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EPA Proposes Unprecedented Water Rules
By James M. Taylor
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed new regulations that would give the agency control over more privately owned land than ever before.
EPA issued the regulations despite the Supreme Court ruling twice in recent years that federal environmental officials had defined its Clean Water Act powers too broadly.
EPA claims the Supreme Court’s decisions in Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (2001) and Rapanos v. United States (2006) created confusion regarding its newly proposed regulations.
In the SWANCC case, the Court...
The many facets of climate change theory are examined and measured against scientific observations. The book comes to the inescapable conclusion that claims of human-induced climate change are, at best, seriously, over-hyped. It demonstrates that measures to staunch global emissions of greenhouse gases will prove to be unworkable. Such measures will also cripple those economies in which they are introduced.

Due to be published August 2014. To register your interest email Rachel Guy at rguy@ipa.org.au

For more information visit https://thefacts2014.ipa.org.au

Obama’s CO2 Restrictions Will Hit Hardest in Key Senate States

By James M. Taylor

The Obama administration’s proposed carbon dioxide restrictions will impose their highest costs on states with key U.S. Senate races this November. The restrictions, which do not apply uniformly throughout the nation, threaten the chances of Democratic candidates who argue their party identification gives them additional leverage with President Barack Obama’s administration.

Different States, Different Standards

Under the proposed restrictions, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency assigns each state a different emissions reduction requirement. The state of Washington, for example, will have to reduce its power plant carbon dioxide intensity by 72 percent, while North Dakota will have to reduce its emissions by only 11 percent.

The supposed rationale behind the differences makes little sense. For instance, Washington State is required to make the largest cut in carbon dioxide emissions even though it currently produces more than 70 percent of its electricity from emissions-free sources. North Dakota will be allowed to emit 1,783 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt hour (MWh) of electricity generated, whereas Washington will be allowed emissions of only 215 pounds per MWh.

Battleground States Hit Hardest

In Senate battleground states, the Obama administration’s emissions reduction requirements are particularly stringent. Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Virginia will all have to reduce their emissions by more than the 30 percent overall national reduction.

In Senate battleground states, the Obama administration’s emissions reduction requirements are particularly stringent. Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Virginia will all have to reduce their emissions by more than the 30 percent overall national reduction.”

Shutting Down Good Power Plants

Many states will be forced to shut down perfectly good coal-fired power plants to meet their emissions requirements. Shutting down fully functional power plants to force the expensive construction of replacement power plants will cause electricity prices to “necessarily skyrocket,” as Obama admitted during the 2008 presidential campaign. Even in the limited circumstances where new power plants would be necessary, coal is the least expensive widely available source of electricity. Natural gas, nuclear, wind, and solar are all substantially more expensive than coal.

Empirically, states that have started down this road by imposing renewable power mandates are experiencing much more rapid increases in electricity prices than the national average. Obama’s proposal will accelerate electricity price inflation while forcing such inflation on those states that have chosen not to carve out a guaranteed market share for the renewable power lobby.

James M. Taylor (jstyle@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News. This article first appeared at TheFederalist.com and is reprinted with permission.
ruled federal environmental officials could not use what was known as the “migratory bird rule” to assert jurisdiction over isolated bodies of water. In Rapanos, the Court determined federal environmental officials could not prohibit a private landowner from filling in an isolated wetland. In both cases, the Court emphasized the need for federal environmental officials to show the body of water in dispute meets the Clean Water Act’s definition of “navigable waterway” that triggers federal jurisdiction.

In its newly proposed regulations, EPA officials claim dry streambeds that only occasionally fill with water qualify as navigable waterways under the Clean Water Act. EPA also expands its definition of what is navigable. For example, the new rule suggests small ponds and water holes can qualify as navigable waterways even if they are not physically connected to any other body of water. In such a system, federal environmental officials view these small bodies of water in combination, even if they are not geographically linked to one another.

Property rights advocates point out EPA's proposed rule would allow it to regulate far more bodies of water than officials attempted to regulate before the aforementioned Supreme Court rulings. They also question EPA's attempts to “clarify” the Supreme Court decisions by treating the decisions as agency victories and invitations to expand the agency's powers to an unprecedented level.

Farm Groups Voice Opposition

“As a result [of EPA’s proposal], permit requirements that apply to navigable waters would also apply to ditches, small ponds, and even depressions in fields and pastures that are only wet when there is heavy rain.”

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Farm Groups Voice Opposition

“As a result [of EPA’s proposal], permit requirements that apply to navigable waters would also apply to ditches, small ponds, and even depressions in fields and pastures that are only wet when there is heavy rain,” the American Farm Bureau Federation noted in the Gilroy Dispatch.

The AFBF statement continued, “If landowners could not get permits to do things like build fences and use pesticides to control bugs and weeds—something that would be far from guaranteed—farming and ranching would be much more costly and difficult. Other landowners, too, would face roadblocks to things they want to do, such as build a house or plant trees. American Farm Bureau and California Farm Bureau are both calling on Congress to prevent this expansion.”

Farm Groups Voice Opposition

Congress Limited EPA’s Reach

“When Congress wrote the Clean Water Act, Congress limited the act’s application to ‘navigable waters’ for good reasons,” said Jay Lehr, science director for The Heartland Institute, publisher of Environment & Climate News.

“Among the reasons, Congress did not want EPA bullying farmers over small depressions in their land that occasionally hold rainwater, bullying people who dig a ditch to help drain their land, and using the smallest of streams and micro-bodies of water to restrict property use,” Lehr said. “EPA is attempting to stand the Clean Water Act on its head as it continues to seek more money and power.

“EPA says farmers should take the agency at its word that it will not enforce these regulations in a heavy-handed manner. In light of EPA’s long-standing record of heavy-handedness, arrogance, and abuse, however, farmers know better,” he concluded.

“Private individuals would never attempt to misapply the statute so blatantly, because there are tremendous expenses involved with fighting hopeless legal cases,” Lehr explained. “EPA, however, relies on its bottomless pockets full of taxpayers’ money to bully landowners and force them alone to bear the financial burdens of challenging EPA.”

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Congress Limited EPA’s Reach

“Congress, not federal agencies, writes the laws of the land,” said American Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman in a press statement. “When Congress wrote the Clean Water Act, it clearly intended for the law to apply to navigable waters. Is a small ditch navigable? Is a stock pond navigable? We really don’t think so, and Farm Bureau members are going to be sending that message.”

Farm Groups Voice Opposition

Farm Groups Voice Opposition

“This, in my career of farming, is the most scary and frightening proposition that I have witnessed,” Iowa Farm Bureau Federation President Craig Hill told the Des Moines Register.

Farm Groups Voice Opposition

Smart drilling, or hydraulic fracturing, is a revolutionary new way to extract oil and natural gas, with incredible results. The United States is now the leading producer of natural gas, and is projected to produce more oil than Saudi Arabia by 2017! Thanks to “fracking”:

- Natural gas prices have fallen to historic lows, saving consumers $100 billion every year
- CO₂ emissions are dropping: Burning natural gas emits half of the CO₂ emitted by coal
- 360,000 family-supporting jobs have been created, along with economic booms

Learn more about the benefits of fracking in a Policy Brief by Isaac Orr, published by The Heartland Institute, available for free download from heartland.org. And visit heartland.org for further information or to book a speaker for your organization.

THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

James M. Taylor (jtaylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Wind Industry Attacks California’s Solar Subsidies

By Bonner R. Cohen

The California Wind Energy Association and other renewable energy groups criticized a new law extending special tax breaks to the California solar power industry.

