts’s injury,” Roberts wrote. “But even if the regulation does reduce emissions … the Court never explains why that makes it likely that the injury in fact—the loss of land—will be redressed. … The realities make it pure conjecture to suppose that EPA regulation of new automobile emissions will likely prevent the loss of Massachusetts coastal land” (emphasis in original).

Decision Largely Rhetoric

“By … ignoring not only the letter but the discernible intent of the Clean Air Act in order to claim that any compound put into the air by Man is a ‘pollutant,’ the Court countered, ‘While the Congress that drafted [the Clean Air Act] might not have appreciated the possibility that burning fossil fuels could lead to global warming, they did understand that without regulatory flexibility, changing circumstances and scientific developments would soon render the Clean Air Act obsolete.’

Jed Babbin, editor of Human Events and former U.S. deputy undersecretary of defense, said, “The issue for me is that though the EPA has never wanted to reg-

ulate CO2, it now has the authority to do so. Some say it still won’t. Horseradish. When, in the history of bloated government, has an entrenched bureaucracy been told it has the authority to regulate something and then failed to do so?”

Court Ignored Congress, President

As a final matter, the Court dismissed EPA’s other reason for not regulating CO2—that Congress and the president have both deliberately chosen not to limit CO2 emissions. The Court ruled EPA cannot take even such deliberate deci-

sions by Congress and the president into consideration when deciding whether to regulate.

“While the statute does condition the exercise of EPA’s authority on its for-

mation of a ‘judgment,’ that judgment must relate to whether an air pollutant ‘cause[s], or contribute[s] to, air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare,” the Court asserted.

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland. org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

INTERNET INFO

The full text of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in Massachusetts et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency is available through PolicyBot, The Heartland Institute’s free online research database. Point your Web browser to http://www.policybot.org and search for document #21106.

Supreme

Continued from page 1

climate change are serious and well rec-

ognized,” the Court ruled. More specifi-

cally, the Court deferred to the affidavit of a scientist with an environmental activist group who claimed a “strong consensus” of scientists agree sea levels will rise “precipitously” by the end of the century.

Link to Alleged Harm

Next, the Court ruled EPA’s refusal to regulate CO2 is causing the projected rise in sea level. Despite EPA’s argument that regulating greenhouse gas emis-

sions from automobiles will have little or no effect on global temperatures and sea level, the Court stated, “Agencies, like legislatures, do not generally resolve massive problems in one fell regulatory swoop. … They instead whittle away at them over time.

“The rise in sea levels associated with global warming has already harmed and will continue to harm Massachusetts,” the Court added. “The risk of catastroph-

ic harm, though remote, is nevertheless real. That risk would be reduced to some extent if petitioners received the relief they seek.”

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency must either regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases or give a reasonable explanation for why it cannot or will not do so, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on April 2 …”

Calls Carbon Dioxide ‘Pollutant’

Addressing EPA’s argument that it cannot regulate CO2 under the Clean Air Act because the act never once identifies carbon dioxide as a pollutant, the Court countered, “While the Congress

that drafted [the Clean Air Act] might not have appreciated the possibility that burning fossil fuels could lead to global warming, they did understand that without regulatory flexibility, changing circumstances and scientific developments would soon render the Clean Air Act obsolete.”

Maureen Martin, senior fellow for legal affairs at The Heartland Institute, was less pessimistic. “The Court’s rhetoric is mere dicta,” Martin noted, “gratuitously included to act, in essence, as a sequel to An Inconvenient Truth, warts and all.

“Once past the rhetoric, however,” Martin continued, “all the Court did was order USEPA to issue a more ‘reasoned explanation’ for its refusal to regulate greenhouse gases. It is now up to the agency to articulate a principled, statu-

torily based explanation, as the Court ordered, to justify its refusal to regulate greenhouse gases.

“Accepting a century-long time horizon and a series of compounded estimates renders requirements of immi-

nence and immediacy utterly toothless.”

CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN ROBERTS

U.S. SUPREME COURT

DISSENT TO MASSACHUSETTS V. EPA

“This ought not to be excessively dif-

cicult,” Martin noted.

