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## The worst ethical scandal in the US Congress

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# Climate Ethics

Ethical Analysis of Climate Science and Policy

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## The Worst Ethical Scandal In the US Congress: Climate Change?

By DONALD A BROWN on August 11, 2010 12:26 AM | [50 Comments](#) | [0 TrackBacks](#)

What is the worst ethical scandal in the US Congress? Could it be climate change?

Although the US media has recently paid attention to the comparatively minor ethical stories unfolding in the US House of Representatives, there is not a peep in the US media about a much more momentous unfolding ethical failure in the US Senate. While many press stories have appeared in the past few week about potential ethical problems of Representatives Charlie Rangel and Maxine Waters in the House, ethical lapses that harm society because public servants may have abused their power in ways that enrich themselves or their families, the US Senate ethical failure is more ethically reprehensible because it is depriving tens of millions of people around the world of life itself or the natural resources necessary to sustain life. The failure in the US Senate to enact legislation to reduce US greenhouse gas emissions is a moral lapse of epic proportions. Yet it is not discussed this way.

There are several distinct features of climate change that call for its recognition as creating civilization challenging ethical questions.

First, climate change creates ethical duties because those most responsible for causing this problem are the richer developed countries, yet those who are most vulnerable to the problem's harshest impacts are some of the world's poorest people in developing countries. That is, climate change is an ethical problem because its biggest victims are people who can do little to reduce its threat.

Second, climate-change impacts are potentially catastrophic for many of the poorest people around the world. Climate change harms include deaths from disease, droughts, floods, heat, and intense storms, damages to homes and villages from rising oceans, adverse impacts on agriculture, diminishing natural resources, the inability to rely upon traditional sources of food, and the destruction of water supplies. In fact, climate change threatens the very existence of some small island nations. Clearly these impacts are potentially catastrophic and there is a growing scientific consensus that we are running out of time to prevent catastrophic climate change.

The third reason why climate change must be seen as an ethical problem stems from its global scope. At the local, regional or national scale, citizens can petition their governments to protect them from serious harms. But at the global level, no government exists whose jurisdiction matches the scale of climate change. And so, although national, regional and local governments have the ability and responsibility to protect citizens within their boarders, they have no responsibility to foreigners in the absence of international law. For this reason, ethical appeals are necessary to motivate governments to take steps to prevent their citizens from seriously harming foreigners.

In 1979 a report issued for the United States Academy of Sciences acknowledged that humans were changing the atmosphere and predicted that if CO2 was allowed to increase to 560 parts per million (ppm), global temperatures would increase approximately 3 0 C. (Charney et al., 1979)

In May of this year, the US Academy of Sciences issued another report that found:

A strong, credible body of scientific evidence shows that climate change is occurring, is caused largely by human activities, and poses significant risks for a broad range of human and natural systems. (US Academy of Sciences, 2010)

And so, after thirty years of first being warned that activities within its boarders may be contributing to huge suffering all around the world, despite frequent additional warnings with higher levels of confidence from many prestigious scientific bodies and organizations since then that have concluded that climate change is a grave threat, ignoring increasing scientific concern that the world is running out of time to prevent even more rapid climate change, the United States Senate refuses to take action to fulfill its ethical duties to others to prevent harm.

Both Democratic and Republican Senators who oppose action on climate change in the US



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Senate do so because such legislation would "create a 'national energy tax'", warning costs would be passed to consumers in the form of higher electricity bills and fuel costs that would lead manufacturers to take their factories overseas, putting jobs at risk. (Haroon, 2010)

For twenty-five years, many American politicians have opposed climate change legislation on similar grounds that such legislation would harm US economic interests.

Yet, if climate change raises ethical questions, then strong arguments can be made that nations have not only national interests but also duties, responsibilities, and obligations to others. However, ethical arguments that could counter the national-interest based arguments are rarely heard in the climate change debate and are now virtually absent in the U.S. discussion of proposed domestic climate change legislation. We never hear, for instance in the United States that we should enact climate change legislation because our emissions are harming others. This is a catastrophic ethical failure.

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[Richard Pauli](#) | August 11, 2010 1:57 AM | [Reply](#)

You are too polite.