Wind power, biomass, and geothermal power groups say the special benefits for solar power tilt the playing field against other renewable power options. Senate Bill 871, signed by California Gov. Jerry Brown (D) on June 20, extends an exemption for solar power systems from state property taxes until 2025. The existing exemption was not scheduled to expire until 2017, but the legislature rushed the new exemption into law at the end of the session with almost no advance notice or opportunity for debate.

Renewable Groups Criticize Solar Deal

“There is no reason for the State Legislature and Gov. Brown to extend a property tax exemption to large-scale solar energy projects at this time,” said Nancy Rader, executive director of the California Wind Energy Association, in a press statement. “Wind and geothermal renewable energy producers are also facing challenges in getting utilities to recontract for their existing resources. California needs these resources to balance our energy portfolio and meet long-term greenhouse gas reduction goals.”

“The original intent of the property tax exemption was to help stimulate what was once a fledgling industry,” said Julee Malinowski-Ball, executive director for the California Biomass Energy Alliance, in the same press statement. “Wind and geothermal renewable energy producers are also facing challenges in getting utilities to recontract for their existing resources. California needs these resources to balance our energy portfolio and meet long-term greenhouse gas reduction goals.”

Non-Solar Renewables Struggling

“It is amazing how the renewable energy industry is struggling in California even with mind-boggling federal, state, and local subsidies,” said Jay Lehr, science director for The Heartland Institute, which publishes Environment & Climate News. “The CPUC projects geothermal and biomass power will decline by 50 percent in the state by 2020 despite enormous subsidies.”

Wind energy producers are encountering turbulence as they attempt to secure contract renewals that would enable 1,500 megawatts of old wind turbines to be replaced by newer ones, according to the California political news site Fox & Hounds.

“We are concerned that competition from solar energy is already forcing wind producers to reduce contract rates for their energy production. The bickering among competing industries is growing,” Lehr observed.

Unnecessary Rush to Subsidize

Section 73 of the California Revenue and Taxation Code allows a property tax exemption for certain types of solar energy systems installed between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 2016. This section was altered in 2008 to include the construction of an active solar energy system installed by the owner-builder in the initial construction of a new building the owner-builder does not intend to occupy.

Established in 2002 and accelerated by the enactment of two additional laws in 2006 and 2011, California’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requires investor-owned utilities, electric service providers, and community-choice aggregators to increase procurement from eligible renewable energy sources to 33 percent of total procurement by 2020.

Welcome to the Fold

Today’s squabbles among the already heavily subsidized renewable energy producers may be a sign of things to come. John Droz, a physicist and energy analyst, says it is “ludicrous” that subsidy-dependent renewable energy industries complain about subsidies received by other renewable energy industries. “If this isn’t a case of the pot calling the kettle black, I don’t know what is,” said Droz.

“Wind producers have no leg to stand on when it comes to subsidies,” agreed Daniel Simmons, director of regulatory and state affairs at the Institute for Energy Research.

“Wind and solar are both dependent on subsidies for the large increase in installations we have seen over the past few years,” Simmons explained. “But if this means wind producers no longer want subsidies for any energy sources, then we welcome them into the fold.”

Look in the Mirror

“The wind power industry is taking hypocrisy to new levels in their protests against solar power,” Lehr observed.

“Wind power needs to look in the mirror,” he said. “Big wind energy companies claim solar power subsidies were designed long ago merely to help a fledgling industry get on its feet. That, however, is the exact model the wind power industry has been advocating for in pursuit of its own taxpayer subsidies. Now, decades later, the wind power industry continues to push for taxpayer support to prop up an industry that will fall like a house of cards without never-ending subsidies and a guaranteed market share.”

Bonner R. Cohen, Ph.D. (bcohen@nationalcenter.org) is a senior fellow at the National Center for Public Policy Research.
Failed Everywhere They’ve Tried

Obama-Style Climate Programs Have Failed Everywhere They’ve Been Tried

By Timothy Ball and Tom Harris

President Barack Obama’s recently announced energy and environment policies have been tried in many countries, always with the same result: abject failure. Yet, when critics point this out, explaining that the U.S. economy will lose millions of jobs and billions of dollars in growth, Obama simply waves their objections away:

“Let’s face it,” Obama answers. “That’s what [critics] always say. ... Every time ... the warnings of the cynics have been wrong.”

Obama Following Europe’s Failures

Other leaders, especially those in Europe who are further down the green path than America is, know better.

The deputy leader of the German Green Party in the Bundestag, Oliver Krischer, summed up the dangers of relying on green power when he said, “A few years ago the renewable sector was the job miracle in Germany; now nothing is left of all that.”

Every European economy that followed the green agenda has faltered. Consequently, Germany is building coal plants to replace failed wind power sources and even clean nuclear plants that are a casualty of irrational phobia after the Fukushima power facilities were taken out by a tsunami triggered by the Tohoku earthquake.

In 2013 alone, Germany built six more coal plants. China and India build four new ones every week, rendering Ontario’s coal shutdown, as well as those planned for the United States, completely irrelevant from a climate perspective no matter what one believes about the science.

Rise of Maurice F. Strong

Obama’s dangerous climate and energy policies rely peripherally upon the reports of the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This is the climate science agency created by Canadian billionaire Maurice F. Strong through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). It is instructive to review how Strong’s actions ruined Ontario, since Obama is taking America down a similar path.

Strong was UNEP’s first head and convened the first international expert group meeting on climate change. Strong then foisted the IPCC onto the world at the Earth Summit (officially, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development [UNCED]) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, serving as UNCED conference secretary-general.

Canadian Poverty Path

This was the same year left-leaning New Democratic Party leader Bob Rae appointed Strong to run Ontario Hydro, the major power producer for the province. Strong immediately applied the UNEP’s philosophy and policies designed to demonize carbon dioxide (CO2) as the byproduct of fossil fuel-driven industries and nations, very much as Obama is doing right now in the United States. A magazine article titled “Maurice Strong: The new guy in your future” explains what he did at Ontario Hydro:

“Maurice Strong has demonstrated an uncanny ability to manipulate people, institutions, governments, and events to achieve the outcome he desires. Through his published writings and public presentations he has declared his desire to empower the UN as the global authority to manage a new era of global governance. ... The fox has been given the assignment, and all the tools necessary, to repair the henhouse to his liking.”

Strong used Ontario Hydro’s massive debt, ostensibly created by building nuclear power plants, to eliminate fossil fuels, transforming Ontario from a “have” province contributing to the wealth of the Canadian federation to one that now relies on the rest of the country for financial handouts. It was obvious that this was coming. In 2008, then-Canadian Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty forecasted:

“If this continues—this is not hyperbole, this is a fact—Ontario will become a ‘have not’ province in confederation. And it will be Premier [Dalton] McGuinty’s legacy that he in two terms took Ontario from being the strongest economic province in the federation to a ‘have not’ province.”

Becoming a Global Leader

After Earth Summit, Strong, by then adviser to presidents, prime ministers, and powerful corporations, continued to take a leading role in efforts to implement the outcomes of agreements reached at UNCED, through:

• the establishment of the Earth Council;
• the establishment of the Earth Charter movement;
• his chairmanship of the World Resources Institute;
• his honorary board membership with the David Suzuki Foundation;
• membership on the board of the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Africa-America Institute, the Institute of Ecology in Indonesia, the Beijer Institute of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and others; and
• membership in the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund, and the China Carbon Corporation.