Horner agreed. “It is not at all dif-

cult to establish that regulating CO2 emissions from new tailpipes in the U.S. cannot under any scenario or imaginable assessment of climate sensitivity have a detectable influence on climate or, as the Court demanded, Massachusetts’s shore-

line,” he noted.

And Martin pointed out, “The Heartland Institute, and many other organizations and scientists across the country and around the world who believe passionately in sound science, stand ready to assist USEPA in this task.”

— James M. Taylor
Zoo Must Kill Baby Polar Bear, Animal Rights Extremists Argue

By James M. Taylor

A baby polar bear born in the Berlin Zoo should be euthanized rather than be subjected to the humiliation of being raised as a domestic pet, animal rights activists have argued in recent weeks. Schoolchildren around the world have rallied to the bear’s defense in an unprecedented letter-writing campaign.

The polar bear cub, named Knut by its zookeepers, was born in captivity on December 5. Knut’s mother rejected Knut and his twin brother at birth, resulting in the death of Knut’s brother just four days after birth.

Zookeepers stepped in and rescued Knut, rearing him in an incubator for the next 44 days.

Human Support ‘Unnatural’

Upon introducing Knut to the public on March 26, the Berlin Zoo encountered a shock when it was criticized by animal rights activists. German activist Frank Albrecht told Der Spiegel magazine, “The zoo must kill the bear. Feeding by hand is not species-appropriate but a gross violation of animal protection laws.”

Albrecht was not alone among animal rights activists seeking to have the bear killed. “One should have had the courage to let the bear die,” added Wolfram Graf-Rudolf, head of Germany’s Aachen Zoo, as quoted in the March 19 issue of Der Spiegel.

Zoo Vows Protection

In response to calls for the bear’s death, the Berlin Zoo was inundated with letters from German schoolchildren pleading for the animal to be kept alive.

Andre Schuele, chief veterinarian of the Berlin Zoo, promised no harm would befall Knut. “Polar bears live alone in the wild. I see no logical reason why this bear should be killed,” Schuele said in the March 20 London Daily Mail.

“A baby polar bear born in the Berlin Zoo should be euthanized rather than be subjected to the humiliation of being raised as a domestic pet, animal rights activists have argued in recent weeks.”

Schuele noted killing Knut makes no sense when animal rights activists are seeking endangered species protection for polar bears in response to the activists’ expectation of catastrophic global warming.

Ulterior Motives

Part of the animosity voiced by animal rights activists appeared to be in response to perceived economic exploitation of the animal. The Berlin Zoo has lost money every year for at least the past nine years, but it now expects an explosion in popularity and revenue due to the rare birth-in-captivity of the cute polar bear cub.

The zoo’s stock price has more than doubled this year.

“This sad call for the blood of a baby polar bear shows what charlatans and hypocrites animal rights extremists are,” said Sterling Burnett, senior fellow for the National Center for Policy Analysis. “They claim to care about animals, but if any animal does not fit their definition of what an animal should be, they have no qualms about killing it.”

“If animal rights zealots really loved animals, they would applaud human assistance to a struggling baby polar bear,” Burnett added. “Their opposition to human intervention shows they are motivated not by a love of animals, but by a hatred of humans.”

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

Bedbug

Continued from page 1

was an effective weapon against the bloodsucking pests.

Now, however, infestations are rising rapidly as a result of years of failure to use DDT and several other effective pesticides that have been banned in the United States.

As a result, bedbugs that hitch a ride into the United States in the luggage of foreign visitors meet little resistance establishing colonies in hotels and motels, in turn hitching rides into U.S. homes.

“Bedbug infestations have nearly doubled nationwide since the year 2000, according to pesticide companies, and a ban on DDT and other effective pesticides is to blame.”

“The irony is, as a pest problem bedbugs were virtually eliminated in the U.S. in the 1950s thanks to the use of DDT,” said Leonard Douglen, executive director of the New Jersey Pest Management Association, in an April 10 news release.

“Bedbug infestations have been on the increase in the United States for many years,” said Jay Lehr, science director for The Heartland Institute. “Hotels have been complaining about it for some time. There is little doubt that the loss of DDT in the Third World has allowed for the continuing increase.”

Many developing nations have banned DDT because the European Union has long refused to buy produce from nations where the effective pesticide is used.

