EPA, Army Corps Square Off Over Mississippi Delta Drainage Plan

By James M. Taylor

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers are squaring off over an Army Corps proposal to seasonally drain 67,000 acres of wetlands adjacent to the lower Mississippi River. The Army Corps wants to spend $220 million to build a pumping station in the Yazoo River Basin to address seasonal flooding. EPA opposes the plan.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wants to build a pumping station in the Yazoo River Basin to address seasonal flooding. EPA opposes the plan.

EPA Emphasizes Wildlife

"EPA has had longstanding concerns about this project because it would impact aquatic ecosystems on a massive scale, affecting approximately 67,000 acres of wetlands," EPA spokeswoman Melissa Dykeman said. EPA says the project's goals do not justify altering wetlands that are vital to regional fish and wildlife. It has notified the Army Corps it plans to veto the proposal unless the Corps can provide sufficient evidence the feared environmental impacts will not occur.

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Citizens Protest Wind Farm Plan for Maryland

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San Francisco Regulators Seek Greenhouse Fee

By Tom Tanton

San Francisco-area air quality regulators are proposing to charge a fee to most businesses based on the amount of greenhouse gases they emit.
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](http://www.heartland.org), by clicking on the Crichton is Right button.
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Science Organizations’ ‘Consensus’ Statements Do Not Reflect Members’ Views

By Joseph D’Aleo

The American Geophysical Union, the world’s largest organization representing earth and space scientists, has issued a new statement on the causes and consequences of recent climate change and possible responses.

Similarly, in the past few years the Royal Society, National Academy of Sciences (NAS), and American Meteorological Society (AMS) have issued statements endorsing a so-called consensus view that human activities are driving global warming.

What you don’t hear is that these societies never allowed member scientists to vote on these climate statements. Essentially, in each case only two dozen or so members on ad hoc committees and governing boards of these institutions produced the “consensus” statements.

“[Science] societies never allowed member scientists to vote on these climate statements. Essentially, in each case only two dozen or so members ... produced the ‘consensus’ statements.”

Member Scientists Ignored

As a council member of one of the professional societies (the AMS), I can tell you I was extremely disappointed with the process and even the notion of issuing a statement supposedly representing to policymakers the view of the society without the full involvement of its members.

In the case of the AMS, the statement drafting process involved appointing an ad hoc committee to draft a statement and then having the council review and recommend changes and post the statement for comment, for just 30 days, on the home page of the society’s Web site.

Few members visit the home page, and many go to the site only to look for papers or register for upcoming conferences. Still, the posted statement received a record number of comments, many of them strongly negative. Despite an exhaustive effort to catalog the comments, in the end little substantive change was made to the statement.

In spite of the dissent, the society proclaimed to Dr. Roger Pielke Sr., when he inquired about the process for creating the statement, that the committee simply “facilitated the drafting and that the council and the membership owned and controlled the final statement.”

Pielke pushed for longer review and for a referendum. However, little changed from the draft statement, and no changes were made to the process.

Goal Is Advocacy

Pielke believes “this problem of our professional organizations using their positions as political pulpits is appalling and compromises the scientific process.”

The AMS has gone so far as to list advocacy and efforts to influence policy in its strategic goals, although to the society’s credit it softened the wording in its 2007 version.

Rank and File Disagree

With my experience as chief meteorologist for two large weather companies, and with many personal contacts in operational meteorology, climatology, and broadcasting, I believe the majority of rank-and-file members within those specialties (as many as 60 to 70 percent) do not buy the notion that man is entirely responsible for climate change. Yet the societies use their statements to imply full support of all the scientists involved.

Joseph D’Aleo (email form http://icecap.us/index.php/go/contact-us) is a certified consultant meteorologist, was the first director of meteorology at the Weather Channel, and is executive director of the International Climate and Environmental Change Assessment Project.
Landowner Must Cut Redwoods to Accommodate Neighbor’s Solar Panels

By James M. Taylor

In a battle between next-door neighbor environmentalists, a Sunnyvale, California couple is being ordered to cut down their backyard redwood trees or face up to $1,000 per day in fines.

The Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office issued the order to Richard Treanor and Carolynn Bissett after their neighbor, Mark Vargas, complained the redwoods were partially shading a solar power panel Vargas had installed a few years after the redwoods were planted.

Redwoods Must Fall

In 1978, then-Gov. Jerry Brown signed the Solar Shade Control Act, which gives solar panel owners the legal right to prevent neighboring trees from growing in a manner that interferes with solar power panels. Treanor and Bissett planted several redwoods in their backyard between 1997 and 1999. Vargas installed an extensive network of solar panels on his roof in 2001.

As the redwoods grew, they eventually began shading a portion of Vargas’s solar panels at certain times of the day.

Vargas initially asked Treanor and Bissett to cut down their redwoods. When they refused, he asked that they cut off the top half of the trees, leaving just the bottom portion of the tree trunks. When Treanor and Bissett again refused, Vargas contacted the district attorney, who took Vargas’s side in the dispute.

“We are the first citizens in the state of California to be convicted of a crime for growing redwood trees,” Bissett, who drives a Prius and is a self-proclaimed environmentalist, told the San Jose Mercury News for a January 24 story.

Shocked by Ruling

The plight of Treanor and Bissett has generated shock and a great deal of sympathy from fellow Californians.

“Don’t ask me to cut down my trees just because they tower over your solar panels,” wrote Mercury News columnist Patty Fisher in a January 28 editorial. “I don’t care if the law is on your side. A law that condemns trees simply for growing is a law that needs to be rewritten.

“Trees are about as green as you can get, even when they shed their leaves,” Fisher noted. “Trees not only produce oxygen and reduce carbon dioxide but also provide habitat for woodland critters. They beautify our neighborhoods, providing screening and cooling shade.”

“In a battle between next-door neighbor environmentalists, a Sunnyvale, California couple is being ordered to cut down their backyard redwood trees ...”

Coal Power Opposition Raises Blackout Possibilities

By Steven Milloy

The lights may soon go out in the Washington, DC metro area and other parts of the country due to environmental activist opposition to coal-fired power plants, energy analysts are warning.

“Electric power has already become painfully expensive in Washington and its suburbs. Now, local utilities, say, it could become something even worse: scarce,” the Washington Post reported on February 3.

Rolling Blackouts

Maryland may face rolling blackouts as early as 2011 or 2012 on summer days, experts note. The core of the problem: The region’s ability to meet its ever-increasing demand for electricity is being short-circuited by environmental activists doing everything they can to make it as difficult as possible to generate and transmit electrical power.

Environmental activists are calling on governments to force consumers to conserve energy instead of allowing industry to accommodate increasing demand. “The cheapest power plant out there is the one you never have to build,” one activist told the Post.

“The lights may soon go out in the Washington, DC metro area and other parts of the country due to environmental activist opposition to coal-fired power plants ...”

Cost Increases

In reality, opposition to coal-fired power plants is expected to push electricity prices up rapidly.

The New York Times reported on February 5 utilities are turning to natural gas because opponents of coal-burning power plants are stymieing their attempts to build new facilities. The story notes the increased use of natural gas will send prices of that commodity even higher as utilities use more of it to meet rising demand.

Since environmentalist-fomented opposition to coal plants is rising around the country—including a new policy by major banks Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, and Morgan Stanley to discourage coal-plant construction—analysts note utility companies have little choice even though the boom in natural gas demand will send electricity prices even higher.

Tom Tanton, senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute, noted even the most cost-efficient alternatives to coal-fired power plants would be more expensive and likely environmentally counterproductive.

“The amount of sticker shock that consumers will face as a result of blocking new and clean coal-fired power plants depends on numerous factors, such as current and future grid portfolio, demand growth, and age of current fleet,” Tanton said.

“Nevertheless, price increases of perhaps 10 to 25 percent can be expected,” Tanton continued. “At the same time, the construction of cleaner and cheaper new facilities will be thwarted, and reductions in criteria pollutants—nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter—will be slowed as reliance on the existing fleet of power plants continues.”