Strong’s Underlying Objectives

We got a glimpse of what may be Strong’s underlying objectives when he told a reporter, supposedly concerning the plot of a book he would like to write:

“What if a small group of world leaders were to conclude that the principal risk to the Earth comes from the actions of the rich countries? And if the world is to survive, those rich countries would have to sign an agreement reducing their impact on the environment. Will they do it? The group’s conclusion is ‘no.’ The rich countries won’t do it. They won’t change. So, in order to save the planet, the group decides: Isn’t the only hope for the planet that the industrialized civilizations collapse? Isn’t it our responsibility to bring that about?”

Strong worked toward achieving this goal by creating the IPCC and other organizations that supposedly demonstrated CO2 from human industrial activity is causing runaway global warming. Strong admitted he couldn’t implement his plan as a politician, so, according to author Elaine Dewar, author of Cloak of Green, “Strong was using the U.N. as a platform to sell a global environment crisis and the Global Governance Agenda.”

Truth Came Out

Ontario’s energy policy failures intensified to the point that, by November 2010, even the left-leaning Toronto Star newspaper admitted it:

“The McGuinty [Ontario] government has a major electrical power problem, one cre-
Only Half of Americans Believe Humans Causing Global Warming

By James M. Taylor

A poll released by the Pew Research Center reveals a majority of Americans have found no convincing evidence of recent global warming or believe climate change is caused by nature rather than human activity.

According to the poll, merely 40 percent of Americans believe there is solid evidence of recent global warming and such warming is caused primarily by humans.

Analyzing the numbers more closely, 61 percent say there is conclusive evidence Earth is warming while 35 percent say there is no scientific reasoning supporting such a claim. Within the 61 percent saying there is solid evidence of warming, 40 percent have concluded humans are the cause, while 18 percent figure climate variations are a consequence of nature.

According to Pew, political liberals constitute the only group saying global warming is occurring and humans are the primary cause. The poll’s results show those same political liberals believe by overwhelming margins that politicians should “do whatever it takes to protect the environment.”

The same poll shows Americans support building the Keystone XL pipeline, with 61 percent in favor and 27 percent opposed.

James M. Taylor (jtaylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Kansas Fights Federal Prairie Chicken Restrictions

By Kenneth Artz

Local officials in Kansas are pushing back against U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service environmental restrictions regarding prairie chickens after the agency classified the lesser prairie chicken as a threatened species in five states and proposed stifling land-use restrictions in March.

Drought Culls Chicken Population

According to FWS, a prolonged drought in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas has reduced lesser prairie chicken numbers in the five states by nearly 50 percent since 2012.

Although nearly 18,000 free-roaming lesser prairie chickens remain in the five states, FWS took the opportunity to invoke the Endangered Species Act to propose land-use restrictions in the states. FWS blames farmers and ranchers for declining prairie chicken populations, concluding the conversion of prairies to farms and grazing lands has dramatically reduced the area of prairie chicken habitats.

Brownback Seeks Compensation

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback (R) said FWS should utilize incentives rather than restrictions to protect prairie chickens, calling for the agency to offer financial compensation to Kansans who preserve or restore prairie chicken habitat.

“This is an overreach on the part of the federal government and I am concerned about the effect this designation will have on Kansas and the Kansas economy,” argued Brownback in a press statement.

“If they’re upset about the loss of habitat, the federal government has a fabulous tool that is available and that they’ve been cutting back on,” he continued, referring to financial incentives. “Instead, they’re putting the costs on the private landowner and the energy industry.”

Sue-and-Settle Abuse

FWS listed the lesser prairie chicken as threatened under the Endangered Species Act after environmental activist groups filed suit against FWS and demanded such a listing.

“The listing proves once again that ‘sue and settle’ is taking the place of sound science,” said U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-KS) in a statement.

Economically Suitable Alternatives

“I am confident there are ways to address conserving the species while not hampering economic growth and farming and ranching activities,” added U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) in a separate press statement.

In addition to impeding farming and ranching, FWS restrictions also threaten energy production in the state. The Kansas Independent Oil and Gas Association reports oil and natural gas production employs 67,000 Kansans.

Unnecessary Restrictions

Seton Motley, president of the public-policy organization Less Government, suggests the lesser prairie chicken should not be listed as threatened.

“There is plenty of undeveloped land in Kansas, and the prairie chicken can adapt to energy production in a single area,” he explained.

“Remember when environmental activists told us that building the Alaskan pipeline would spell the end of the Alaskan caribou?” Motley asked. “Well, it didn’t. To the contrary, the caribou benefited from the pipeline, which provided a wind break and emitted heat from the warm oil flowing within. The FWS’s land-use restrictions regarding the prairie chicken make about as much sense as the caribou restrictions.”

Kenneth Artz (iamkenartz@hotmail.com) writes from Dallas, Texas.

Bird Conservancy Files Suit Against U.S. Government

By Bonner R. Cohen

The American Bird Conservancy has filed a lawsuit against the federal government, charging the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with “multiple violations of federal law” in granting wind turbine permits.

At issue is FWS’s controversial proposed rule that would allow wind power facilities to kill protected golden and bald eagles for periods of up to 30 years. Currently, eagle kill permits are valid for only five years.

The 1940 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act punishes people who kill eagles intentionally or accidentally with fines and jail time. As part of its policy to push renewable energy, however, FWS inserted an exemption into the law in 2009, allowing permits for wind turbines to kill eagles “accidentally” even when such kills are foreseeable when building wind farms.

Sacrificing Eagles for Wind Power

In its lawsuit, the American Bird Conservancy specifically cites the 1940 statute in stating FWS is violating federal law. FWS added the 2009 provision administratively; Congress played no role when FWS unilaterally amended the law.

FWS estimates wind turbines in the United States kill 440,000 birds each year, but many environmentalists argue the number is much higher. A peer-reviewed study published last year in the Wildlife Society Bulletin reported U.S. wind turbines kill 1.4 million birds and bats each year, including 573,000 birds.

“Americans take pride in the fact that Bald Eagles are once again a common sight in many places across the country,” said Dr. Michael Hutchins, national coordinator of American Bird Conservancy’s Bird Smart Wind Energy Program, in a press statement. “Their popularity and symbolic importance suggests that the American people are not going to tolerate the deaths of many to wind turbines.”

‘So Sue Me’

Marita Noon, executive director of Energy Makes America Great Inc., says the American Bird Conservancy suit is fitting considering President Barack Obama’s bold challenge for people to sue his administration.

“President Obama has proudly challenged, ‘So sue me.’ The American Bird Conservancy is to be applauded for stepping up with a lawsuit against the administration’s policy of executive overreach and favoritism,” said Noon.

Noon concurs with the American Bird Conservancy’s logic, concluding, “While the law prescribes fines and jail time for those who accidentally kill bald and golden eagles, under Obama the FWS modified the law by allowing the favored wind industry ‘kill permits’ that permit wind turbine operators to murder the majestic birds by chopping them up.”

Bonner R. Cohen, Ph.D. (bcohen@nationalcenter.org) is a senior fellow at the National Center for Public Policy Research.
Landrieu Strikes Out with Obama and Reid on Keystone Pipeline

By Kenneth Artz

Louisiana Sen. Mary Landrieu (D) continues to strike out with President Barack Obama and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in her attempt to get their support for building the Keystone XL pipeline.

Meeting with Obama Yields Nothing

Landrieu emphasized to reporters on June 25 she would be bringing up the Keystone pipeline in a meeting that evening with Obama. After the meeting, and as June turned to July, Obama showed no sign Landrieu had influenced him to end his stalling on a decision regarding construction of the pipeline.