Infestations Rising

Bedbugs have recently been discovered infesting not only hotel rooms of all price ranges, but also moving vans, airplanes, bus cushions, and apartment buildings. The size and shape of a flat apple seed, bedbugs hide in the daytime and often are not discovered by hotel guests until they wake up itching in the middle of the night.

Without DDT or other effective pesticides, bedbug colonies are difficult to exterminate. They may withstand weeks of treatment by today’s less effective pesticides.

San Francisco, which has some of the most restrictive pesticide laws in the nation, has been hit particularly hard by resurgent bedbugs.

The number of complaints to San Francisco health officials about bedbug infestations—primarily in upscale hotels—more than doubled from 2004 to 2006.

“We don’t use as harsh chemicals as we used to, we don’t spray mattresses with insecticide before selling them anymore, and the bugs are getting increasingly resistant to the few chemicals we have left,” Laura Krueger, California Department of Health Services public health biologist, told the April 8 San Francisco Chronicle.

Traveling Tips

To avoid falling victim to bedbugs, experts strongly advise thoroughly and immediately inspecting your hotel room when arriving. Examine the seams of the bed mattress and the box spring. Small bloodstains on the mattress or sheets are a sign of bedbugs.

Look behind the bedboard and check bedside drawers. Keep your suitcase off the floor, preferably on a luggage rack or some other open pedestal.

Immediately upon returning home, thoroughly vacuum your suitcase and wash and dry all your clothes on the hottest setting. Be sure to seal and discard the vacuum bag immediately after vacuuming your suitcase.

“Perhaps as bedbugs hit home in the United States a stronger case can be made for returning to the use of the most important chemical ever produced by man,” said Lehr. Despite some environmentalists’ claims, “DDT has never thinned a bird egg or was a carcinogen to man. It is the best weapon humans have against disease-carrying insects.”

James Hoare (ljahoare@aol.com) is an attorney in Rochester, New York.
Organic Foods Putting Human Health, Environment at Risk

The Truth About Organic Foods
By Alex Avery
Henderson Communications, 2006
231 pages, $19.95, ISBN 0978895207
http://www.amazon.com

Review by Craig Rucker

If you think organic food is safer, healthier, more nutritious, and more eco-friendly than conventionally grown food, you might be surprised to learn that virtually all of these claims are largely hype. As far as health and quality, those depend on far more than using manure fertilizer or natural pesticides.

That’s the gist of The Truth About Organic Foods, a provocative new book by Alex Avery, who serves as director of research and education for the Hudson Institute’s Center for Global Food Issues.

Written for Non-Scientists
The book is a dispassionate examination of the organic pseudo-religion’s odd origins and unscientific basis.

Chapter by chapter, it deconstructs common perceptions regarding organic food health and environmental claims. Written for the average consumer, it provides budget-stretched families with a resource to alleviate fears and is a welcome tool with which to turn the tables on organic purists.

It should be required reading for all food reporters.

“[The Truth About Organic Foods] is a dispassionate examination of the organic pseudo-religion’s odd origins and unscientific basis.”

Mystic Origins
The book begins with the movement’s origins in the 1920s’ lectures of a German mystic, Rudolf Steiner, who advised farmers to use only animal manure for fertilizer, saying then-synthetic nitrogen fertilizers lacked vital “cosmic energy.”

Steiner also recommended stuffing cows’ horns and deer bladders with manure and herbs to boost yields and ward off pests. Seriously.

In the 1930s and 1940s, social elites echoed Steiner’s belief in the superiority of manure-fertilized crops. The movement finally got its name when American J.I. Rodale published his first issue of Organic Gardening magazine in 1942.

Seventy-five years later, organic farming activists still cannot point to any credible science supporting their long-held belief that organic food is superior to conventionally grown food.

Claims Unsubstantiated
Organic believers say organic food is more nutritious. It is their founding belief. Yet dozens of experiments have concluded otherwise, as Avery notes, including organic farmers’ own research.

In the late 1940s Lady Balfour, the wealthy niece of a British Prime Minister, donated her sizeable farm to prove that organically grown food is more nutritious. In 1977, she admitted the experiment “revealed no consistent or significant differences.”

Today, the organic activist group that was created to conduct the experiment claims the issue hasn’t been adequately studied, and it hides its own research.