Steven Milloy (junkman@junkscience.com) is an adjunct scholar at the Competitive Enterprise Institute and the publisher of JunkScience.com.
College Students Take Issue With Bottled Water

By James M. Taylor

College students across the nation celebrated Valentine’s Day by kicking off a celebrity-judged “I Heart Tap Water” student video contest. The contest, in which students create short films encouraging people to drink tap water instead of bottled water, runs until April 14.

Winners, who will receive cash prizes up to $1,500, will be announced on Earth Day, April 22.

Videos Focus on Environment

“Bottled water is not as environmentally friendly as people think it is,” actor and celebrity judge Alec Baldwin said in a February 14 news release.

But the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) notes the bottled water industry is a leader in the food and beverage industry in reducing its environmental footprint. PET water bottles, which are becoming increasingly lighter in weight, accounted for less than one-third of 1 percent of all waste produced in the United States in 2005, the group notes.

IBWA President Joe Doss suggested the students are missing an important part of the picture. “It is about beverage choice, available to consumers who choose, or rely upon, bottled water for refreshment and hydration. To misinform people about anything to the contrary is a disservice and just plain wrong.”

Bottled water is a safe, healthy, convenient beverage that consumers choose to stay refreshed and hydrated.

Petroleum Consumption

On February 14, the day the I Heart Tap Water contest began, the University Daily Kansan, the student newspaper of the University of Kansas at Lawrence, published a lengthy article documenting environmentalist objections to bottled water. The article noted shipping bottled water from such faraway places as Fiji and France to the United States requires the consumption of large quantities of oil.

“The production of the 28 billion bottles of water Americans buy each year uses 1.1 million barrels of oil and releases one billion pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere,” the story reported. Moreover, “Those bottles could take anywhere between 400 and 1,000 years to degrade,” the author wrote.

“We have local municipal water sources that provide a quality product for us,” noted Jeff Severin, director of the University of Kansas Center for Sustainability. “There is no reason why we should not take advantage of our local sources.”

Healthy Water

According to Food and Water Watch, which is sponsoring the I Heart Tap Water contest, “Consumers are wasting billions of dollars a year on billions of gallons of bottled water in large part because advertising spin has led them to believe that water in a bottle is safer or better than tap water.”

IBWA disagreed, noting bottled water is growing in popularity not because of “spin,” but because people appreciate its consistent quality, taste, and convenience.

Doss noted, “In an era of increasing obesity, heart disease, and diabetes, people recognize the importance of water consumption. Bottled water is a safe, healthy, convenient beverage that consumers choose to stay refreshed and hydrated. Any actions that discourage the use of this healthy beverage choice are not in the public interest.”

Doss also noted the students are creating a false choice for consumers. “It does not always amount to a tap water versus bottled water choice,” he said. “Many consumers likely drink both bottled water and tap water depending on the circumstances.”

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is a senior fellow of The Heartland Institute and managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

Concerned about Climate Change?

James Taylor says there’s no cause for alarm!

James M. Taylor is managing editor of Environment & Climate News, a senior fellow with The Heartland Institute, and one of the nation’s most sought-after speakers on climate change. He has addressed elected officials, civic organizations, and church groups – always to applause and praise for his knowledge and accessible speaking style.

Taylor is author of What Climate Scientists Think About Global Warming (Heartland Institute, 2007) and other Heartland publications. He has appeared on CNN’s Glenn Beck show, the Fox News Channel, and the “Good Morning America” and “Newsmakers” national radio programs. His writing on environmental issues has appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Houston Chronicle, Detroit News, Boston Globe, Tampa Tribune, and elsewhere.

Engagements are scheduled on a “first come, first served” basis, so call 312/377-4000 today to schedule James Taylor to keynote your next event!

An outstanding speaker ... and an expert on environment issues!
Mississippi

Continued from page 1

67,000 acres of wetlands,” EPA Deputy Regional Administrator Lawrence Starfield wrote to the Army Corps on February 1.

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers are squaring off over an Army Corps proposal to seasonally drain 67,000 acres of wetlands adjacent to the lower Mississippi River.”

“EPA has participated in the review of this project since before the release of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) in 2000,” Starfield continued. “During that time and subsequent to the DSEIS release, EPA has consistently expressed concerns with the significant environmental effects of the structural component of this project.”

Corps Focuses on Property

Army Corps officials maintain the proposed pumping station would not have as much environmental impact as EPA and environmental activist groups claim. The Corps notes it would operate the pump only to drain water into the adjacent Mississippi River when floodwaters in the Yazoo River Basin reach exceedingly high levels.

The Army Corps has planned to build the Yazoo River Basin pump station since 1941, but until now it has always had higher-priority concerns that placed the proposed facility on the back burner. Local property owners and elected officials support the project to protect their property from severe floods.

EPA has rarely used its Clean Water Act authority to veto Army Corps projects. It last exercised the power in 1981.

“EPA has noted it will help only a few landowners in the region and is ‘formulated principally to protect the owners [of that land],’” the Ledger added.

Activist Groups Oppose Plan

“Contrary to the Corps’ claims, residential flooding in the Yazoo Pumps project area is extremely limited, and there are far more effective ways to address what limited flooding there is than by building a $220 million pumping plant designed to drain wetlands and marginal agricultural lands,” said Melissa Samet, senior director of water resources for the environmentalist group American Rivers.

“During the 24-year period from 1979 to 2002, only 62 properties within the Yazoo Pumps project area filed flood insurance claims under the National Flood Insurance Program. Collectively, these properties filed 209 claims for damages totaling $1.664 million. At that rate, it would take more than 3,173 years to recoup the $220 million construction investment in the Yazoo Pumps,” Samet explained.

“Even the Corps of Engineers recognizes that the Yazoo Pumps are not designed to protect communities from flooding,” Samet added. “More than 80 percent of the project’s benefits are from agriculture, and the majority of those benefits will go to large landowners.”

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is a senior fellow of The Heartland Institute and managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Abuse, Misuse of Peer Review Process Allow Spread of Science Misinformation

By Henry I. Miller, M.D.

Those of us who regularly seek out information about scientific and medical subjects have learned there’s a hierarchy of reliability.

For example, the “facts” in a random blog item or a news release from a special-interest group are on average less trustworthy than, say, those from the Web site of the National Institutes of Health.

Likewise, the term “peer-reviewed journal”—which means articles have been reviewed anonymously by independent experts before being accepted for publication—elicits instant respect from many people.

But not from me, because I actually read many of those journals.

Peer Review Shortcomings

I’ve found it is not uncommon for articles that are egregiously, obviously flawed—most often because the basic rules of scientific research have been violated—to find their way into prominent scientific publications.

Some of the worst of these papers have conveyed false alarms about the safety of gene-spliced (“genetically modified”) plants that subsequently have been extensively reported in the popular press. In this way, misinformation is widely propagated and feeds the propagandizing of anti-technology activists.

Methodology Flaws Ignored

A case in point is a 2001 paper in the British journal Nature purporting to show genes from a pest-resistant, gene-spliced variety of corn had migrated into native corn plants in Mexico.

Colleagues of the authors had pointed out flaws in the methodology and results months before the article was submitted to the journal. The publication triggered criticism from major research groups, which Nature subsequently published.

Eventually the original paper was condemned by Nature’s editor-in-chief: “Nature has concluded that the evidence available is not sufficient to justify the publication of the original paper.”

Since then, no other research group has been able to confirm the original results.

Environmental Benefits Ignored

In 2000, the American journal Science published an article in which the authors claimed to have evaluated the “ecological risks and benefits of genetically engineered plants.” En route to concluding they could draw no conclusion, the authors neglected the proven benefits of gene-spliced organisms, including enhanced yields, nutritional enhancements, less use of chemical pesticides, and greater use of no-till farming (and thus less soil erosion and runoff of chemicals and lower release of carbon dioxide to the environment).

At the same time, no detrimental effects of gene-spliced plants had been described—nor have any been identified since.