As Obama continues to delay a decision, Canada appears to be losing patience. This spring, Kinder Morgan Energy Partners announced it will expand its pipeline from the Alberta oil fields to West Coast export terminals, effectively tripling the amount of oil it can deliver for shipment to Asia. Canadian government officials supported Kinder Morgan’s announcement, saying it is important to diversify Canada’s potential oil exports in light of Obama’s ongoing failure to approve the delivery of western Canadian oil to the United States via the proposed Keystone XL pipeline.

Obama’s failure to approve the Keystone XL pipeline threatens to disrupt North American energy security. Currently, more than 98 percent of Canadian crude oil exports go to the United States. By forcing Canada to build infrastructure for Asian exports, the United States will increasingly have to compete for the privilege of purchasing Canadian oil.

Reid Blocks Vote

In a close election contest against Republican challenger Bill Cassidy, Landrieu claims she will be more effective than Cassidy in advocating for the Keystone XL pipeline and other energy production issues, because a Democratic senator will have more pull with the Obama administration and Senate Democrats than a Republican.

Obama, however, has given no indication he will allow the Keystone XL pipeline to be built. Reid, moreover, is using his power as Senate Majority Leader to block a Senate vote on the pipeline; Landrieu voted for Reid as Senate leader. The Keystone XL pipeline appears to have majority support in the Senate, but Reid has vowed to block a vote unless Republicans cave in to some of his demands on other issues. Republicans responded by saying they will not be bullied by Reid’s demands.

“I’m not giving up until it is built,” Landrieu said before her meeting with Obama. “I’ve been in a lot of tough fights over the years, and the ones that matter the most are the toughest. I won’t give up on Keystone until we get it built, and I will press for a vote on the Senate floor.”

Despite her claims that she is better able than Cassidy to induce federal approval for the pipeline, neither Obama nor Reid appear to be listening to Landrieu.

No Record of Influence

Daniel Simmons, director of regulatory and state affairs at the Institute for Energy Research (IER), notes Landrieu is one of the few pro-energy senators in her party, but she has no influence with Obama or his administration.

“President Obama is the most anti-energy president the United States has seen, and Sen. Landrieu has no way to influence the administration in any way,” said Simmons.

“If Sen. Landrieu cannot get a vote on the Keystone XL, it is her own fault. She voted for Sen. Harry Reid as Majority Leader, and he is the biggest impediment to a vote on Keystone XL in the Senate,” Simmons explained.

“If anything, it gives her the chance to publicly stand against President Obama on an issue that is popular with the voters. She’s hoping this will make them forget about how she sold them down the river by voting for Obamacare,” said Seton Motley, president of the public policy organization Less Government.

Energy and environment consultant H. Sterling Burnett said Landrieu blew an earlier opportunity to shepherd the Keystone XL pipeline through the Senate. “She could have wrangled the necessary votes during the first year of President Obama’s first term,” said Burnett.

“We’ve known Keystone was safe—even President Obama’s own State Department has issued two reports giving the pipeline its approval,” Burnett said.

Kenneth Artz (iamkenartz@hotmail.com) writes from Dallas, Texas.

Don’t just wonder about global warming. Understand it.

The Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC), started in 2003 by Dr. S. Fred Singer, one of the world’s most distinguished climate scientists, concludes that global warming is not a crisis.

Climate Change Reconsidered II – Physical Science is a comprehensive and authoritative critique of the alarmist reports of the United Nations IPCC. Previous volumes in the series have been called “essential reading” [Tom Harris, International Climate Science Coalition], “a must-have for serious climate scientists” [Anthony R. Lupo, University of Missouri-Columbia], and “highly recommended!” [William Mielberg, author, Moon Missions].

Climate Change Reconsidered II, by Craig D. Idso, Robert M. Carter, and S. Fred Singer, is available for free online at climatechangeresconsidered.org.

Order online direct from the publisher or go to Amazon.com, or call 312/577-4000.

“This new 1,000-page report is available for free at ClimateChangeReconsidered.org.”

“I’ve been in a lot of tough fights over the years, and the ones that matter the most are the toughest. I won’t give up on Keystone until we get it built, and I will press for a vote on the Senate floor.”

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MARY LANDRIEU
U.S. SENATOR - LOUISIANA
N.Y. Municipalities Can Ban Fracking, Court Rules

By Alyssa Carducci

New York's highest court ruled municipalities can use zoning laws to ban hydraulic fracturing, adding to the frustration energy producers are experiencing in the state.

The New York Court of Appeals voted 5-2 to allow municipalities to ban fracking, affirming more than 170 municipalities in the state that have enacted bans or moratoria against fracking. New York is the second state in the Northeast, along with Pennsylvania, that has given local governments authority to ban fracking.

Hydraulic fracturing is the practice of extracting natural gas or oil from deep underground rock formations by injecting a mixture of water and sand, along with trace chemicals, at high pressures. The high-pressure mixture creates small cracks in the rock formations, allowing trapped oil and natural gas to escape the rock formations and be brought to the surface. The practice has powered economic revivals in states such as North Dakota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Shifting Political Landscapes

“There are real losses here, and it’s a real tragedy for thousands of farmers and people in rural communities that would have realized the economic benefits that oil and gas development can deliver,” New York State Petroleum Council Executive Director Karen Moreau said in an emailed statement.

“Municipal boards change hands every two years, and a constantly shifting landscape of regulatory uncertainty virtually guarantees that major long-term investments in the state’s economy cannot occur,” Moreau explained.

Local Control Falacy

“I’m all for more local control, but I think that the [court] simply didn’t go far enough. Why move from state level control to some arbitrary ‘local’ community? Why not to the ultimate in ‘local control,’ which is the actual property owner?” asked energy economist Tom Tanton, president of T2 & Associates.

“The idea that an arbitrary and elitist group of locals are any better suited to deciding what I should do with my property than a larger set, the state, defies logic,” Tanton observed.

Statewide Moratorium

New York currently has a “temporary” statewide moratorium on fracking, imposed by former Gov. David Paterson (D). Various municipalities have voted to ban fracking in case Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) lifts the moratorium. Cuomo claims his administration is studying the issue, though he refuses to give a firm timeline on when state environmental officials will make a final decision on fracking.

“Hydraulic fracturing bans, be they local or statewide, reflect anti-energy extremism rather than environmental stewardship,” said Jay Lehr, science director for The Heartland Institute, which publishes Environment & Climate News.

Water Concerns Unwarranted

Lehr, who received the nation’s first Ph.D. in groundwater hydrology, explained the lack of scientific support for environmental activist objections to hydraulic fracturing.

“Environmental extremists claim hydraulic fracturing threatens groundwater. However, hydraulic fracturing occurs hundreds of feet—and often more than a thousand feet—beneath the surface. Multiple layers of impermeable rock have kept the oil and natural gas trapped far beneath the surface and continue to do so after hydraulic fracturing enables their extraction,” Lehr explained.

“Federal, state, and local environmental officials have confirmed this commonsense reality, testing thousands of wells and groundwater sites near hydraulic fracturing sites. They have never found a single instance of the hydraulic fracturing process causing groundwater contamination,” Lehr said.

Hypocritical Backing of Local Rule

Lehr also addressed assertions that local governments should have the authority to ban activities such as hydraulic fracturing.