Fears Are Misplaced
Many consumers say they purchase organic food to avoid pesticides. However, an understanding of natural pesticides shows the folly of such logic.

About 5 percent of the weight of any vegetable consists of natural pesticides, many of them carcinogenic.

According to toxicologist Bruce Ames, one cup of coffee contains more carcinogens than a year’s worth of synthetic pesticide residues—usually found on produce at only a few parts per billion (the equivalent of one second in 32 years).

Do you think conventional meat and dairy products are loaded with hormones and antibiotics? Here are the facts: More than 97 percent of all meat in the United States is totally free of hormones and antibiotics, and more than 99.5 percent is free of synthetic hormones.

Hormones aren’t even allowed or sold for use in pigs or poultry. Only one sample in 400 violates the ultra-cautious antibiotic limits set by the FDA.

Beef hormones produce leaner beef, and the billions of grams of antibiotics found in organic meat, milk, and eggs—not to mention the hormones naturally produced by our own bodies.

Accordingly, the World Health Organization and food safety authorities in the United States, Canada, Japan, and Europe have all declared beef hormones safe.

Milk is even purer: 100 percent of it is tested for antibiotic residues with zero tolerance for even trace contamination. The bio-tech hormone given to cows is a perfect copy of the natural one, so the milk is in all respects indistinguishable from organic.

Organic Foods More Dangerous

Switching from phantom food risks to real ones, Avery notes organic foods have repeatedly been found to harbor more illness-causing bacteria than conventionally grown foods.

The January 2007 issue of Consumer Reports found organic chicken had 300 percent more salmonella than regular chicken, and university studies have found harmful bacteria are more likely to appear in organic vegetables than in conventionally produced.

“More than 97 percent of all meat in the United States is totally free of antibiotics, and more than 99.5 percent is free of synthetic hormones.”

Larger Environmental Footprint

Finally, if you think organic farming is better for the planet, that too is wrong.

Just for starters, giving up synthetic fertilizer would require sacrificing millions of square miles of wildlife habitat to make more manure.

It’s high time consumers knew the truth about organic food. You will find no better or more accessible source for this truth than The Truth About Organic Foods.

Craig Rucker (info@cfact.org) is executive director of the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT). This article first appeared on the CFACT Website, http://www.cfact.org.
Polar Ice

Continued from page 1

of Edinburgh and Duncan Wingham of University College London examined data from 14 satellite-based estimates of Greenland and Antarctic ice sheet volume taken since 1998. According to the scientists, who published their findings in the March 16 issue of Science magazine, the ice sheets are affecting sea level somewhere between a rise of 1.0 millimeters per year and a fall of 0.15 millimeters per year.

Examining the data for Greenland and Antarctica, the two scientists concluded, “Our best estimate of their combined imbalance is about 125 gigatons per year, enough to raise sea level by 0.35 millimeters per year. This is only a modest contribution to the present rate of sea-level rise of 3.0 millimeters per year.”

Minuscule Effect

The Shepherd and Wingham estimates mean less than an inch-and-a-half of sea level rise due to polar ice melt over the entire next century. “Yet even this unimpressive estimate of sea level increase may be far too large,” said Craig Idso, founder and former president of the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change.

“For although two of Greenland’s largest outlet glaciers doubled their rates of mass loss in less than a year back in 2004, causing many climate alarmists to claim that the Greenland Ice Sheet was responding much more rapidly to global warming than anyone had ever expected, Howat et al. report—in the very same issue of Science as Shepherd and Wingham—that the two glaciers’ rates of mass loss decreased in 2006 to near the previous rates,” Idso continued.

“And these observations, in other words, suggest that special care must be taken in how mass-balance estimates are evaluated, particularly when extrapolating into the future, because short-term spikes could yield erroneous long-term trends,” Idso said.

“Ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica are losing little if any ice mass, thus having very little impact on global sea level, results from several recent studies show.”

Ice Sheet Stabilized

In the March 30 issue of Science, still more evidence indicated there is no reason to fear rising sea levels resulting from polar ice melt. Four scientists from Pennsylvania State University and the University of Texas studied a sedimentary wedge (also known as a “till delta” of rocks and sediment) deposited by West Antarctica’s Whillans Ice Stream.