“[T]he term ‘peer-reviewed journal’—which means articles have been reviewed anonymously by independent experts before being accepted for publication—elicits instant respect from many people. But not from me, because I actually read many of those journals.”

Politically Charged Discussion

Another egregious and exceedingly harmful example of apparent anti-biotechnology bias appeared in an article in the British medical journal The Lancet. It claimed to show adding to potatoes a gene that codes for a substance toxic to insects caused damage to the immune system of laboratory rats and stimulated abnormal cell division in their digestive tract.

But many research groups have shown the experiment’s research methodology was fundamentally flawed and no conclusions about the safety of biotech foods can be drawn from the research results. After an extensive review, the British Royal Society issued a statement detailing the ways in which the experiments were fatally flawed, concluding, “On the basis of this paper, it is wrong to conclude that there are human health concerns with the process of [gene-splicing] itself, or even with the particular genes inserted into these [gene-spliced] potatoes.”

The editors of the journal nonetheless remonstrated against their critics, arguing that in spite of the article’s admittedly deficient methodology—and over the strenuous objections of the paper’s referees—they published it to “make constructive progress in the debate between scientists, the media, and the general public” about a very politically charged issue.

Unleashing such a sham has proved to be anything but constructive, because the paper’s publication is frequently cited as presumptive validation of its spurious conclusions. The irresponsible rationalization of the editors makes a mockery of the peer review process.

Real World Ignored

The most recent example of the failure of editorial and peer review in scientific journals occurred in an article published in September 2007 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). The authors claimed to show pollen from gene-spliced corn harmed certain insects in a laboratory aquatic ecosystem.

Their conclusions are dubious, and their methodology was atrociously sloppy and inaccurately described. More important, the researchers reported elsewhere that they had failed to find these same effects in studies in the field—which they neglected to reveal in the PNAS article.

This is a critical omission because laboratory studies are designed to mimic what happens in the real world. In other words, even if the laboratory studies had been performed correctly and carefully, positive results arguably would have been irrelevant because they don’t mimic what happens in the field.

Process Must Be Corrected

These and other failures of peer review corrupt the traditional process by which new scientific knowledge is obtained and reported. They inflict irreparable harm on the reporting and archiving of scientific developments for policymakers, the media, the public, and the scientific community.

Within weeks of the publication of the flawed PNAS article, for example, European Union environmental regulators cited it as justification for a ban on the sale of gene-spliced corn seeds.

Because science is (or is supposed to be) self-correcting—a thesis is put forth, tested, and ultimately revised on the basis of new data—misinformation conveyed to the scientific community distorts the entire process.

Journals should request reviews of research articles from bona fide experts who do not have a known bias toward the subject of the research. These reviewers should be encouraged to ask probing, detailed questions, and the authors of the submitted article should be required to answer them satisfactorily before a paper is accepted.

Had such measures been taken regarding the research articles described here, it is unlikely any of them would have been published in a prominent journal.

When editors lack the integrity and competence to undertake these measures, the scientific community should take them to the woodshed. If they want to retain society’s respect, they will.
U.S. Supreme Court to Decide Whether ESA Listing Exceeds Federal Power

By E. Jay Donovan

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether the Interstate Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution gives the federal government authority to regulate Alabama sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act.

A lawsuit contending the federal government overstepped its bounds in seeking to regulate Alabama sturgeon was filed by attorneys with the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF), an organization that litigates on behalf of property owners against government overreach. PLF attorneys represent the Alabama-Tombigbee Rivers Coalition, an alliance of Alabama businesses, agricultural associations, and other water users who would be adversely affected by federal regulation.

The Supreme Court announced on January 4 its decision to hear the case.

No Interstate Connections

Critical to the issue of federal oversight authority is the fact that the Alabama sturgeon is not found outside of limited areas in Alabama and is not used for any commercial purpose.

“We are very gratified that the Supreme Court has accepted this case, which raises major constitutional questions about the appropriate limits of federal power,” said M. Reed Hopper, an attorney with Pacific Legal Foundation.

“Does federal power to regulate commerce among the states extend to purely local land and water use matters, and local species, that don’t have a role in interstate commerce?” Hopper asked.

“Will a balance of power between federal and state authority continue to be a meaningful concept in our constitutional system? That is what is at stake in this case.”

Clarifying Prior Decisions

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit upheld the federal listing of the Alabama sturgeon in a 2007 case. In asking the Supreme Court to review that decision, PLF cited Supreme Court decisions in 1995 and 2000 that set limits on federal regulatory powers. In both of the cases cited, the Court ruled the federal government did not have authority to regulate things that did not flow through or substantially affect interstate commerce.

PLF argues none of the prongs of the Court’s “substantially affects” test is satisfied in this case.

“The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether the Interstate Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution gives the federal government authority to regulate Alabama sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act.”

According to PLF, the Alabama sturgeon listing has nothing to do with economic activity; doesn’t include any limiting principle that would confine federal regulation to interstate commerce; makes no express findings that show a relationship between the listing and interstate commerce; and provides no clear, demonstrated link between the Alabama sturgeon and interstate commerce.

“If the federal government can regulate a wholly intrastate, noncommercial species, and its habitat ... there is no activity that the government could not regulate,” states the PLF petition.

National Impact

“There’s a clear need for the Supreme Court to address the questions raised by our petition,” Hopper said. “The impacts are national in scope—as many as half of the estimated 1,300 species listed under the ESA are found on private property. So the federal government is regulating a vast number of species—and a vast amount of privately owned land—without clear justification under the Commerce Clause of the Constitution.

“Lower courts have been unable to agree on a constitutional rationale to support the ESA. And the fundamental concept that our federal government is one of limited powers must be preserved and protected,” Hopper concluded.

E. Jay Donovan ( ejd38@hotmail.com ) is a freelance writer based in Tampa, Florida.

Wolf

Continued from page 1

Endangered Species list, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming have developed programs that would allow a limited amount of hunting designed to keep wolf populations at current levels.

Although experts expect the federal plan ultimately to be validated in the federal courts, the filing of the suit will block implementation of the state and federal programs for years to come.

Wolf Numbers Exploding

Since the reintroduction of 31 gray wolves into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 and 1996, wolves have rapidly reproduced and fanned out into Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. By the end of 2007, more than 1,500 gray wolves were counted in the three states.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has determined wolves no longer require an endangered classification. FWS proposes letting the states manage their own wolf populations, with FWS prepared to step back in and reclassify gray wolves as endangered if the regional population drops under 300.

With the wolf population growing from just the original 31 to more than 1,500 in barely more than 10 years, the resiliency of wolf populations has already been empirically demonstrated.

“I am very surprised the wolf population has grown as fast as it has,” said Ed Bangs, FWS Wolf Recovery Coordinator.

States’ Management Effective

While Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming have developed separate and somewhat different wolf management programs, the combined effect of the state management programs is designed to maintain a wolf population similar to current levels.

“The wolf population is doing great,” said Bangs. “The states have been managing them for a few years now and they have been doing a great job doing it. We expect this to continue under the proposed state plans.”

Activists Insistent

In justifying their suit to block state assumption of wolf management plans, environmental activist groups argue a population of at least 2,000 to 3,000 wolves is necessary to maintain long-term viability of the species.

“This is a giant step backward. There is absolutely no reason to begin a wholesale slaughter of the region’s wolves,” said Suzanne Stone, Northern Rockies wolf conservation specialist for Defenders of Wildlife, in a January 28 news release. “Yet that is exactly what the federal government is willing to allow the states to do: wipe out hundreds of the wolves our nation has worked so hard to recover.”

Bangs disagrees, noting the states’ target of roughly 1,000 wolves ensures plenty of wolves to fend off any future extinction threats.

Conflicts with Animals, People

Steve Nadeau, large carnivore manager for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, noted too many wolves can create problems for livestock and endanger big game species such as elk.

“In areas where our big game populations are struggling and not meeting objectives—and one of the primary reasons they are not meeting objectives is predation—we can help them through regulated hunting” of predators, Nadeau told the New West Web site.