“Environmental extremists often argue that proponents of limited government and federalism should welcome the thought of allowing local governments to decide on hydraulic fracturing moratoria,” Lehr observed. “Rather than promoting and abiding by local government decisions, however, environmental extremists first try to get a blanket national ban on hydraulic fracturing through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, then try to get statewide bans in the 50 states, and then go to the local level as the banning entities of last resort.

“If they were to choose one proper entity and abide by it, that would be one thing,” he said. “However, environmental extremists make disingenuous appeals to local rule and federalism only when it suits their freedom-restricting goals.”

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Fracking to Begin in 2015

The governor’s action ends a 2012 moratorium on hydraulic fracturing—also known as fracking—that was imposed to provide time for drafting fracking-specific regulations. The bill also terminates a decade-old fracking ban.

The North Carolina Mining and Energy Commission has continued to develop fracking regulations, which are scheduled to be finalized by January 1, 2015. They would go into effect in March 2015 with the first drilling permits available on July 1, 2015.

Fracking is a method of extracting oil and natural gas deposits that are inaccessible by conventional drilling. The method has become increasingly common over the past decade and, together with the companion technology of horizontal drilling, has been largely responsible for the recent energy production boom in the United States.

Central North Carolina is home to the Deep River Basin, stretching 150 miles from Durham to the South Carolina border. In 2012, the U.S. Geological Survey estimated the Deep River Basin contains 1.7 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Though this area is significantly smaller than the Marcellus Shale Formation that runs through Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, the Deep River Basin is still rich enough to make North Carolina a substantial energy producer.

Trade Secrets Respected

The new law contains a trade secrets provision, which proponents hope will help attract drillers to North Carolina.

The provision allows energy producers to retain their particular fracking formulas as proprietary secrets not available to competitors’ scrutiny. Fracking formulas typically contain 99 percent water and sand, with 1 percent or less of trace chemicals aiding in natural gas extraction.

“With respect to trade secrets, the law doesn’t mean drilling companies can hide their proprietary fracturing blends from state regulators,” said Jon Sanders, director of regulatory studies at the Raleigh-based John Locke Foundation. “That information is shared with the state geologist, the state health director, the Mining and Energy Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Division of Emergency Management."

Fracking Revenues Exceed Costs

In a related development, a recent study by a pair of researchers at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina concluded fracking boosts public financing of local governments through local taxes and other fees.

The researchers, Daniel Raimi and Richard Newell of Duke’s Energy Initiative, published a study reporting oil and gas development from hydraulic fracturing has helped local economies and local government revenues. The local government revenue collected from fracking enterprises typically exceeds the costs of road maintenance, sewer expansion, and other government costs related to energy production and local population growth.

The researchers formed their conclusions after studying data from 10 states that have active hydraulic fracturing exploration and development.

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Study Links Ethanol to Higher Air Pollution

By Kenneth Artz

Ethanol may be increasing air pollution in Brazil, scientists report in a peer-reviewed study. The study may have public-policy implications in the United States, where federal law requires the transportation fuel mix to contain approximately 10 percent ethanol.

Sugarcane-based ethanol, which is heavily subsidized by the Brazilian government, powers many of the cars in Brazil. A recent study of Sao Paulo air conditions found ethanol-powered vehicles may be linked to the city’s smog problem. When higher ethanol prices induced drivers to switch from ethanol to gasoline, the city’s smog levels declined, scientists found.

Approximately 40 percent of automobiles in Sao Paulo are flexible-fuel vehicles running on either gasoline or ethanol. When the percentage of those flexible-fuel vehicles using gasoline alone rose from 14 percent to 76 percent, ozone pollution dropped by 20 percent, the researchers reported.

Mandates Prop Up U.S. Ethanol

In the U.S., the Energy Policy Act of 2005 established renewable fuel mandates, most of which are met by ethanol. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 expanded the mandates. Forty percent of the U.S. corn crop is devoted to ethanol, comprising 10 percent of U.S. transportation fuel.

Environmental activist groups seized on the Brazilian study to question the wisdom of U.S. renewable fuel mandates.

“When it’s critical that we reduce our oil dependency, we certainly shouldn’t do it in a way that worsens air quality, water quality, and carbon pollution,” said Roland Hwang, director of the energy and transportation program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, in the Los Angeles Times.

In addition to the Nature Geoscience study on ethanol and air pollution in Sao Paulo, a National Academy of Sciences study found ethanol is not an effective means of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Several additional studies report ethanol mandates encourage development of natural environments into marginal croplands and cause farmers to strain water resources.

Consequences of Government Interference

Energy and environment consultant H. Sterling Burnett said government has known all along that ethanol causes environmental problems and probably should not be used as a fuel source.

“Facts are facts, and the fact is every energy source has some benefits and some harmful effects. With sugarcane-based ethanol, the problem is increased levels of ozone,” said Burnett.

Kenneth Artz (iamkenartz@hotmail.com) writes from Dallas, Texas.
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After Impasse, Colorado to Vote on Fracking Policy

By Kenneth Arzt

Colorado voters will directly decide the fate of the Centennial State’s fracking policy this November after the state legislature failed to agree on a compromise bill.

Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) said he would like to see the legislature pass a bill that would prevent local governments from banning natural gas production through hydraulic fracturing processes, also known as fracking. Legislators, however, failed to reach agreement on the provision’s finer details.

Hickenlooper favored a version that would allow local communities broader authority for imposing restrictions on fracking, such as imposing geographic bounds to prevent drilling a half mile or less from residences. Republicans balk at the prospect of granting local governments such influence, saying it would allow local communities to impose fracking bans through backdoor means.

Liberal Cities Impose Bans

Five Colorado municipalities have voted to ban fracking, though such bans will remain only symbolic unless state law is changed to recognize them. Boulder and Ft. Collins, where little or no fracking takes place, nevertheless have banned the process—further evidence of the symbolic nature of such bans. Outside such liberal bastions, there is substantially less support for fracking bans. Loveland voters on June 24 rejected a proposed ban.

State Rep. Jared Polis (D-Boulder) is funding efforts to put a referendum on the November ballot to allow local communities to ban fracking. He is also financing anti-fracking initiatives at the local level. Polis said he would no longer finance the efforts if the legislature agreed on compromise legislation.

Energy Production Fueling Economy

Fracking is fueling job production and economic growth in Colorado. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Colorado oil production has nearly tripled since 2005 and natural gas production in the state is up nearly 50 percent.

Hickenlooper has generally supported fracking while calling for stringent regulations.

“Things are changing dramatically and rapidly. Almost every well today is fracked. You’d be silly not to do it,” said Hickenlooper in the Aspen Times. “Our job is to make sure it’s done safely.”

Hickenlooper noted the state has doubled the number of environmental compliance officers performing inspections at oil and natural gas production sites.

Governor Notes Benefits

Isaac Orr, a research fellow at The Heartland Institute, publisher of Environment & Climate News, said the ballot initiatives in Colorado are more about opposing energy production than advocating home rule. Orr praised Hickenlooper for acknowledging the benefits of hydraulic fracturing.

“Gov. Hickenlooper knows what he is doing—he has a master’s degree in geology, and he’s worked in the oil and gas industry. He’s trying to craft legislation that balances the concerns of environmental activists with the industry, but basically the environmental activists won’t be happy until that industry is shut down. Then they will go after the ranchers,” said Orr.

Orr said Hickenlooper is too savvy to sacrifice the economic windfall of fracking to appease environmental activists.

“If environmental activists succeed in shutting down fracking in the state, that would cost Colorado nearly $8 billion in lost gross domestic product (GDP) and loss of 68,000 jobs in the first five years alone,” said Orr.