Deliberate scientific ignorance by our leaders is no less than treason against humans; sabotage to our future. At what price? Just some lobbying plunder.

Politics can direct human willpower, but politics cannot change the facts of climate science.

[Allis Druffel](#) | August 11, 2010 12:05 PM | [Reply](#)

Thank you, Professor Brown, for this well-written, accurate and thoughtful reflection on the current state of federal legislation and climate change. As a person who works with the faith community on energy efficiency, renewable energies and policy advocacy, I am thrilled to see scientists who are involved in the field speak up. I pray that more scientists enter the social sphere in greater numbers to help counter-act the effective denial/skeptic machine that has been in place.

In addition to the faith community's practical actions on energy efficiency measures, education and policy advocacy, we continue to pray for the conversion of hearts and minds that will lead to strong, binding national and international legislation that will help to stave off the worst of climate change effects for our children and grandchildren.

[David F Collins](#) | August 11, 2010 5:56 PM | [Reply](#)

Thank you for a concise, reasoned exposition from an ethics viewpoint. Science may well be value-independent but what is done with it is not.

The mushy, squishy part is why the ethics blindness to which you refer. I suppose it is best expressed in a justly famous poem by Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Santibáñez Villegas:

"Poderoso caballero  
es don Dinero."

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Nelson T. Enajo | [August 11, 2010 5:57 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Thank you Sir, so we have to work to take actions at community level, in any which way we can.

Kindly allow us to share some local initiatives as a 3rd world country, viz:<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=133817&id=722418233&l=27083e1ddf>.

Thank you for having the courage for posting this article.

More power.

Nelson

John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) commented on The Worst Ethical Scandal In the US Congress: Climate Change?: Gary Willi

JAE | [August 12, 2010 12:52 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Like many academics, you need to get out of Gotham City and see what the real world is like.

Gary | [August 12, 2010 1:23 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

This would be a relevant statement if the Climate Change movement wasn't a complete and deliberate fraud.

Sadly, It is most certainly that.

Even more sadly, so many educated people stupidly buy the propaganda and push for extremely expensive and utterly useless regulations and taxes to fix a non problem.

future generations will laugh at how silly this one was.

Henry chance | [August 12, 2010 2:17 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

The largest ethics scandal is hustling the government for grants to insist on man made warming. My wheat field absorbs 10,340 kilograms per acre of CO2. Don't tax people for generating plant food.

 DONALD A BROWN | [August 12, 2010 2:31 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

A number of commentators have called climate change science a fraud. I am sure they believe this. Yet every scientific organization that has taken a position on the science of climate change supports the consensus view that entails: (a) the planet is heating, (b) the warming is mostly human caused, and (c) severe harsh impacts will be caused by business-as-usual and the harshest impacts will be experienced by some of the poorest people in the world.

They include the following:

Almost every major scientific organization with expertise over climate science has issued statements in support of the consensus view. These now include:

- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- American Astronomical Society
- American Chemical Society
- American Geophysical Union
- American Institute of Physics
- American Meteorological Society
- American Physical Society
- Australian Coral Reef Society
- Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society
- Australian Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO
- British Antarctic Survey
- Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences
- Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society
- Environmental Protection Agency
- European Federation of Geologists
- European Geosciences Union
- European Physical Society
- Federation of American Scientists
- Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies
- Geological Society of America
- Geological Society of Australia
- International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA)
- International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics
- National Center for Atmospheric Research
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Royal Meteorological Society
- Royal Society of the UK

Also every Academy of Science in the world that has taken a position on climate change (19), has supported the consensus view. 11 countries Academies of Science have signed a joint

statement endorsing the consensus position. They are:

- Academia Brasileira de Ciencias (Brazil)
- Royal Society of Canada
- Chinese Academy of Sciences
- Academie des Sciences (France)
- Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina (Germany)
- Indian National Science Academy
- Accademia dei Lincei (Italy)
- Science Council of Japan
- Russian Academy of Sciences
- Royal Society (United Kingdom)
- National Academy of Sciences (USA):

A letter from 18 scientific organizations to the US Congress says:

Observations throughout the world make it clear that climate change is occurring, and rigorous scientific research demonstrates that the greenhouse gases emitted by human activities are the primary driver. These conclusions are based on multiple independent lines of evidence, and contrary assertions are inconsistent with an objective assessment of the vast body of peer-reviewed science.