Bangs agreed wolf hunting is little cause for concern. “We are encouraging people to ignore the rhetoric and hysteria and search for the truth. Some limited, highly regulated hunting will be allowed, but this will have very little effect on overall wolf populations,” said Bangs.

Bangs says wolves have already filled all suitable wolf habitat in the region. “Many more wolves would lead to undesirable conflict with people,” he said.

E. Jay Donovan ( ejd38@hotmail.com ) is a freelance writer based in Tampa, Florida.
Federal Government Continues to Weigh ESA Listing of Polar Bears

Numbers aren’t declining, experts note

By H. Sterling Burnett, Ph.D.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has postponed a decision on whether to list polar bears as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act.

The FWS stated the extension, announced on January 8, was necessary in order to take into account public comments and expert opinions regarding the bears.

The process began in December 2006 when Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the Bush administration’s plan to consider listing the polar bear as a threatened animal on the U.S. Endangered Species list. The decision to consider listing the polar bear settled a lawsuit filed by Greenpeace and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Polar Bear Numbers Stable

Kempthorne has acknowledged polar bear populations are not currently in decline, but he has stated concern over predictions global warming may cause a retreat in Arctic sea ice. Global warming alarmists have claimed a retreat of sea ice would make it more difficult for polar bears to hunt seals.

If the bear is finally listed as threatened, it will be the first time a species was placed on the Endangered Species list based on global warming projections.

In support of their argument, environmentalists have presented only one academic study showing any present harm to polar bears. That study examined a single population of polar bears in Canada’s Western Hudson Bay and linked an early break-up of ice in the bay to a 21 percent decline in the polar bear population.

Other research, however, indicates polar bear populations are actually growing overall, including in areas where ice is receding.

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has postponed a decision on whether to list polar bears as ‘threatened’ under the Endangered Species Act.”

Flawed Methodology

FWS cited nine administrative reports in support of its decision to consider listing polar bears. The reports shared a number of common assumptions regarding computer model predictions of retreating Arctic sea ice. Some models predict a steep decline in Arctic sea ice, leading to predictions that seal populations will decline as the sea ice retreats.

On January 30, 2008, however, J. Scott Armstrong, a researcher in the field of scientific forecasting methods, exposed flaws in the sea ice models at a hearing held by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Armstrong and his colleagues had assessed the methodology used by climate forecasters to predict future sea ice conditions and polar bear population levels. Armstrong’s team audited the methodologies used in reports cited by FWS, and Armstrong determined each of the studies violated a majority of the forecasting principles that applied to their research.

On average, Armstrong found, the authors properly applied only 12 percent of their relevant principles. “In what occupations would work that follows 12 percent of proper procedures be considered acceptable?” Armstrong asked at the hearings.

Real-World Observations

Armstrong also noted a good deal of real-world evidence casts doubt on predictions of rapid Arctic ice loss. According to Armstrong, coastal stations in Greenland are cooling, and average summer air temperatures at the summit of the Greenland Ice Sheet have fallen by 4°F per decade since measurements began in 1987.

Moreover, Armstrong noted, a study commissioned by Canada’s Department of Fisheries and Oceans examining the relationship between air temperature and sea ice coverage concluded “the possible impact of global warming appears to play a minor role in changes to Arctic sea ice.”

Though polar bears currently eat seals more than any other food source, research shows they have a varied diet when other foods are available. The bears are known to eat fish, kelp, caribou, ducks, sea birds, beluga whales, musk oxen, and scavenged whale and walrus carcasses when they are available.

Dr. Mitchell Taylor, a biologist recently retired from the Nunavut Territorial government in Canada, pointed out in testimony to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that modest warming may be beneficial to the bears because it creates better habitat for seals and makes blueberry bushes more abundant.

Bears Not Threatened

“Ice has declined in some areas of polar bear range, and this decline in ice appears to have reduced the viability of two populations—at Western Hudson Bay and the Southern Beaufort. However, polar bears are currently abundant in all populations, and are not threatened with extinction by sea ice reductions,” Taylor said in an interview for this story.

“According to a recent paper from the U.S. Geological Survey, the total reduction in optimal polar bear ice habitat will be only 30 percent in 100 years. Polar bears have always sustained viable populations in areas where they seek onshore retreats during the open water season,” Taylor continued.

Taylor added, “The reductions in range and numbers that would occur if the computer sea ice projections are correct would not reduce the sea ice enough to cause the extinction of polar bears as a species. There is certainly no imminent danger of even a reduction in polar bear range. It would be prudent to increase monitoring and harvest management activities, but I think it is premature to declare polar bears to be threatened with extinction until more is known about climate change, the simulation models that predict it, and the ability of polar bears to adapt to changing conditions.”

H. Sterling Burnett, Ph.D. (sterling.burnett@ncpa.org) is a senior fellow with the National Center for Policy Analysis, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research institute based in Dallas, Texas.
January Weather Was Exceptionally Cold, Snowy

May be beginning of long-term global cooling shift

By Anthony Watts

January 2008 has been an exceptional month for winter weather, not only in North America but across the globe, according to numerous indicators.

We’ve had anecdotal evidence of odd weather in the form of wire reports from China, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, and record-setting cold and snow have been felt with intensity not seen for 30 to 100 years, depending on the region.

We also have reports of significant negative anomalies in the global satellite data for the lower troposphere. There has been a global drop in temperature of 0.63° Centigrade in the past 12 months. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has announced that January 2008 was below twentieth century temperature averages.

Arctic sea ice has quickly recovered from the record low extent of summer 2007. Although a massive La Niña weather pattern might be the driver behind all of this, the changing weather may also be a harbinger of a more long-term phase shift, according to veteran forecaster Joe Bastardi.

Shift to Cooler Weather?

Said Bastardi, “The maturation of the La Niña to its classic major cold look, both in the equatorial Pacific waters and the amazing amount of the Northern Hemisphere troposphere that is covered by colder-than-normal temperatures, is not only a major driving force in the everyday weather picture of Earth, but is a sign that in the end, it is nature, not man, that will have its way with the weather.”

“It is straight out of the book of climate,” Bastardi adds. “The pattern is so much like the 1949-1950 La Niña, which was signaling the start of the reversal of the warming of the Earth’s climate in the 1930s, ‘40s, and early ‘50s. Only someone choosing to ignore it, or not wanting to see it, would not be cognizant of it.”

Large Snow Anomalies

Now to add to this, we have images and reports from NOAA and Rutgers University of large anomalies of snow cover extent for the northern hemisphere in January 2008. Figure 1 is NOAA’s Snow and Ice chart for January 31, 2008.

Figure 2 is the Rutgers Global Snow Lab map of the Northern Hemisphere for January 2008. The key at the bottom of the image indicates coverage by percent of land area. The Northern Hemisphere reports 50.13 million sq. km of snow cover; Eurasia, 32.30 million sq. km; and North America, 17.83 million sq. km.

Figure 3 is the Rutgers Global Snow Lab anomaly graph. As the figure indicates, January 2008 had the largest real Northern Hemisphere snow cover during the period 1966-2008, just slightly larger than the previous largest anomaly, January 1984.

“January 2008 has been an exceptional month for winter weather, not only in North America but across the globe ...”

No Recent Global Warming

The exceptionally cold and snowy weather is being largely ignored in the media, but climate scientists are taking notice of the lack of global warming during the past several years.

“Satellite records show absolutely no warming since the beginning of 2001, while global carbon dioxide emissions increased 15 to 20 percent. The drop in temperature in the past year has been a whopping 0.63°C (1.13°F),” said climatologist Patrick Michaels, an environmental sciences professor at the University of Virginia and senior fellow at the Cato Institute.

“The lack of warming in recent years is yet another piece of solid evidence that warming for this century is going to be near the low end of projections made by the United Nations, around 1.75°C (3.15°F), far below the end-of-the-world forecasts we hear so much of,” Michaels added.

