Heartland Replies to Judith Curry II

Judithcurry.com

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http://judithcurry.com/2012/05/24/heartburn-at-heartland/

Dr. Judith Curry printed this comment by Heartland Institute President Joseph Bast following her own commentary titled “Heartburn at Heartland.”

Dr. Curry,

Thanks for reproducing in your recent post my account of the left’s attacks on our scientists and donors. It’s a story that isn’t getting nearly enough attention in the blogosphere. I’m disappointed, though, that you also reproduced, at length and even endorsed, the lies and distortions written about us by Suzanne Goldenberg. A simple call or email to me or Jim Lakely would have given us a chance to correct her many misstatements.

I won’t ask for a correction or apology, but please understand that …

(a) Concerning ICCC-7, we set a record for the number of cosponsors (60), 12 speakers asked to speak after only 2 withdrew, and the mood was decidedly upbeat. Opponents (including “Forecast the Facts” and Occupy Wall Street) promised to disrupt the conference and failed utterly – fewer than 50 people showed up for their rallies. Those who did show up wore boots on their heads and refused Christopher Monckton’s invitation to debate.

(b) You didn’t see many new faces on the program because 50 warmists invited to speak refused to show up, and we had set aside space on the program for them. I’ve said after nearly every conference since the 3rd one that “this is probably our last conference,” and I’ve made a fundraising pitch, because the ICCCs are expensive and I suspect they are subject to the law of diminishing returns, but we keep doing them due to popular demand. Stay tuned for news about ICCC-8.

(c) Concerning Heartland’s financial health, we’ve raised more money since the Fakegate incident than in the previous 11 months, and are on track to double our income this year. We’ve doubled the number of current donors since February. With only one exception so far, the donors we’ve lost either didn’t give in 2011 (or even in 2010) or have agreed to fund spin-off organizations we are creating, such as the R Street Institute, so the result is no net loss of our effectiveness, and actually an increase.

(d) The campaign against our directors and donors being conducted by “Forecast the Facts,” 350.org, and Greenpeace – not by “anonymous individuals” as you strangely suggest – in fact is unprecedented because it could not have occurred had not Peter Gleick stolen and revealed our
donor list. But we are obviously well on our way to building a new and much larger donor base that is “Greenpeace proof.”

(e) Our PR response to Fakegate has been called “brilliant” even by the folks at DesmogBlog. History will record it as another major scandal that helped bring down the man-made global warming movement. But the MSM and environmental groups doubled down on their strategic mistake, understanding that the only way to prevent Fakegate from “becoming another Climategate” is to take down Heartland and its network of scientists and donors. Their tactics compelled us to match their intensity.

(f) I am not surprised or disappointed that you and other bloggers disapprove of our tactics. It is simply not your role in the controversy to be aggressive or controversial. But it is ours.

(g) The billboard, which cost $200, generated more than $5 million in earned media so far, and that figure doesn’t include television, radio, and tens of millions of page visits and online commentaries. Was the MSM coverage overwhelmingly negative? Of course. How could it be otherwise? There has been no positive coverage of skeptics since Fakegate broke, none at all, and reporters have made it clear that they will not report the debate fairly, so there is no longer any point in trying to appeal to their ethics or honesty. Thanks to the billboard, 37 million Americans now know that the debate over climate change continues.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me or Jim Lakely if you have questions or suggestions.

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