If climate change science is a fraud, there are a lot of the smartest scientists in the world in on it.

By the way, zero scientific organizations or Academies of Science support any skeptics view.

Associate Professor Brown,

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PAK | [August 12, 2010 3:13 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

You're right Professor. Forget about promoting mortgages to those who shouldn't qualify and then not going after Frannie or Freddie. Forget about the disaster that is Social Security and Medicare. Forget about the fact we're sitting at 10% unemployment and companies aren't hiring b/c of the unknowns handed to them by our government. Forget about the Spanish economy where the whole green agenda is worsening the economy.

You guys will all look as silly as those saying the next ice age was coming back in the 70s.

I was so proud to be a PSU alum, now I'm questioning that allegiance.

---

enemy2k | [August 12, 2010 3:13 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Yeah, global warming is some vast global liberal conspiracy, LOL. And 99.999 percent of scientists are involved. How could so many people keep a secret? It makes ZERO sense. Do you people even realize how ridiculous you sound parroting oil industry propaganda? The only 2 organizations who disagree with the concensus are funded by OIL money.

---

Robert | [August 12, 2010 3:26 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Even if you believe in global warming, the real question is how do spend scarce resources? I sincerely doubt that a mother struggling to survive inthe Sahal cares about CO2, but does care greatly about clean water, good governance, and access to basic medical care. Lomborg and others have raised this issue, and at a recent conference, in a ranking of 10 global issues, global warming was dead last.

And your list of organizations in support of global warming is impressive, but science isn't a popularity contest. Ask Galileo! Or Lister.

---

AJP | [August 12, 2010 3:55 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Let's see, we've got professors spouting off a couple of dozen organizations that have been paid to buy into global warming (follow the money trail) and shills who have been paid to support those organizations and the agenda (follow the money trail). Many of these organizations have or have threatened to expel any member that doesn't toe the global warming line, why would they do this--follow the money trail. We've got an ex-VP of the U.S. going all over the world playing Chicken Little and why, well follow the money trail. We've got formerly well-respected universities white-washing investigations into outright fraud and lying about data and why, just follow the money trail.

Dear Professor Brown and those that agree with him, just open your minds and look at the historical data. You're very good at trying to convince an uneducated public that your science is sound but you always leave out the fact that all of this (the warming, the rise in CO2 levels, melting ice caps) has happened before. As recently as the 1950's submarines surfaced at the North Pole and the pictures show not a lot of ice around considering where they're at. The natural cycles of the oceans are never mentioned by your crowd and we are just now entering the beginning of a cold PDO. The AMO will begin it's cooling cycle in a few years just like it always has and at that time are you people going to start blaming how cold the Earth has gotten on Climate Change (notice how that evolved from the 'Global Warming' mantra in the late 90's to early 2000's)? Nothing is ever mentioned of the possible affects of the solar minimum (and in this cycle it's really at a minimum) on our climate. I say possible because it would be a theory, just like your climate change is a theory. Some theories are proven right,

some wrong. But I don't see the word 'fact' anywhere in the definition of theory. To those who have been duped by the climate change alarmists, just do the real research for yourself. Look at the weather history, look at the climate history and you'll find this has all happened before. What hasn't happened before is a well orchestrated, even more well funded fraud in the name of science.



DONALD A BROWN | August 13, 2010 1:10 AM | Reply

We have received many comments that claim climate change science that has concluded that humans are causing the undeniable warming we are seeing is a fraud. We at climate ethics encourage all to come to their own conclusions about the climate science but in so doing every one has a duty to examine the evidence.

Many of the comments that we have received dismiss the fact that all the National Academies of Science in the world, including the US Academy of Science, in addition to every scientific organization with expertise on global climate issues supports the consensus view only support the consensus view because they have been bought off. That is fraud is the only explanation for the concurrence of the world's most prestigious scientific institutions that the planet is warming, the warming is mostly human caused, and that harsh impacts will be experienced if we continue on a business as usual basis. None of the comments that we have received that claim the science is a fraud deal with the enormous amount of scientific evidence that is cited by the Academies of Science around the world.