“The bottom line,” Michaels said, “is there is hardly a planetary ‘emergency,’ and the cooler heads urging no expensive and ineffective policies at this time are in tune with the planet’s climate.”

Anthony Watts (info@surfacetstations.org) is a veteran meteorologist from Chico, California. Watts is currently assembling data and conducting a comprehensive analysis of the nation’s official temperature reading stations, which can be found at https://www.surfacestations.org.
Antarctic Ice Melt Scare Lacks Scientific Support

By Patrick J. Michaels

The Washington Post recently ran a shocking above-the-fold article warning us of “Escalating Ice Loss Found in Antarctica.” A new paper by Eric Rignot of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory shows a net loss of ice where most scientists thought the opposite would occur, the story noted.

The Post went full-bore with this one, spreading the article on to an entire interior page. The piece ends by noting that Rajendra Pachauri, head of the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is so concerned that he is personally going down to inspect the situation.

“Despite a warming Southern Ocean, the amount of ice surrounding Antarctica is now at the highest level ever measured for this time of the year, since satellites first began to monitor it almost 30 years ago.”

Record Sea Ice
He should. Before he even gets to Antarctica, Pachauri is going to see something even more surprising than Rignot’s finding. Despite a warming Southern Ocean, the amount of ice surrounding Antarctica is now at the highest level ever measured for this time of the year, since satellites first began to monitor it almost 30 years ago. This represents a continuation of the record set last winter (our summer).

Thanks to the miracles of modern technology, we can also look at the departure from the average for ice mass in a given month. At present, the coverage of ice surrounding Antarctica is almost exactly two million square miles above where it is historically supposed to be at this time of year. It’s farther above normal than it has ever been for any month in climatologic records.

Around now, because it’s summer down there and the ice is headed toward its annual low point, there should be about seven million square miles of it. That means, as data in University of Illinois’ Web publication Cryosphere Today shows, there is nearly 30 percent more ice down in Antarctica than usual for this time of the year.

IPCC Predicts Growing Ice
All of the IPCC’s models of Antarctica in the twenty-first century forecast a gain in ice, as a warmer surrounding ocean evaporates more water, which subsequently falls in the form of snow when it hits the continent. It’s simply too cold for rain in Antarctica, and it’ll stay that way for a very long time.

Concerning Antarctica as a whole, the IPCC’s new climate compendium notes “the lack of warming reflected in atmospheric temperatures averaged across the region.” Other studies, such as Peter Doran’s in Nature in 2003, show actual cooling in recent decades. (There is a small area of significant warming in the peninsula that points towards South America, but this is less than 2 percent of Antarctica’s total land mass.)

There’s brand new evidence, just published in mid-January in Geophysical Research Letters, of a striking increase in snowfall over that peninsula. The few snowfall records that are available elsewhere in Antarctica show considerable variation from decade to decade, so discriminating the “signal” of increased snowfall caused by global warming from all the rest of the “noise” may be very difficult indeed.

We see the same problem with hurricanes and global warming. Their strength and numbers vary considerably from year to year. The year 2005 was the most active ever measured in the Atlantic Basin, while 2007 was one of the weakest in history. How do you find the fingerprint of global warming amid such variation?

“The year 2005 was the most active [hurricane season] ever measured in the Atlantic Basin, while 2007 was one of the weakest in history. How do you find the fingerprint of global warming amid such variation?”

Putting Facts in Context
So it’s not warming up, and the snowfall data are equivocal, yet the continent is experiencing a net loss of ice. How can this be, and is it even important? The current hypothesis is that warmer waters beneath the surface are somehow loosening the ice. That’s plausible, but again, there’s precious little proof of it.

And further, the bottom line is that there is more ice than ever surrounding Antarctica.

One of the tired tropes that reverberate throughout global warming reporting is that inconvenient facts get left out. In this case, it’s blatant. Midway through the Post’s page-long article comes a statement that “these new findings come as the Arctic is losing ice at a dramatic rate.” Wouldn’t that have been an appropriate place to note that, despite a small recent loss of ice from the Antarctic landmass, the ice field surrounding Antarctica is now larger than ever measured?

Patrick J. Michaels (pmichaels@cato.org) is senior fellow in environmental studies at the Cato Institute and author of Meltdown: The Predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians, and the Media. This article first appeared in the American Spectator on February 5, 2008.
Cap and Trade Would Stifle Economy, Delay Transition to Cleaner Fuels

By William O’Keefe and Jeff Kueter

With Congress determined to regulate energy use and perhaps impose caps or taxes on carbon dioxide emissions, the consequences of these actions deserve more scrutiny than they have received.

Much of today’s debate is driven by rhetoric asserting a climate catastrophe is certain and the United States is sitting on the sidelines.

Neither claim is true. Projections of climate catastrophe are largely the product of models that have not been validated, use questionable data, and rely on unproven assumptions about the science.

U.S. Reducing Emissions

The United States is confronting the climate risk, if any, with significant success. Since 1990, the benchmark year used in the Kyoto Protocol and many of the legislative proposals in Congress, the United States has reduced carbon intensity (carbon emissions per unit of economic output) by 22 percent. Since 2000, the United States has reduced carbon intensity by 11 percent. Although the European Union is cited as a model of responsible action, its emissions have grown faster than ours.

“With Congress determined to regulate energy use and perhaps impose caps or taxes on carbon dioxide emissions, the consequences of these actions deserve more scrutiny than they have received.”

If we accept that energy is vital for economic growth, then it is understandable that a growing population (U.S. population grew from 248 million in 1990 to 302 million today) and a growing economy (U.S. GDP jumped from $7.1 trillion in 1990 to $11.4 trillion in 2006 in inflation-adjusted dollars) will need more energy.

Accordingly, U.S. energy use increased 18 percent in 1990-2006. Greenhouse gas emissions grew at a much slower pace. While demanding absolute reductions, advocates have yet to explain how any nation can support more people while reducing energy use.

Cap and Trade Proposals

One approach to reducing emissions is called cap and trade, which would set a specific carbon emission level—the cap—to be achieved by a specific date, for example, the 2000 level by 2020. Emission allowances equaling that level would be distributed by the government, and businesses could use their allowances or trade them in the marketplace.

All cap and trade proposals would reduce the cap over time. In other words, carbon-emitting activities would be reduced on a political schedule until they are almost entirely driven out of our energy system. Some proposals set a goal of reducing emissions 60 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

But with no economically feasible replacement technology currently in existence, that emission reduction goal would prevent the economic growth needed to support the projected growth in U.S. population.

No Feasible Alternatives

Most of the emissions of concern come from coal-generated electricity and transportation fuels. There are no cost-competitive alternatives available today or on the horizon to achieve such drastic reductions.

Nuclear power is not politically acceptable and will take decades to come on line. Biofuels and other alternatives are expanding because of sizable government mandates but still cannot realistically be expected to provide more than 10 percent of the projected national demand for gasoline in 2030.

Commercial technology has never been developed on a political schedule, and caps might well have the perverse effect of freezing technology. Companies compelled to meet arbitrary goals will resist replacing their capital stock before the end of its economic life. Moreover, forced investments divert money from needed research and development.

Rising Energy Prices

Cap and trade is meant to ration energy use by increasing costs, perhaps substantially, to consumers and businesses. Independent analyses have demonstrated it is an inefficient means of increasing the cost of carbon, far less efficient than a carbon tax.

It will indeed increase costs significantly, but inefficiently. Constraints on fossil energy use force businesses to substitute more expensive fuels. Thousands of firms will incur costs to monitor and report emissions, and to acquire offsets or additional allowances if they need to exceed their emissions limit. The federal government will have to create a new administrative mechanism for monitoring, auditing, revising regulations, and controlling allowance volatility.

“Since 1990, the benchmark year used in the Kyoto Protocol and many of the legislative proposals in Congress, the United States has reduced carbon intensity (carbon emissions per unit of economic output) by 22 percent.”

Hundreds of millions, and perhaps billions, of dollars would be spent each year on such activities.