“The scientists determined the sedimentary wedge will prevent the West Antarctic ice sheet from sliding into the Antarctic Ocean any time in the foreseeable future. The sedimentary wedge, the scientists explain, “serves to thicken the ice and stabilize the position of the grounding line,” such that “the ice just up-glacier of the grounding line is substantially thicker than that needed to allow flotation, owing to the restraint from friction with the wedge.” As a result, the scientists conclude, “the grounding-line will tend to remain in the same location despite changes in sea level (until sea level rises enough to overcome the excess thickness that is due to the wedge).”

The four scientists then conclude that a substantial rise of sea level would be required to budge the sedimentary line and destabilize the ice sheet. “Sea-level changes of a few meters are unlikely to substantially affect ice-sheet behavior,” the scientists report.

Further Confirmation

In a separate article in the same issue of Science, John B. Anderson, a scientist at Rice University, concluded, “at the current rate of sea-level rise, it would take several thousand years to float the ice sheet off [its] bed.”

Additionally, a study by five scientists also published in the March 30 issue of Science reports the ice thickness caused by the sedimentation line will tend to stabilize it against “any other environmental perturbation.”

“The scientists report, “Large sea-level rise, such as the ~100-meter rise at the end of the last ice age, may overwhelm the stabilizing feedback from sedimentation, but smaller sea-level changes are unlikely to have synchronized the behavior of ice sheets in the past.”

“[T]hese studies show once again that global warming alarmism and scientific reality are in serious conflict. Al Gore and his fellow alarmists talk about 20 feet of sea level rise, while science shows that is pure fantasy.”

IAIN MURRAY

SENIOR FELLOW

COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

“Cumulatively and individually, these studies show once again that global warming alarmism and scientific reality are in serious conflict,” said Competitive Enterprise Institute Senior Fellow Iain Murray. “In an effort to scare the American public into reducing their emissions, Al Gore and his fellow alarmists talk about 20 feet of sea level rise, while science shows that is pure fantasy.”

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

Greenland Glacier Survived Warmer Temperatures

Greenland’s ice sheet is no closer to melting than that of Antarctica, indicates a study reported by five scientists at Britain’s University of Southampton in the March 8 issue of Nature magazine.

The scientists report extensive icerafted sedimentary debris was deposited in the Norwegian-Greenland Sea roughly 30 to 38 million years ago. Evidence indicates the sediment was carried by glacial ice rather than sea ice, which in turn indicates glaciers existed on Greenland “about 20 million years earlier than previously documented, at a time when temperatures and atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations were substantially higher” than they are today.

According to the University of Southampton scientists, at the time Greenland glaciers deposited the sedimentary debris, ocean bottom-water temperatures were 5 to 8 degrees Celsius warmer than they are today, and atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations were up to four times greater than today’s.

“Our data provide the stratigraphically extensive evidence for the existence of continental ice in the Northern Hemisphere during the Palaeogene,” the scientists report, which “is about 20 million years earlier than previously documented, at a time when global deep water temperatures and, by extension, surface water temperatures at high latitude, were much warmer.”

Given the existence of Greenland glaciers when temperatures and atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations were much greater than exist today, “there is great reason to not only doubt, but to reject out-of-hand, Mr. Gore’s scare stories of sea levels rapidly rising tens of feet in response to his implied rapid demise of the Greenland Ice Sheet,” said Craig Idso, founder and former president of the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change. “We now have evidence of a much warmer period of time that failed to bring about such a catastrophic consequence.”

— James M. Taylor
Rachel Carson’s Dire Unintended Consequences

Courage for the Earth: Writers, Scientists and Activists Celebrate the Life and Writings of Rachel Carson

edited by Peter Matthiessen

Review by Jay Lehr, Ph.D.

One of the most difficult aspects of keeping up with environmental issues is having to suffer through the agonizing hero worship at the altar of Rachel Carson.

Were I a more religious person, I would be inclined to believe she made a pact with the devil in which she received the grandiosity that could boil the contents of any healthy stomach.

Misguided Admiration

It is mind-boggling to find such incredibly misguided admiration for a woman whose opposition to DDT and other synthetic pesticides led to the suffering and death of millions of people around the world. In this book the usual suspects and their friends in the left-leaning environmental activist world spew forth a soupy goo of issues is having to suffer through the proclamations of millions of people around the world.