It is absurd to conclude that the Academies of Science have only issued statements in support of the consensus view because they are corrupt. They have explained well the evidence they have relied upon to support the consensus view. It is there for all to see. Only comments that deal rationally with this large body of evidence should be considered seriously.

Again the consensus view is that:

A strong, credible body of scientific evidence shows that climate change is occurring, is caused largely by human activities, and poses significant risks for a broad range of human and natural systems...and that the likelihood of these conclusions subsequently being found to be wrong is vanishingly small.

How do we know this consensus view is true. Support for this view comes from:

- 33 national academies of science say the consensus view is true
- 68 national and international organizations with expertise over climate science say the consensus view is true
- 0 scientific organizations say it is not true
- 97 % active climate scientists who actually do peer reviewed climate science say it is true
- The Ghg effect has been understood for 150 years.
- The natural Greenhouse effect is a fact-we know how it works
- We know without doubt that the more ghg in the atmosphere the greater the warming and we have known the initial effect of additional ghg with precision since 1858.
- We know that increased ghg in the atmosphere are human caused because of the isotopes of CO2 appearing in atmosphere.
- We know that increases in ghg appearing in the atmosphere are in direct proportion to fossil fuel around the world.
- We also know that global temperatures have risen in direct proportion to fossil fuel use around the world.
- To not believe that increases of ghg are causing the warming you have two options.
- Some unknown fact suppresses the ghg effect
- Some other unknown factor is causing the temperature.
- The planet is heating
- We know that the things that drive natural climate variability cant be causing the warming we are seeing.
- Even though one should be suspicious of climate models, they are now working to predict what we are seeing and can be used to explain prior temperatures the Earth has experienced.
- 2010 is the hottest year so far and the last decade is the hottest on record.
- Number of record highs is 2x record lows
- Growing seasons are lengthening
- Nights have warmed more than days (this is very important to rule out the sun as the cause of the warming.
- Oceans have warmed steadily since 1970 and more importantly they are warming in a way that makes recent global warming very likely not attributable to ocean cycles.
- More wildfires are being seen around the world
- Droughts and floods are increasing in intensity and frequency
- Storm damage is rising as predicted.
- Snows are melting earlier
- Fire seasons start earlier and are harder to contain
- The world is losing snow cover
- The globe is losing frozen ground . permafrost.
- World's glaciers are losing ice each year
- Sea ice is declining
- Volume of sea ice is declining
- Greenland is losing ice

- Antarctica is loosing ice
- Sea level is rising at the fastest level on record
- Oceans are becoming more acid
- Plant and animals are moving up slope and north 3.0 miles/decade
- Timing of flowers, butterflies emergencies are appearing earlier,

However, the strongest reasons why the most prestigious scientific organizations around the world support the consensus view is because of numerous attribution and finger-printing studies that unequivocally point to human causation of warming. In particular, the fingerprinting on the differences between the temperatures of upper and lower atmosphere, measurements of increasing absorption of and re-radiation of heat with a corresponding decline in heat leaving the atmosphere, the increases in heating in the night time compared to daytime, how oceans are heating are very strong evidence of human causation. Numerous additional attribution studies make it very unlikely that the warming the Earth is experience is due to natural forcing.

In other words there is strong credible evidence of human causation.

As we said, we encourage everyone to draw their own conclusions about climate change science, but they must follow the evidence and that is what every prestigious scientific body in the world with expertise over global climate has done and that is why they support the consensus view.

To claim that this is all a fraud is not credible.

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Mike replied to [comment from AJP](#) | August 13, 2010 3:02 PM | [Reply](#)

You said five times to "follow the money trail." But you did not in fact follow the money. You have given no evidence at all. You said: "Many of these organizations have or have threatened to expel any member that doesn't toe the global warming line." But no one has been expelled. No one I know of has lost tenure. One person in Virginia stepped down as state meteorologist, but that was because he was getting money from utility companies - and he is still a tenured university professor.

---

Mike | August 13, 2010 4:38 PM | [Reply](#)

Prof. Brown,

Here is an ethical/psychological question. Why is it so easy to get people afraid of Mexican immigrants, but so hard to get people concerned enough about climate change to press Congress for action?