An alternative approach is to continue stimulating the development and use of new technologies. Government can do this through investments in research and development and by encouraging rapid turnover of equipment, which gives individuals and businesses incentives to buy newer, less carbon-intensive products. This approach is less costly and quite effective.

The time has come for some honest discussion of climate change. The solution to the climate issue is technology; not energy rationing.

William O’Keefe (okeefe@marshall.org) is CEO of the George C. Marshall Institute. Jeff Kueter (kueter@marshall.org) is president of the George C. Marshall Institute.
Climate Change Policy Must Encourage Innovation

Policymakers should view business as ally, not enemy

By William L. Kovacs

Participants at the United Nations climate change conference last December in Bali produced a roadmap for future negotiations and an agreement to complete by 2009 negotiations for a post-Kyoto climate change agreement.

Reaching an agreement that will be acceptable to developing and developed nations alike will be difficult, but any successful agreement must encourage technological innovation in the business sector.

Divergent Global Interests

At Bali, developing nations firmly rejected the notion of having to adopt rigid emissions reduction targets. The developed world (Annex I) nations remain split on adoption of firm emissions reduction targets within an explicit time frame. Many already feel the pain of trying to meet even modest emissions reduction goals, and a stricter control regime would pose even greater concern.

It may be fortunate that there is a general recognition among all parties that all options (mitigation, technology, adaptation, and finance) must remain on the table for discussion. Also on the table in the minds of some participants is whether the forthcoming national elections in the United States will usher in a new regime more favorably disposed to accepting quantitative emissions reductions targets and restrictions such as those enacted within the Kyoto Protocol.

Public Demands Strong Economy

Those who hope for such a regime change should soberly consider the general business climate in which the next administration will operate. As it stands, our nation (and many others) will continue to have to grapple with persistent economic woes—and this is a concern that in the mind of the American public is far more important than any worry about climate change policy.

For example, a January 2008 NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll confirmed Americans are far more concerned about job creation and economic growth than the environment.

Business, Industry Role Essential

The Bali roadmap recognizes a role for business through the need for action on technology development and transfer both for mitigation and adaptation and for technology cooperation within sectors. This is particularly important because what happens in one business sector often has large spillover effects within other sectors.

Policymakers must look to business and industry for insights during the forthcoming negotiations. In order to safeguard continuing economic growth in their countries, governments are much in need of a better understanding of how businesses, particularly those operating in global markets, make investment decisions. Business leaders must help fill this knowledge gap.

William L. Kovacs (pr@uschamber.com) is vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Environment, Technology, and Regulatory Affairs Division.

“[A] January 2008 NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll confirmed Americans are far more concerned about job creation and economic growth than the environment.”
San Francisco

Continued from page 1

The fee—4.2 cents per metric ton of carbon dioxide—would affect everything from oil refineries to power plants and would include landfills, factories, and small businesses such as restaurants and bakeries.

The largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the Bay Area, the Shell oil refinery in Martinez, would pay $186,475 a year for its 4.4 million annual metric tons of emissions. The largest emitter in Santa Clara County, the Hanson Permanent Cement Plant in Cupertino, would pay $44,507 a year for its 1.05 million tons.

Foot in Door

The levy proposed by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District would replace voluntary local measures that have recently slowed local greenhouse gas emissions. If the fee is successfully implemented, supporters of greenhouse gas emissions will find a final vote on the proposed greenhouse gas fee by May. Broadbent said the proposal is designed to raise $1.1 million a year, the Mercury News reported.

“It is not a ‘carbon tax’ but a cost recovery fee,” Broadbent said, according to the article, “because the money would not go into a general fund, but would be used instead to pay for the air district’s global warming reduction programs.”

“California, regrettably, has taken the lead in obfuscating the differences between a tax and a true fee,” responded Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, in an interview for this story.

“The proposed global warming ‘fee’ is clearly a tax,” said Coupal. “There is little if any nexus between fee payers and the alleged harm sought to be addressed, and there is clearly no direct benefit to the fee payers.”

Successful Current Programs

The proposal is being closely watched around the state because it would represent the first time companies have been hit with direct levies based on their greenhouse gas emissions. Businesses already pay various surcharges on energy use to fund greenhouse gas emissions programs, but this is the first time a fee would be charged per unit of such emissions.

“San Francisco-area air quality regulators are proposing to charge a fee to most businesses based on the amount of greenhouse gases they emit.”

To date, most greenhouse gas reduction programs in the U.S. have been voluntary. The voluntary programs have been much more successful than the mandatory ones put in place in other developed nations.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports the greenhouse gas intensity of the U.S. economy has been declining for the past 10 years and U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are slowing faster than emissions in the European Union, which relies on mandatory restrictions.

Chasing Businesses Away

Consumer groups and business officials reacted warily to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District’s proposed new fee. Tupper Hull, a representative for the Western States Petroleum Association in Sacramento, said hitting oil refineries and power plants with fees could end up hitting consumers in the pocketbook.

“This proposal will raise the cost of producing energy and fuel for California consumers, and at a time when consumers have concerns about what they are paying,” said Hull, according to the February 9 San Jose Mercury News. “We can’t say how much that is, but it is a significant concern.”

Hull also said if some of the other 30 air districts in California begin copying the idea, the state will have a confusing patchwork of rules right at the time government is trying to craft a statewide implementation plan for Assembly Bill 32, the greenhouse gas reduction law signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) two years ago.

The proposed fee would be especially harmful because costs and tax burdens on California businesses are already significantly higher than in the rest of the country, critics note. The neighboring states of Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon each have much lower energy costs and tax burdens, and therefore are better able to attract new business development.

“Other states, such as Florida, Nevada, and Arizona, are cheering the proposal,” Coupal said. “They will welcome with open arms those businesses operating in California whose tolerance for nuttiness has run out.”

Tom Tanton (ttanton@fastkat.com) is a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute.
Encouraged by two years of success in fighting back noxious, invasive plant species with aquatic herbicides, the Idaho Department of Agriculture has asked state legislators to expand a program to eradicate Eurasian milfoil.

**Destructive Weed**

Under legislation signed into law in April 2006, the state’s Department of Agriculture has been encouraging and providing financial support for local communities to apply aquatic herbicides as a safe and effective means of eradicating Eurasian milfoil.

The plant is a serious pest, taking root in the bottom of lakes and ponds and sending long, entangling tendrils to the surface. The aggressive, invasive weed quickly forms very dense, thick mats of vegetation at or just below the water’s surface.

The weeds interfere with water-based recreation such as fishing, boating, water skiing, and swimming, and they can create a stench that makes walking along shorelines next to impossible. Swimmers unaware of the danger of submerged milfoil have been known to become entangled in the weeds and drown.

Milfoil also causes other environmental problems. The dense mats of weeds increase the pH of the water and reduce the amount of oxygen available for fish and other aquatic life. In addition to asphyxiating fish and other water life, milfoil creates an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes.

**Aquatic Herbicide Success**

The Idaho Department of Agriculture and local communities throughout the state report tremendous success since the large-scale use of aquatic herbicides in 2006.

Assertions by environmental activists that aquatic herbicides would harm the environment have been proven false, as the herbicides have efficiently eradicated targeted noxious weeds while being environmentally safe in all regards.

Brad Bluemer, the noxious weed superintendent of Bonner County, believes the resounding success of aquatic herbicide treatments over the past two years will mute many of the protests by environmental activists.

“I’m not expecting it to be so serious this time,” Bluemer told the January 18 Bonner County Daily Bee.

“Encouraged by two years of success in fighting back noxious, invasive plant species with aquatic herbicides, the Idaho Department of Agriculture has asked state legislators to expand a program to eradicate Eurasian milfoil.”

**County Finalizes Plans**

Based on the real-world results achieved by aquatic herbicides in Bonner County, the county’s Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force on January 24 finalized plans to apply the herbicides to 38 acres of Priest Lake this year. The Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force reached a final battle plan by drawing from the best recommendations of state- and county-level experts on noxious weeds.