Rachel Carson was a nice, well-meaning lady with rudimentary training in zoology who stumbled into the role of a writer for the government agencies who first employed her.

She turned out to be so good at it that she incrementally left science behind. When she decided to attack the chemical inputs into our environment, she counseled in all the wrong places, kicking off an environmental firestorm that had a horrendously negative cost-benefit ratio measured in human lives.

The editor of Courage for the Earth, Peter Matthiessen, expresses her good intentions as follows: “She intended to make certain that if the public continued to let itself be led by politicians who stood by and permitted the leasing of world resources and the pollution of the land, air, and water that our children must inherit, it would not be because we knew no better.”

Secondary Concern

A true window into her thinking can be found in a beautiful paragraph in her 1941 book Under the Sea-Wind: “To stand at the edge of the sea, to sense the ebb and flow of the tides, to feel the breath of a mist moving over a great salt marsh, to watch the flight of shorebirds that have swept up and down the surf lines of the continents for untold thousands of years, to see the running of the old eels and the young shad to the sea, is to have knowledge of things that are as nearly eternal as any earthly life can be. These things were before man ever stood on the shore of the ocean and looked out upon it with wonder; they continue year in, year out, throughout the centuries and ages, while man’s kingdoms rise and fall.”

The final phrase clearly shows that Rachel Carson cared greatly for nature’s wildlife and little, if at all, for mankind.

Factual Shortcomings

Although the sea was her obsession, Carson wrote beautifully on other subjects, from the threat of nuclear technology and the first signs of global warming to animal rights and the importance of introducing nature to young children. In combining her writing with a career in science, she had what she once called “the magic combination of factual knowledge and deeply felt emotional response.”

If only this was so, an estimated 50 million people who have since died of malaria might be alive today.

Harvard’s E.O. Wilson claims in Courage for the Earth that Carson’s Silent Spring resulted in the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973, which led to the recovery of the American alligator, gray whale, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and the eastern population of the brown pelican. All of those claims have been proven false by the late G. Gordon Edwards.

Among the most egregious claims in the book are those supplied by Al Gore, such as the following: “Silent Spring came as a cry in the wilderness, a deeply felt, thoroughly researched and brilliantly written argument that changed the course of history.” Without this book, Gore writes, “the environmental movement might have been long delayed or never have developed at all.”

Gore goes on to claim, “Carson brought two decisive strengths to this battle: a scrupulous respect for the truth and a remarkable degree of personal courage. She checked and rechecked every paragraph in Silent Spring.”

Unfortunately, it appears she was checking only the grammar, not the scientific reality, of which she was sadly misinformed.

New Activism

Silent Spring planted the seeds of a new activism that has grown into one of the great popular forces of all time—but not one from which mankind has benefitted on the whole. The costs have outweighed the benefits by many orders of magnitude.

Carson’s biographer, Linda Lear, tells us in Courage for the Earth that those who saw Rachel Carson “as just another contemporary prophet of doom, not only miss the triumphal arc of her journey, but the seamlessness of her vision. In her brief life, Carson moved from unbounded wonder to deep despair at the potential outcome of human domination of the natural world. She certainly did her part to thwart that domination.”

If you were to draw a thread through the many leftist contributors to this book, you could use as a needle a salient comment made by author Freeman House, who asserts, “It’s comforting to a writer such as myself to think that a single book can alter the course of the future.” House considers Silent Spring one of these. He goes on to say that before its publication in the 1960s, “I sometimes found myself saying ‘What we need is a contemporary prophet of doom, not only one from which mankind has benefitted on the whole. The costs have outweighed the benefits by many orders of magnitude. Carson’s biographer, Linda Lear, tells us in Courage for the Earth that those who saw Rachel Carson “as just another contemporary prophet of doom, not only miss the triumphal arc of her journey, but the seamlessness of her vision. In her brief life, Carson moved from unbounded wonder to deep despair at the potential outcome of human domination of the natural world. She certainly did her part to thwart that domination.”

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Food Irradiation: A Healthy Secret

This article is the twelfth in a continuing series excerpted from the book Smoke or Steam? A Guide to Environmental, Regulatory, and Food Safety Concerns, by Samuel Aldrich, adapted and serialized by Jay Lehr.