---

sidd | August 13, 2010 7:44 PM | [Reply](#)

Thanx for the article. I suggest an addition to your list:

Anthropogenic climate change is an ethical problem because most of the burden will be borne by legions yet unborn. We seed the air with carbon today, and the harvest will be a thousand and a thousand warming years, yet we discount future lives and hopes to insignificance over a century or two.

We are writing a check on the environment, and saying, "The kids and their kids and their kids ... are good for it. They'll suck it up. Besides, our generation will be dead before it comes due." [1]

And to help us sleep, hypothetical great great great grandchildren can be discounted quite rapidly with a handy dandy formula...

Note 1: The check might be coming due sooner than we were planning. We may yet live to see our children curse our names.

---

Donald A .Brown | August 13, 2010 8:25 PM | [Reply](#)

ClimateEthics has recieved in the last few days a host of emails and comments on the last post claiming that ClimateEthics got the science wrong. Most of these are simply ad hominem charges, that is attacks on the character of the writer, not serious engagement in the issues under discussion.

A few others are more respectful scientific claims but are at odds with the peer-reviewed literature or state no basis for their conclusions in the peer-reviewed literature.

We at ClimateEthics have said over and over again that we encourage all parties to draw their own conclusions about the science of climate change, however, this requires engagement with the peer-reviewed scientific literature. We at ClimateEthics are not hostile to skepticism in science, in fact skepticism is necessary for science to advance. Yet skeptics must play by the rules of science, that is subject their claims to peer-review in reputable scientific journals.

Skeptics also should not say that a piece of evidence that they want to rely on completely refutes conclusions of most climate scientists when at best it only dents one line of evidence nor should they make claims about the science that has been effectively refuted.

The consensus view, that we can see human causation in the undeniable warming that the

world is experiencing is based upon multiple lines of robust evidence. In the last response to recent comments we noted that there are numerous fingerprinting and attribution studies that have led to all known scientific institutions with expertise in the subject matter to support at least generally the conclusions of IPCC. In a democracy like the United States, we turn to the United States Academy of Sciences to review holistically the peer reviewed literature. They have said at least three times that we are aware of that there is a vast body of scientific evidence that supports the conclusion that the climate is warming, it is human caused at least in part, and serious adverse impacts will result under business as usual. In other words, the United States Academy of Sciences supports the conclusions of the IPCC as does every Academy of Science in the World. Instead of engaging in the evidence, respondents to this website just dismiss this on the basis that the scientists are bought off even though the Academy of Sciences and the IPCC lay out in great painstaking detail the evidence on which their conclusions are based.

Now we at ClimateEthics should not be viewed to be the appropriate body to synthesize the peer-reviewed science. That is the role of the US Academy of Sciences, the IPCC and other prestigious institutions that have significant expertise over climate change science.

The IPCC has drawn conclusions with higher and higher levels of confidence in their four reviews of the peer-reviewed science. Yet, even if there is more uncertainty than that acknowledged by IPCC, ClimateEthics asserts that decision-making in the face of uncertainty raises ethical questions in addition to scientific issues. That is particularly true when the science that concludes that there is danger reaches a level of respect even in cases where all the uncertainties have not been resolved. The duty to be careful once someone is on notice that they are doing something potentially harmful is a particularly strong duty when the harms could be catastrophic, to wait until all the uncertainties will be resolved will make it too late to prevent the harm to the victims of the harm, the longer one waits to resolve the uncertainties the worse the problem gets. These factors are all in play in climate change.

Because if the mainstream view is correct, climate change is a problem caused by some people that will most harshly be experienced by others, the harms to the victims will likely be catastrophic, and the victims of climate change have not consented to be put at risk, climate change raises many civilization challenging ethical questions.

Because climate change is an ethical question, decision-making in the face of uncertainty raises ethical questions. Where there is a lot at stake, most cultures place the burden of proof on those who want to continue dangerous behavior.

The expertise at ClimateEthics is on the ethical dimensions of climate change. We encourage reasoned discussion on these issues but will not accept attacks on character that are not an invitation to reason responsibly.