In 2006 Bonner County successfully used a chemical known as 2,4-D to eradicate Eurasian milfoil in many of its lakes and ponds. Other chemicals, endothall and Renovate, also have been successful in attacking the milfoil.

The Idaho Department of Agriculture has been especially supportive of 2,4-D because of its low cost and high effectiveness.

Jay Lehr, Ph.D. (lehr@heartland.org) is science director for The Heartland Institute and managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

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**Idaho Officials Find Aquatic Herbicides a Success**

By James M. Taylor

The Idaho Department of Agriculture has asked state legislators to expand a program to eradicate Eurasian milfoil.

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Jay Lehr, Ph.D. (lehr@heartland.org) is science director for The Heartland Institute and managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Laurel, Maryland Considers Ban on Dry Cleaning Chemical

By James M. Taylor

The city of Laurel, Maryland is considering a ban on the most efficient and inexpensive dry cleaning chemical, even as a similar ban in California is chasing dry cleaners there out of business.

Perchloroethylene, known simply as “perc” in the dry cleaning industry, is the primary chemical used in more than 80 percent of the nation’s dry cleaning businesses. When applied to fabrics, the chemical extracts dirt, sweat, and grime without exposing sensitive fabrics to water and laundry chemicals.

Older Machines Leaked

Older dry cleaning machines leaked small amounts of perc that would sometimes make their way into groundwater. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports some laboratory rats have developed cancer when exposed to high doses of perc.

Neower dry cleaning machines release almost no perc into the environment, but environmental activist groups are nevertheless pushing for a total ban.

Small Businesses Going Under

In Laurel, legislation being considered by the city council would ban new dry cleaner businesses from using perc. Existing businesses would be allowed to continue using it until they replace or add new machines, at which time they would be required to switch to alternative methods.

In 2007, the California Air Resources Board approved a rule banning the sale of machines using perc. As a result, the cost of doing business is rising, dry cleaners are going out of business, and customers are paying substantially more for inferior cleaning services.

With customers unwilling to pay much higher prices for less-effective dry cleaning services, many small businesses are going under, according to a February 5 article in the Sacramento Bee. Local business owner Samantha Vanausdall and her husband have already closed one of their two dry cleaning stores and plan on closing the other soon, the article noted.

Alternatives

The three alternatives to perc are carbon dioxide, silicone, and modified wet cleaning.

Carbon dioxide cleaning uses liquid carbon dioxide to saturate and extract dirt and grime, but it is not nearly as effective as perc. Carbon dioxide equipment is twice as expensive as the newer, low-emitting perc machines. Also, the possibility of carbon dioxide leakage is causing concerns similar to those over perc leakage, as carbon dioxide emissions are implicated in the campaign against global warming.

“The city of Laurel, Maryland is considering a ban on the most efficient and inexpensive dry cleaning chemical, even as a similar ban in California is chasing dry cleaners there out of business.”

Silicone cleaning uses a solvent that has been shown to cause cancer in laboratory rats, and it produces chlorine. Environmental activist groups that oppose perc also tend to oppose industrial processes that make chlorine as a byproduct. Silicone cleaning is also more expensive than perc.

Wet cleaning uses special detergents that change the pH of water, extracting dirt and grime in a somewhat more gentle process than regular washing machines. However, the process is labor intensive, which drives up dry cleaning costs. Also, even the more gentle wet cleaning process can damage fabrics.

“If you take a beautiful wool suit, and throw it in the dry-cleaning machine with ... even a little bit of water ... you can throw it away,” A.L. Daniel, owner of a dry cleaning business in Sacramento, told the Sacramento Bee.

Minimal Health Risk

For all the economic and environmental problems created by banning perc, health experts note such a ban will accrue few if any environmental or health benefits.

“There is no evidence that low-level exposure to perc is causing any human health problems,” said Angela Logomasini, director of risk and environmental policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. “The possibility of exposure to perc causing any significant health harms is exceedingly low.”

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is a senior fellow of The Heartland Institute and managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Great Lakes Compact Would Hurt Michigan Agriculture, Economy

By Jay Lehr, Ph.D.

When it comes to the production of fruits and vegetables, the state of California leads the nation. Many people know that. But when asked which state ranks second, few would correctly identify Michigan.

It is therefore unfortunate, and difficult to understand, why the state would knowingly move to limit, if not ultimately cripple, its valuable agricultural economy. This unfortunate result is quite possible as the Michigan legislature is poised to join the Great Lakes Compact.

Joining the Great Lakes Compact will force the state to behave as if it is surrounded by desert instead of abundant water resources. It will limit Michigan farmers’ ability to irrigate their crops and will thus undermine this hugely important part of the state’s economy.

Preemptive State Action
Michigan may be the most water-rich of our 50 states. Ninety-nine percent of the state lies within the Great Lakes Basin. Yet its elected officials are moving to support a new “Annex” to the Great Lakes Compact that, if approved by the U.S. Congress, would eliminate the state’s sovereignty over its own water resources.

In fact, under pressure from anti-development advocacy groups, the Michigan legislature is considering passage of legislation that may achieve the same results well ahead of congressional approval of the states’ Great Lakes Compact.

The Michigan legislators contend that in order to get the federal government to permanently protect Great Lakes waters from out-of-state citizens and not view the compact as overly protectionist, the Great Lakes states should pass legislation limiting their own citizens’ use of this resource.

One such proposal would limit total agricultural irrigation from groundwater statewide to 50 million gallons a day. Moreover, if that mark is reached for 90 consecutive days the state would have the right to place further restrictions on groundwater withdrawals.

Unnecessary Restrictions
The stated goal of the irrigation restriction is to ensure the fish in Maryland streams are not stressed by reduced recharge into their streams. But the 50 million gallons per day limit is quite arbitrary and unnecessarily restrictive on agriculture when one considers that essentially every day of the year the Great Lakes Basin receives more than 160 billion gallons of natural recharge.

Great Lakes Compact...
Public Policy Groups Oppose Congress Pressuring EPA

February 20, 2008

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

We write to share our concerns about your January 25, 2008 letter to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. Like the plaintiffs in the Supreme Court global warming case (Massachusetts v. EPA, April 2, 2007), you apparently want EPA to issue a finding, under Section 202 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), that carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions endanger public health and welfare—the prerequisite for EPA to establish first-ever CO2 emission standards for new cars and trucks. We believe an endangerment finding would have disastrous consequences for the economy, environmental protection, and the political process.

Although Section 202 applies only to new motor vehicles, an endangerment finding would also make CO2 a pollutant “subject to regulation” under the CAA’s Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) program, which regulates emissions from stationary sources.

Under the CAA, no new or existing “major” stationary source of a regulated pollutant may be built or modified (if the modification increases emissions) unless the source first obtains a PSD permit. A source is defined as “major” if it is either in one of 28 listed industrial categories and emits at least 100 tons per year of an air pollutant, or is any other type of establishment and emits at least 250 tons per year. Two hundred and fifty tons may be a reasonable regulatory threshold for smog- and soot-forming emissions. It is a minuscule quantity of CO2—roughly the amount emitted each year by a mid-sized commercial building that uses fossil fuels for heating.

A PSD permit can take years and hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars to obtain. In their November 8, 2007 testimony before the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, attorneys Peter Glaser and John Cline state that, “No small business requiring a moderate-sized building or facility heated with fossil fuel could operate subject to the PSD permit administrative burden.”

PSD permitting is time-consuming because, to obtain a permit, a regulated entity must install “best available control technology,” and BACT determinations are made on a case-by-case basis. However, nobody knows yet what BACT for CO2 entails. Glaser and Cline caution that applying BACT to CO2 would create “considerable, and perhaps fatal, uncertainty for businesses.” They explain: “Since BACT determinations for CO2 have no regulatory history at this time, and can vary by type of facility and from state-to-state, businesses wishing to construct new sources or modify existing ones would have no basis for planning what the regulatory requirements will be.” In a December 12, 2007 letter to Congress, the Chamber of Commerce and 18 other trade associations warned that extending PSD to CO2—the unavoidable consequence of an endangerment finding—could bring construction activities “to a screeching halt.”