Irradiation of food, which is highly effective in killing harmful organisms, is relatively new and widely misunderstood, and it has been flagrantly misrepresented in the media.

Irradiation aims to cut down on the 6.5 million cases of food-borne sickness that occur in the U.S. each year, resulting in more than 10,000 annual deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The first operating license for a commercial food irradiator was issued in January 1992. The deaths of three children and food poisoning of 450 from eating hamburger in a fast food chain in Washington State in 1993 were a dramatic example of the threat.

Irradiation Safe, Effective

Irradiation kills salmonella on poultry, trichina in pork, hazardous organisms in beef and seafood, and insects and larvae in food. It provides an alternative to certain chemicals and pesticides to reduce spoilage of fruits and vegetables after harvest.

In addition, irradiation allows some fruits and vegetables to ripen more fully before harvest, thus enhancing flavor. Irradiation of food has been researched since the 1950s, and its use is approved in more than 30 countries. The practice has lagged in the United States because a few small groups (mainly non-scientists) have attempted to promote boycotts. They misunderstand or misrepresent the treatment process, associating it with radiation from nuclear warfare.

Image Problems

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman reported in 2000 that very little meat has been irradiated because of concerns in the food industry about consumer reaction. If the consumer is not going to accept it, it does not matter what you call it.

Guiding Principles

A scientific group dedicated to radiation protection, the Health Physics Society, has drawn the following conclusions about irradiation:

- Food preservation by irradiation offers great potential benefits with few, if any, offsetting hazards.
- The technical feasibility of safely preserving certain foods by irradiation is firmly established by experimental evidence and experience.
- Federal regulatory bodies are proceedings cautiously in approving new applications in technology and are basing their decisions to approve or disapprove new technologies on the best scientific and technical information.
- Foods processed by the EU irradiation procedures do not become radioactive or toxic as a result of irradiation.
- The application of irradiation technology should neither be permitted nor precluded on the basis of misinformation.

Obstructionist Tactics

The food irradiation experience is an example of obstructionist tactics used by a few to prevent the adoption of a new health-promoting technology. Irradiating food is like passing a suitcase through an airport x-ray scanner. The suitcase does not become radioactive, and neither does food that is irradiated.

By Samuel Aldrich and Jay Lehr

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved irradiation for wheat and flour in 1963, for white potatoes in 1964, for pork in 1985, for fruits and vegetables in 1986, for poultry in 1990, and for red meats in 2000. Irradiation has been approved by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the American Medical Association, and the World Health Organization.

The long delay in commercial development of irradiation in the United States is similar to the 50-year delay in obtaining acceptance of milk pasteurization. Many illnesses and deaths could have been prevented if the technology had been accepted sooner.

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FOR

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AGAINST

Al Gore
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For more information about this challenge debate and global warming, please go to www.globalwarmingheartland.org.

The Heartland Institute is a 23-year-old national nonprofit organization devoted to discovering, developing, and promoting free-market solutions to public policy problems. For more information please visit our web site at www.heartland.org.

Crichton is RIGHT!

Michael Crichton’s book, State of Fear (Harper Collins, 2004, $27.95), is a surprising book. Tucked inside a lively and entertaining tale of a philanthropist, a scientist, a lawyer, and two remarkable women who travel around the world trying to foil the plots of evil-doers is a detailed expose of the flawed science and exaggerations at the base of the global warming scare. It is also a devastating critique of mainstream environmentalism today and an eloquent call for change.

Like Crichton’s previous block-busters, The Andromeda Strain and Jurassic Park, this book blends science and fiction in ways that teach as well as entertain readers. Crichton, who earned an M.D. from Harvard University and has written several nonfiction books, backs up his claims with footnotes, an appendix, and an annotated bibliography. Clearly, he wants the science in his book to be taken seriously.

Which raises the question: How much of the science in State of Fear is accurate, and how much is fiction?

The answer: Michael Crichton is right! His synthesis of the science on climate change is extremely accurate and the experts he cites are real. The Heartland Institute has been participating in the debate over climate change for more than a decade, and we have worked with many of the experts listed in the book’s bibliography. You can find more information at The Heartland Institute’s Web site, www.heartland.org, by clicking on the Crichton is Right button.