Simply saying that something is an ethical questions does not necessarily lead to a consensus on what ethics requires. It can lead to conflict among ethical prescriptions, an overlapping consensus among ethical theories about right or wrong, or it can lead to an agreement that some issues positions taken by a party is ethically problematic even if there is a disagreement about what ethics requires.

ClimateEthics is eager to share its reasoning on its ethical conclusions in a reasoned way but will not respond to unreasonable ad hominem attacks..

[gary](#) | August 13, 2010 10:55 PM | [Reply](#)

30 years of research and 75 Billion dollars wasted and stil all we have are wild claims and an poorly supported hypothesys.

Of course the political science academies back this money trough.

They are in the middle of the single biggest gravy train in the history of funded science. If they even hint that there is any doubt, tey loose funding.

Gee,,, I wonder what motivates them.

Begin your serious look at this fraud with a visit to Thegreenagenda.com. Then look up the Club of Rome. The Al Gore is member by the Way.

Then expand to read some of the research on solar effects and ENSO cycles.

If you still believe after that, then you are baseing your belief on Faith, not science.

Studies have shown conclusively that the more you know about AGW the less it will concern you.

CO2 is Plant food.

[Karl](#) | August 13, 2010 11:31 PM | [Reply](#)

Donald A. Brown @2:31

Your list is an impressive appeal to authority. Science does not need such an appeal, politics does. All these organizations have a huge stake in the government grants that go toward studying climate change.

 DONALD A BROWN replied to comment from [Karl](#) | August 14, 2010 12:11 AM | [Reply](#)

It just not true that all the members of the National Academy of Sciences depend upon grants. It also absurd to assume that the grants are given only to people who will confirm the consensus view. Grants are given competitively based upon the scientific merits of what is being studied. Neither the granter or the grantee knows what the results of the grant will be. Anyone who is a skeptic can apply for a grant and will get the grant if he or she can demonstrate that their is an important area of science that needs to be studied.

It is beyond absurd to conclude that all of the peer reviewed sciences is funded because granters know what results they want. You should not make such a claim unless you can prove it. There is too much at stake.

The National Academy of Sciences dosen't receive grants, it simply reviews the science to give advice to the government. The National Academy of Sciences is respected, trusted, and represents the best in science.

gary | [August 14, 2010 1:04 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Donald...

I work for an organization that promotes the propaganda view. We just received 2 Million dollars to setup a Climate Change Action Center. We have Hired 4 new staff for it.

There are no strings and no expectations attached to the money.

All we had to do to get it was agree to promote the agenda.

All of the Staff on that team believe absolutely in the doctrines.

Not one of them understands the science or cares about it.

They have lucrative jobs and don't really need to accomplish anything with their efforts.

I wonder what motivates them.....

AGW is an interesting theory.

It is more important as a social change tool and a Tax generator.

Follow the money and you will absolutely wind up at huge profiteering and people who depend on the myth to keep food on their families tables.

it is a moot point now anyway since the bubble is bursting as we speak and the whole movement is colapsing rapidly.

It was a nice try however.

Mike replied to [comment from gary](#) | [August 14, 2010 5:31 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Gray,

I did a Google search for "Climate Change Action Center." I found several private activists groups. They seem to be funded by private sources like American Express and PATAGONIA® CLOTHING & GEAR. Donald Brown did not list any such groups. Gray, if you are working for a group you disagree with, then you are the one behaving in an unethical manner.

There are many private groups on both sides of the climate change debates. Denier groups like Heartland, Cato and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce do did list their funding sources. I think as a matter of ethics, all organizations that want tax exempt status should have to list their major funding sources.

Mike replied to [comment from Karl](#) | [August 14, 2010 6:08 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Suppose you are on a jury and the prosecution brings out expert witnesses in DNA analysis, finger print analysis and ballistics, all giving evidence of the defendant's guilt, and all the defense attorney says is "Science does not appeal to authority!" You'd find his client guilty. If you think the people with expert knowledge are wrong about climate change, it is up to you to show us where they went wrong. We as a people have to make some tough choices. Do we go by the best available evidence or rely on a few contrarians and bloggers?