“The economic benefit is too great to ignore,” he added. “Colorado has some of the better reserves—the shale is more easily extractable, so that makes the state more important in providing for America’s energy future.”

Activists Seek Shutdown

Daniel Simmons, director of regulatory and state affairs at the Institute for Energy Research (IER), concurred with Orr’s assessment.

“Anti-energy advocates have always wanted a ballot measure, so there was little chance the legislature would intervene,” Simmons explained. “The fight over hydraulic fracturing is a fight about energy, not a fight about the safety of hydraulic fracturing. There is no question that hydraulic fracturing is safe—it has been used for more than 60 years in well over a million wells without a single case of groundwater contamination.”

“Hydraulic fracturing is responsible for the nation’s dramatic recent increase in natural gas and oil production. The United States is the world’s largest producer of natural gas, and next year we’ll take the lead as the largest oil producer. The fight about hydraulic fracturing is an attack on domestic energy production,” Simmons concluded.

Kenneth Arzt (iamkenartz@hotmail.com) writes from Dallas, Texas.

“Things are changing dramatically and rapidly. Almost every well today is fracked. You’d be silly not to do it. Our job is to make sure it’s done safely.”

JOHN HICKENLOOPER
GOVERNOR - COLORADO

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Myths Busted at Climate Conference

Continued from page 1

Speakers addressed myths of climate alarmism, specifically refuting the often-repeated assertion that 97 percent of scientists disagree with so-called global warming skeptics. On the contrary, speakers noted, only 0.5 percent of the authors of 11,944 scientific papers on climate and related topics over the past 21 years have said they agree most of the warming since 1950 was manmade. Speakers also cited the Remote Sensing Systems satellite record, which shows there has been no global warming for the past 17 years, 10 months.

Busting Myths
During the opening dinner, meteorologist Joe Bastardi explained extreme weather events are not becoming any more frequent or severe as the planet warms. To the contrary, Bastardi documented how hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, and other extreme weather events are declining in frequency and severity. To the extent there are short-term increases in extreme weather events at some places within the overall global decline, Bastardi showed those follow weather and climate patterns that existed long before recent global warming.

During the breakfast session on Day 2, Greenpeace cofounder Patrick Moore chronicled the radicalization of once-noble environmentalist groups. Standing before photographs of himself leading environmental protests and provocative actions against whalers and other corporate entities, Moore explained how Greenpeace and other environmental activist groups are now harming human health and welfare by demanding so many resources be dedicated to the fictitious global warming crisis. True environmental progress would be made fighting for land conservation and other real environmental concerns rather than trumped-up global warming claims, Moore explained.

Patrick Michaels, a past president of the American Association of State Climatologists and former program chair for the Committee on Applied Climatology of the American Meteorological Society, explained during the Day 2 luncheon how government research grants are promoting the false notion of an alarmist consensus. Large government research grants are handed out almost uniformly to scientists who will promote the idea of a global warming crisis, ensuring more funding for government agencies addressing the topic and subsequently more research grants for the participating scientists, he noted.

Presenting the Science
The breakout sessions featured additional dozens of compelling presentations.

Howard Hayden, emeritus professor of physics at the University of Connecticut, demonstrated how all energy sources have environmental drawbacks. He showed how wind, solar, and other renewable power sources simply cannot meet the nation’s energy demands.

Wind and solar power require tremendous amounts of land to produce even a very small amount of electricity. Although there may be room for expensive renewable power at the margins, global warming strategies that aim to shut down conventional power will not find enough replacement renewable power to keep the lights on, Hayden demonstrated. True land conservationists, said Hayden, are among the most vocal opponents of wind and solar power facilities.

Dr. John Dunn, a medical doctor, attorney, and advisor for the American Council on Science and Health, debunked EPA assertions that restrictions on power plant emissions will save lives and benefit human health. Human mortality rates are much higher during cold spells and winter months than during heat waves and summer months, he noted. Addressing EPA’s claims that tangential reductions in particulate matter and other emissions will save lives, Dunn showed EPA’s assertions are totally unsupported and defy health and mortality data. Also worth noting, EPA reports power plant emissions of the Six Principal Pollutants already have declined 70 percent even without EPA’s proposed carbon dioxide restrictions. Existing rules and regulations will reduce those emissions even further, with or without the proposed carbon dioxide restrictions.

James M. Taylor, senior fellow of The Heartland Institute, which publishes Environment & Climate News, summarized the scientific evidence for modest instead of severe global warming. Taylor’s presentation, along with all of the ICCC-9 presentations, was videotaped and is available online. He gave a lively 10-minute talk with visually-friendly charts and graphs to share with family, friends, and acquaintances who would like to learn more about the global warming debate.

Denying Blessings of Modernity
At the final panel discussion, “Panel 21: Global Warming as a Social Movement,” on Wednesday afternoon, the distinguished panelists were Calvin Beisner, Ph.D., founder and national spokesman of the Cornwall Alliance; Paul Driessen, J.D., a senior advisor to the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow and Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise; and Peter Ferrara, J.D., a senior fellow of The Heartland Institute. Serving as moderator was Minnesota state Rep. Pat Garofalo.

Panelists Beisner, Driessen, and Ferrara all argued climate alarmists tend to be radical environmentalists who view people primarily as polluters and consumers who use up Earth’s resources and poison the planet in the process, never seeing free people as voluntarily being good stewards of natural resources. Through the manmade global warming alarm, activists have used governments to deny affordable and reliable energy and other modern blessings to the developing world, panelists noted.

Nancy Thorner writes for Illinois Review, which previously published some passages from this article.
United States Undergoing Decade-Long Cooling

By James M. Taylor

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s most accurate, up-to-date temperature data confirm the United States has been cooling for at least the past decade.

NOAA temperature data are driving a stake through the heart of alarmists’ claim of accelerating global warming.

Responding to widespread criticism that its temperature station readings were corrupted by poor siting and suspect adjustments, NOAA established a network of 114 pristinely maintained temperature stations uniformly spread throughout the United States.

Because the network, known as the U.S. Climate Reference Network (USCRN), is well-planned, the temperature data require no adjustments to provide an accurate nationwide temperature record. USCRN began compiling temperature data in January 2005. Now, nearly a decade later, NOAA has finally made the USCRN temperature readings available.

Cooling Since Network Established

According to the USCRN temperature readings, U.S. temperatures are not rising at all, at least not since the network became operational 10 years ago. Instead, the United States has cooled by approximately 0.4 degrees Celsius, more than half of the global warming that occurred during the twentieth century.

Lessons Learned

Although 10 years provide hardly enough data to establish a long-term trend, the cooling does present some interesting facts.

First, global warming is not so dramatic and uniform as alarmists have claimed. For example, prominent alarmist James Hansen said in 2010, “Global warming on decadal time scales is continuing without letup … effectively illustrating the monotonic and substantial warming that is occurring on decadal time scales.”

Second, for those who may point out U.S. temperatures are not rising at all, at least not since the network became operational 10 years ago. Instead, the United States has cooled by approximately 0.4 degrees Celsius, more than half of the global warming that occurred during the twentieth century.

Instead of the United States being on the verge of a dangerous warming, the USCRN data confirm the United States has been cooling for at least the past decade.

Second, for those who may point out U.S. temperatures are not rising at all, at least not since the network became operational 10 years ago. Instead, the United States has cooled by approximately 0.4 degrees Celsius, more than half of the global warming that occurred during the twentieth century.