The likely environmental repercussions are equally unsavory. Once EPA and its state-level counterparts start making BACT determinations for CO2, they would be flooded with permit applications from potentially hundreds of thousands of “major” stationary sources. Environmental agencies would be forced to squander their administrative resources pursuing inconsequential CO2 reductions to the neglect of more critical, statutorily required CAA responsibilities.

An endangerment finding could also compel EPA to initiate a National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) rulemaking for CO2. Under the NAAQS program, EPA must reduce atmospheric concentrations of the targeted pollutant to a level that protects public health and welfare with an “adequate margin of safety.” Plaintiffs in Mass v. EPA argued that current CO2 levels already harm public health and welfare. What would it take to actually lower CO2 levels? The Kyoto Protocol would barely slow the increase in CO2 concentrations. Even outright de-industrialization of the United States might not be enough to decrease CO2 levels. Establishing NAAQS for CO2, and there is in principle no limit to the economic sacrifices that could be demanded of the American people.

Congress never intended for Section 202, which deals solely with motor vehicle emissions, to instigate a massive expansion of stationary source regulation, much less to depress the construction industry. Congress also did not intend for Section 202 to spawn an administratively crippling paperwork nightmare for EPA and its state-level counterparts. Nor did Congress intend for Section 202, which requires EPA to consider compliance costs when setting tailpipe emission standards, to leverage money-is-no-object regulation under the NAAQS program.

Above all, Congress never intended for Section 202 to allow litigants and courts to usurp legislative power and set climate policy for the nation. Yet the regulatory cascade triggered by an endangerment finding could subject the U.S. economy to the equivalent of a dozen Kyoto Protocols without Congress ever voting on it.

Two questions leap to our minds. In light of the economic, administrative, and constitutional perils outlined above, do you still intend to press EPA to make an endangerment finding? If so, are you willing to accept responsibility for the ensuing regulatory cascade, administrative morass, and economic burdens?

If you disagree with our analysis of the ramifications of an endangerment finding, we would appreciate hearing your reasoning. If you think our assessment has merit, then we respectfully urge you to reconsider your position.

Sincerely,

Fred L. Smith, Jr., President
Marlo Lewis, Senior Fellow
Competitive Enterprise Institute

Sally Pipes
President and CEO
Pacific Research Institute
for Public Policy

Duane Parde
President
National Taxpayers Union

Matt Kibbe
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After Parents Protest, Montana Town Cancels Speech by Warming Alarmed

By James M. Taylor

Tired of having their children subjected to one-sided assertions regarding a controversial scientific issue, parents in Choteau, Montana convinced their school superintendent to cancel a scheduled January global warming presentation by University of Montana professor Steve Running.

The parents’ concerns were well-founded. Running, a professor of ecology who devises forest models, is not a climate scientist. Nevertheless, he tours the state giving a slide show that closely parallels Al Gore’s movie, An Inconvenient Truth.

It may have received an Oscar from the Motion Picture Academy, but Gore’s movie is so riddled with misleading assertions and factual errors that a British High Court ruled in October 2007 it can no longer be shown in public schools without an explicit disclaimer noting its many errors.

Running’s presentations are even more misleading than Gore’s.

Running Responds (sort of ...)

When contacted by a Montana newspaper, the Clark Fork Chronicle, regarding the substance of Heartland Senior Fellow James M. Taylor’s challenge to his standard global warming presentation, Dr. Steve Running responded:

“I am not interested in an exchange like this. My source material won the Nobel Peace Prize, where are the credentials of this guy’s material?”

As noted in the accompanying article, the credentials include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Hurricane Center, and such preeminent peer-reviewed science journals as the International Journal of Climatology and Geophysical Research Letters.

While the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (as opposed to a Nobel Science Prize), and Running contributed some forest modeling work for IPCC, Running’s slide show is conspicuously absent from any IPCC documents.

False Warming, Hurricane Claims

For example, Running frequently asserts Montana temperatures are rising rapidly. However, the U.S. Historical Climatology Network (USHCN) maintains numerous temperature stations throughout the state, and the vast majority show essentially stable or declining temperatures in recent decades. Only a small minority show any kind of significant warming.

How does Running claim the exact opposite? He presents cherry-picked temperature data from the town of Missoula, which runs counter to the state’s overall trend.

In his standard global warming presentation, Running asserts without documentation, “we have very clear evidence” hurricane intensity is increasing due to global warming. Yet the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports, “the tropical multi-decadal signal is causing the increased Atlantic hurricane activity since 1995, and is not related to greenhouse warming.” Scientists at the National Hurricane Center report, “[W]e don’t see any new trend. ... There’s no link to global warming that you can see at all.”

Running neglects to mention these highly authoritative sources that contradict his assertion.

Misrepresenting Data

In his standard global warming presentation, Running asserts Northern Hemisphere Arctic sea ice is shrinking, while conveniently failing to mention Antarctic sea ice in the Southern Hemisphere is at its greatest extent in recorded history.

He asserts glaciers are shrinking in Antarctica, presenting data from the West Antarctic Peninsula in support of his assertion. However, for Antarctica as a whole temperatures have been getting colder, and the polar ice has been growing for decades. Only a small portion of West Antarctica defies the overall Antarctic trend.

Running deliberately presents data from the small portion of West Antarctica that is the exception to the rule, and then attempts to deceive audiences into believing this small area of shrinking ice is typical of the continent as a whole.

Less, Not More, Drought

Running asserts wildfires are on the rise and that global warming is to blame. The scientific data say just the opposite. The July 2004 issue of International Journal of Climatology reports most areas of North America “have become less arid” and “the terrestrial surface is both warmer and effectively wetter.”

The study concludes, “a good analogy to describe the changes in these places is that the terrestrial surface is literally becoming more like a gardener’s greenhouse.”

Similarly, the May 25, 2006 issue of Geophysical Research Letters reports that for most of the United States, soil moisture improved throughout the twentieth century. The authors note, “This wetting trend is consistent with the general increase in precipitation in the latter half of the twentieth century. Droughts have, for the most part, become shorter, less frequent, and cover a smaller portion of the country over the last century.”

These are just a few of the many examples of misleading assertions and outright falsehoods contained in Running’s presentations. Choteau parents are right to insist that if Running is allowed to make such false and misleading assertions in a public school forum, an alternative, and more factually accurate, view ought to be presented.

James M. Taylor (taylor@heartland.org) is a senior fellow of The Heartland Institute and managing editor of Environment & Climate News.

Is Global Warming really a crisis? Is your child being educated or indoctrinated?

The British High Court has ruled that Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth is partisan propaganda and contains at least 11 scientific errors. It ruled the film should not be shown in classrooms unless accompanied by a document pointing out the scientific errors. The Court also ruled classroom time should be given for presenting an alternative view.

Is your child being forced to watch Al Gore’s propaganda film? If so, you should:

• Call 312/377-4000 and request a free copy of Education or Indoctrination? Al Gore in the Classroom, a collection of background readings produced by The Heartland Institute.

• Talk to your child’s teacher, and if necessary the principal, and ask them to remove Gore from the classroom or provide her or him an alternative view.

• If your child’s teacher or principal isn’t responsive, contact Maureen Martin, senior fellow for legal affairs for The Heartland Institute, at martin@heartland.org, for free legal assistance.

Because schools are for learning, not politics.
Global Satellite Temperatures

**How Much 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.nsstc.uah.edu/public/msu/t2lt/tltglhmam_5.2](http://vortex.nsstc.uah.edu/public/msu/t2lt/tltglhmam_5.2).

**January 2008**

**Global Average**

The global average temperature for April was -0.04°C above normal.

**Northern Hemisphere**

The Northern Hemisphere’s temperature was -0.11°C above normal.

**Southern Hemisphere**

The Southern Hemisphere’s temperature was 0.03°C above normal.

**219,000 Years of Temperature Variation**


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