WCK | [August 14, 2010 6:33 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Dear Dr. Brown

I invite you to re-examine the testimony to congress and the supporting study that James Hansen provided in 1988. He testified that he was 99% sure of his opinion but in hind site was completely wrong in his projections. I offer this to make the point that congress often hears testimony that is later found to be wrong as was the Hansen 1988 testimony. Just because a scientist or a group of scientists think they're 90% correct or 99% correct in their projections, congress has experienced numerous examples of failed consensus opinions, that you have not, and they must be more cautious than you in accepting consensus opinion. You have the right to judge their actions based on your personal view but your personal view is only one of 310 million that congress must respect.

Best regards  
Sundance



DONALD A BROWN replied to [comment from Mike](#) | [August 14, 2010 9:46 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Several comments have been made about appeal to authority. We will be writing a much longer response to these issues soon as a post. However, we agree that there is a practical need in public policy to follow recognized expert opinion and the law in several ways is quite explicit about this. Before you can give expert testimony in most legal cases, one must lay foundation that the expert's opinion is being given with reasonable scientific certainty, where reasonable scientific certainty is often understood to be consistent with peer reviewed science in the field. One, interesting exception to this rule, is when the government is taking protective action according to a regulation. Then the standard is that the scientific basis is not "arbitrary and capricious." We believe this is precisely what ethics would require, however, we will develop this in more detail in a future post. There are many practical reasons why society should look to expert bodies of knowledge to make public policy. We will show why this is so important in the case of climate change because there are wild unsubstantiated claims that have been made both by climate policy opponents and proponents that are not credible.



DONALD A BROWN replied to [comment from WCK](#) | [August 14, 2010 10:58 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Yes, of course, the consensus view can be incorrect and has been in the history of science. In fact, we would argue that skepticism is necessary for science to proceed. However, there is a huge need for skeptics to play by the rules of science, which includes among many other things. that skeptics publish in peer reviewed journals. This is also true of the proponents of theories that humans are causing climate change. And why is this necessary?. Because only peer review constrains erroneous claims, seeks to see if claims are being made that have been thoroughly refuted by scientific logic, and seeks to make sure that the claims are consistent with other basic scientific understandings that are not in contention. Given that there are numerous claims being made by so called skeptics as well as those who believe in human causation that don't withstand serious peer review scrutiny. requiring proponents and opponents of climate change to withstand the rigors of peer review is extraordinarily important. We also need to rely on scientific institutions to synthesize the science of climate change given the huge multi-disciplinary nature of climate change science. The fact is no one scientist is an expert in the entire field of climate change science. This is precisely the role that has been created by the National Academy of Science in the United States. It is also the reason why scientific organizations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, The American Geophysical Union, and others should be consulted about contentious scientific issues. It does not mean that the conclusions of such bodies should be accepted without limitation, that in fact would be an appeal to authority, but it is necessary to give potentially competent advice on science to policy-makers particularly in multi-disciplinary matters such as climate change. This is a much longer story, but courts often go through similar logic to make sense of conflicting scientific claims. To put an expert witness on in a court, one must lay foundation that the expert is testifying consistent with the peer reviewed science with reasonable levels of scientific certainty. This is what we should expect of skeptics and non-skeptics alike. The only way we have to sort this out is to appeal to credible scientific bodies. They may be wrong, but that is not the question we are asking of them. We are asking whether the scientific claims are consistent with the best scientific views.

The National Academy of Sciences has looked at climate change science at least three times. Once in the Carter Administration, once in the Second George Bush Administration, and once this past May. In all three cases the Academy said that there was a credible robust scientific basis for concluding the planet was warming due to human causes.

Now we at ClimateEthics are not the place to go to get advice on the mainstream scientific view. That is not our mission. What we do is work out the ethical implications of the mainstream scientific view. We also believe what should be done in the face of scientific uncertainty is fundamentally an ethical issue, not a scientific question although the science is relevant to the ethical questions.

Gary | [August 15, 2010 1:45 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

Couple of things.

1.

Mike: There is nothing unethical about my position.

I run the IT division. I could not care less about their little hobby. I merely point out that they believe without having any knowledge to back it.

2. James Hansen is not qualified to have an opinion. He is not a climatologist. He is Physisist.

3. It is NOT up to us to prove that the hypothesys is incorrect. It is up to those that want to impose economic ruin to prove that it is correct. So far they have not even come close.