Third, the USCRN data debunk claims that rising U.S. temperatures caused wildfires, droughts, and other extreme weather events during the past year. It is difficult to claim global warming is causing recent U.S. droughts and wildfires when U.S. temperatures are a full 0.4 degrees Celsius colder than they were in 2005.

USCRN promises to continue providing reliable nationwide temperature data for years to come.

James M. Taylor (jtaylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News. This article first appeared at Forbes.com and is reprinted with permission.

Warmist Group Admits Obama’s CO2 Restrictions Are Pointless

By James M. Taylor

The Obama administration’s proposed carbon dioxide restrictions will have little impact on global climate, a prominent global warming activist group has acknowledged.

Highlighting China’s growing use of coal power plants and the gap in power plant environmental safeguards between the United States and China, Climate Central senior scientist Eric Larson predicted on the Climate Central website, “All the windmills in the world won’t deliver our children a climate they can depend on” unless Chinese officials introduce dramatic revisions to existing energy policies.

Decades of Higher Emissions

Larson warned such change is not coming. Instead, China is locking in its rapidly increasing coal use and carbon dioxide emissions. China built more than 500 new coal power plants between 2005 and 2009, which Larson notes is “the equivalent of the entire U.S. coal-fired fleet of coal-fired power plants.” Between 2010 and 2013, China “added half the coal generation of the entire U.S. again.”

Larson observed, “China burns more than 4 billion tons of coal each year in power plants, homes, and factories. By comparison, the U.S. burns less than 1 billion.”

Health Claims Miss the Mark

Although President Barack Obama’s administration is attempting to build support for its proposed restrictions by claiming the restrictions will reduce non-CO2 pollutants, the statutes will bring few emissions benefits in the United States, as EPA reports power plant emissions of the six principal pollutants already have declined by 70 percent since 1980.

The new restrictions will force U.S. electricity prices substantially higher, which will reduce real living standards. With less money available for good nutrition, health care, and other life-enhancing goods and services, the toll on human lifespans and life enjoyment is significant.

Higher energy prices chase energy-intensive industries to nations like China, where power plants are less restricted. Reuters reported this spring only 70 percent of Chinese coal power plants have basic pollution reduction scrubbers that are required on all U.S. coal power plants. In addition, Reuters reported, many of the Chinese power plants with the scrubbers do not actually use them because they substantially raise electricity production costs.

James M. Taylor (jtaylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Schools Targeted with Mythical Alarmist ‘Consensus’ Program

By Casey Luskin

The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is a nonprofit group described as a watchdog over the education of the nation’s children. Its core mission: to enforce a purported “scientific consensus” on hot-button issues, particularly evolutionary theory (NCSE’s focus since the 1980s) and global warming theory (NCSE’s focus since 2012).

NCSE’s supporters see it as an organization that protects science from the attack of ignorant, religious, countrified yahoos and bumpkins. Its detractors see it as a campaign to stifle the free and open debate that is critical to a free society and a necessary condition for scientific progress.

Critics believe that, by seeking to put a lid on scientific controversies, NCSE actually serves as an impediment to science education—such that many school systems and individual teachers refrain from teaching about the topics extensively, or avoid the topics entirely, in order to avoid the wrath of “consensus” enforcers. As a result, the nation’s schoolchildren learn neither the facts underlying the theories and counter-theories, nor the reasoning processes by which real science separates fact from fiction. Unquestionably, many NCSE supporters believe it promotes the teaching of sound science. But in fact, over its history of more than three decades, in almost all of its battles at every level—the federal government, Common Core, the courts, state legislatures, school boards, and individual schools—NCSE has attempted not to promote good science education but to censor views with which it disagrees.

Propagandizing Kids

Indoctrination in the schools is nothing new. During the lead-up to Prohibition, supporters of a ban on alcoholic beverages planted propaganda in textbooks declaring that drinking alcohol could cause a person to combust spontaneously in blue flame. In the Scopes “monkey trial” of 1925, the American Civil Liberties Union defended the use in a classroom of the book A Civic Biology, which taught evolution but also white supremacy and eugenics (the alleged need to eliminate “parasitic” people from the population). In 1957, at a key point in the Civil Rights movement, the textbook Alabama History for Schools declared slavery had been beneficial, “the earliest form of social security.”

Today, across the country, the classroom is a battleground for controversies ranging from gun owners’ rights to the effect of tax cuts on the economy to the history of conflict between Christianity and Islam.

The desire to use schools to shape the future of politics is reflected in such publications as Radical Teacher (which described itself as “socialist” and “feminist”) and Green Teacher. The latter magazine, according to its website, offers “great kid-tested ideas for fostering learning and inspiring action on environmental and other global issues! Written by and for educators, Green Teacher is a quarterly magazine for those working with young people, aged 6-19, inside and outside of schools.”

Origins in Creationism Debate

In the spring of 1980, biologist Wayne Moyer published editorials in BioScience and The American Biology Teacher urging the formation of local groups of activist scientists and educators to oppose the teaching of “creation science” in public schools.

Fearful that creationist initiatives might lead to “an American equivalent of the Lysenko affair,” Moyer proposed to “organize Committees of Correspondence on Evolution, composed of people willing to communicate the meaning and wonder of evolution to the public.” The “Lysenko affair” was the effort by Soviet director of biology Trofim Lysenko to impose a single, false view of genetics and hybridization on Soviet agriculture. Enforcement of his ideas led to the persecution of dissenting scientists and to poor farming practices and mass starvation.

Under Moyer’s vision, these Committees of Correspondence on Evolution (CCEs) would be “joined into a national information network” that would “make available lists of biologists willing to speak on evolution; gather and disseminate information on creationist activities; write and publish critiques and rebuttals of creationist writings; and hold workshops” to challenge creationists.

In January 1981, Stanley Weinberg began publishing a national newsletter, the Memo randum to Liaisons for Committees of Correspondence, to coordinate CCE activities. Weinberg was a retired high school biology teacher, a prominent high school biology textbook author, and former president of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT).

Moyer invited prospective CCE leaders to attend a meeting in Washington, DC to craft a proposal for consideration by scientific and educational societies. In October 1981, some two dozen leaders of scientific societies and teachers’ organizations came together in Washington, DC to “form a united effort or coalition to combat creationism and support the Committees.” The meeting was hosted by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the most prestigious scientific body in the United States.*

The National Association of Biology Teachers organized a follow-up meeting to help plan the CCE network. These efforts were successful. By December 1981, the number of states with CCEs grew to 42.

*Editor’s Note: The National Academy of Sciences was created during the Lincoln administration to provide advice on science and, it was hoped, help solve the problems of a nation in the midst of the Civil War. Its most prominent founder was Louis Agassiz, famous for both real science (he was the first to scientifically propose the idea of an Ice Age) and bad science (he was a father of so-called “scientific racism,” the scientific consensus that wrongly supported white supremacy). Today, NAS members elect new members, for life terms, a selection process that fosters the politicization of science and, often, the involvement of scientists in policy matters about which they know little.
Posed as Grassroots Effort
Spokesmen for these groups denied they were orchestrated by a large consortium of scientific societies, universities, and government agencies; instead they described themselves as “local lobbying groups that are combating creationist efforts at the grass roots level.”

The CCEs did operate locally, focused on monitoring and “fighting the creationists” in their respective states, but they had strong backing, support, and national coordination from some of the most prestigious scientific societies and educational groups in the country.

Moyer was director of the NABT, and he used his national position to seek funding for the CCEs from major biological and other scientific societies. The groups took on an aggressive, if not militaristic, ethos, as the name “Committees of Correspondence,” coined by Moyer, alluded to groups of that name organized by patriots during the Revolutionary War to share strategies for fighting the British. Of course, unlike the Revolutionary War committees, those organized during the 1980s to fight creationism had the establishment entirely on their side.

In January 1982, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) hosted the first official national meeting of CCE representatives. Participants discussed the creation of a national organization to coordinate committee efforts. That led to the NCSE, with Stanley Weinberg elected as the founding president. By 1986, NCSE was operating as an “umbrella organization” coordinating a network of CCEs in most U.S. states as well as five Canadian provinces.

For almost its entire existence, NCSE’s most prominent figure has been Dr. Eugenie Scott, a physical anthropologist who was present, as a representative of Kentucky’s CCE, at that critical meeting at AAAS in January 1982. The Carnegie Foundation and other private foundations provided a grant to the NCSE to open a national office and find an executive director, and Scott held that office from 1986 until her retirement in 2013.

According to a history of NCSE in the American Society for Cell Biology newsletter, by the time Scott was hired in 1986, “the activities of the Committees [of Correspondence] had substantially diminished, and Scott introduced a truly U.S.-wide agenda of education and action.” From that national vantage, NCSE focused on collecting and disseminating information about creationists’ educational activities to the NCSE’s activist-members, and on coordinating local efforts to ensure none of the 17,000 school districts in the United States taught creationism.

The Threat of Intelligent Design
Creationism is the belief that the universe, life, and the various forms of life are the product of divine creation rather than natural, blind evolutionary processes. Creationists include (but are not limited to) those who believe in a literal Biblical account of creation and believe Earth is some 6,000 years old.

In the mid-1990s, increasing numbers of scientists and non-scientists began to express interest in Intelligent Design (ID), a different concept that does not depend on religious belief and does not challenge mainstream views about the age of Earth, but suggests an intelligent cause is the best explanation for many features of nature, such as the complexity of life.

NCSE’s supporters apparently found ID threatening. From 1997 to 2007 the group’s annual budget rose from $250,000 to about $800,000, and its staff roster increased from four employees to 14. The organization was heavily involved in the 2005 Kitzmiller v. Dover trial which, under pressure from a coalition of NCSE, the ACLU, and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, banned ID from public schools in Dover, Pennsylvania.

In 2000, NCSE’s president, Kevin Padian, a University of California, Berkeley paleontologist, and Eugenie Scott were awarded a $450,000 taxpayer-funded grant (on which NCSE was a subcontractor) from the National Science Foundation to create a website to guide teachers in teaching evolution.

‘Science-Policy-Society Interface’
Scott retired as NCSE executive director in 2013 (she now chairs its Advisory Council) and was succeeded by Ann Reid, a biologist who spent 20 years doing virus research at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. Reid entered the policy arena in 2005, first working at the National Academy of Sciences’ Board on Life Sciences and later serving as director at the American Academy of Microbiology.

When Reid’s hiring was announced, the journal Science reported she “hopes to attract support from private foundations and government agencies with interests that dovetail with [NCSE’s] mission.” The chair of the board of governors for the American Academy of Microbiology called her “an expert at navigating the science-policy-society interface.”

Elite Support
Today, NCSE has an annual budget of around $1 million and employs 15 employees to attract support from private foundations and government agencies with interests that dovetail with [NCSE’s] mission.” The chair of the board of governors for the American Academy of Microbiology called her “an expert at navigating the science-policy-society interface.”

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Schools Targeted with Alarmist ‘Consensus’ Program

Continued from previous page

staff, including Ph.D. scientists, former teachers, and a theologian. The organization and its supporters poor-mouth themselves by claiming they must battle “lavishly funded right-wing” opponents, but the NCSE has enjoyed large amounts of government money that its opponents could only dream of obtaining.

NCSE is the beneficiary of grassroots activism on the part of scientists, educators, and others who support its mission. But much of its support comes from powerful groups that are pillars of the political establishment and the scientific-technological elite. President Dwight Eisenhower, in his farewell address, warned of the danger “that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.”

Indeed, NCSE has been collaboratively envisioned, created, and supported financially by elite establishment groups, including the National Academy of Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Association of Biology Teachers, the National Science Teachers Association, the National Science Foundation, and many other national educational and scientific (or scientist-activist) organizations.

Focuses on Climate Change, Evolution
NCSE is organized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Oakland, California and describes itself as “devoted to promoting and enhancing the teaching of science, especially the evolutionary sciences and the climate sciences, in formal and informal education, especially in K-12 public schools.”

According to some of its most recent public tax filings, NCSE has two major programs:

• The Public Information Program provides “information and advice” to hundreds of teachers, parents, and members of the news media “about climate change and education.”

Through this project, the NCSE gives dozens of annual workshops and presentations to organizations, including national and state scientific and educational societies. Practically, this means scientists, educators, and activists contact the NCSE for strategic and rhetorical advice on rebutting arguments—in the classroom, the boardroom, and the media—of those who doubt the “consensus” on evolution and global warming.

• The Public & Internet Media program distributes material about current events regarding “the creation/evolution and climate change controversies.” That includes six issues per year of NCSE’s journal, Reports of the National Center for Science Education, which has a circulation of about 5,000.

On the Internet, NCSE has a moderate impressive presence, with a weekly electronic newsletter that reaches about 4,000 people, a website that drew a reported 680,000 unique visitors in 2012, and a Facebook page that recently showed some 48,000 “likes.”

NCSE claims to have some 5,000 members who are “scientists, teachers, clergy, and citizens with diverse religious and political affiliations.” This description of NCSE members fits into the organization’s strategy—portraying itself as religiously and politically neutral and focused on defending only a supposed consensus. As part of this strategy, the NCSE showcases conservatives who accept the “consensus” on global warming or evolution.

Scott explained: “Finding the people who think ideologically but still accept the science is what we would like to do. Our job at NCSE, at least in global warming and evolution, has been to find the people in intermediate positions who hold those ideological positions, find the conservative Christians who accept evolution, find the Republicans who accept global warming, find the libertarians who accept global warming and say, ‘See, you don’t need to let ideology get in the way to accept the science.’”

Anti-Religious Affiliations
Scott has claimed “the most important group” she works with is “members of the faith community,” and she counsels public school teachers to send students to interview pro-Darwin clergy in order to stress “the compatibility of theology with the science of evolution.”

But NCSE’s leadership is far from objective and non-ideological. Scott is a public signer of the Third Humanist Manifesto, which aspires to create a world with “a progressive philosophy of life ... without supernaturalism” and makes broad metaphysical claims that “Humans are ... the result of unguided evolutionary change” and nature is “self-existing.” The manifesto praises “progressive cultures” and seeks “a just distribution of nature’s resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.”

Other NCSE officials have similar anti-religious affiliations. Barbara Forrest, a member of NCSE’s board of directors, is also on the board of directors of the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association, which is affiliated with prominent national atheist groups, including the American Humanist Association (AHA), which published the Third Humanist Manifesto. The NCSE has direct ties to these humanist groups: Its primary newsletter, Reports of the National Center for Science Education, is directly descended from an earlier journal, Creation/Evolution, originally published by the AHA and later acquired by NCSE.

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**JUNE 2014**

**GLOBAL AVERAGE**

The global average temperature for June was 0.30°C above average.

**SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE**

The Southern Hemisphere’s temperature was 0.29°C above average.

**NORTHERN HEMISPHERE**

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