4. The concensus is of course a myth so discussing it is silly. I am more impressed with the 31000 scientists that signed off that they don't agree than the few that do support the AGW dogma.

If you want to destroy the current way of life on the planet, you must at least show some good evidence that it is necessary. Proof would be good but even some sound logical arguments would help.

So far The IPCC has little other than scandal after scandal, exageration after exageration. And of course there is the FACT that only 51 of them actually signed the chapter 9 "man made" declaration.

Its sooooooo just a scam.....

Bill Logan | [August 15, 2010 7:57 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

When denialists are confronted with the overwhelming number of scientists and scientific organizations that have reviewed the data and come to a conclusion that they disagree with they generally try to revert to the "appeal to authority " argument. They need to learn to distinguish between an appeal to competent authority and appeal to denialist bloggingheads as authority. There is no logical fallacy in pointing out that virtually every single responsible scientist in the field has come to the same conclusion. It doesn't specifically "prove" the point, but in the absence of any believable scientific results to the contrary, it certainly supports the point. In areas of science that are typically beyond the educational scope of the audience, it is important to be able to distinguish between competent authority and people like Anthony Watts.

It is clear that since virtually all of the available science contradicts the conclusions reached by the denialists, they are left with nothing but the "kill the messenger" line of reasoning. In all of the contrarian posts here, and virtually anywhere for that matter, the position is defended by a pathetic litany of ad hominem attacks on the people who find evidence that they have already decided is incorrect.

The last refuge of this group is to claim that taking action to mitigate CO2 will destroy civilization as we know it. Again, and as usual, it is an assertion presented without a shred of evidence, but is necessary to support a position that is taken and defended on strictly emotional grounds.

A clear case in point is Gary's claim that 31,000 scientists have contradicted the consensus view. He refers ,of course, to the Petition Project, sent out by the almost comical Oregon Society of Science and Medicine. The requirement that a participant be considered a "scientist" was only an undergraduate degree in any science. To this project the opinion of a vacuum cleaner salesman with a B.S in sociology from a community college has the same level of authority as a PhD in Climatology. However, Gary prefers to appeal to the authority of the Petition Project than virtually every other actual scientific organization in the world.

We are left with the following:

1. The Earths atmosphere exhibits a "greenhouse effect".
2. The relative concentrations of all the gasses involved is well known and quantifiable using spectral data taken from satellites. CO2 contributes, at current concentrations, about 14%.
- 3.If you keep trapping more and more energy, the atmosphere will warm.
4. The vast majority of all the research confirms that this is happening.
5. If no action is taken, serious harm can be done.
6. If we start taking action now, the economic difficulties will be minimal, but the longer we delay, the more harm will be done, and the more drastic the economic costs.

With this in mind we establish an ethical responsibility to take action. It is up to denialists to demonstrate, with serious peer reviewed research, that that there is no such risk.



DONALD A BROWN replied to [comment from Bill Logan](#) | [August 15, 2010 1:02 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Mr. Logan makes an important point. Skepticism is not bad, and is in fact necessary to make progress in science. But skeptics must play by the rules and only those who subject their claims to peer-review should be entitled to be respect because the science is very complicated, their are bogus claims being made on the internet every day at high volume that have been proven to be refuted by most science, and so society needs a process to sort out the bogus claims. That, in the United States is precisely the role that has been given to the National Academy of Sciences. They have spoken at least three times on the science of climate change, including last May, and they have said they support the view that the planet is warming and it is at least partially human caused, and that under business-as-usual harsh impacts are very likely.

We at ClimateEthics work out the ethical implications of the mainstream view. Those who

want to dispute the mainstream view should play by the rules of responsible science. Many claims about the science are uninformed, not knowledgeable about the science, dont for instance know about then numerous fingerprinting and attribution studies and other robust lines of evidence that point to human causation, not natural variability. This is not meant to discourage dissenting views but to appeal to a rational way of dealing with this problem

Justa Joe | [August 16, 2010 3:28 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Doc Brown, I hope that you're an ethicist and not involved in the hard sciences. Your litany of proofs of AGW reads like the Warmlist, and most of your proofs have long since been de-bunked, have a dubious connection to AGW, or are just plain laughable.

2010 is the hottest year so far and the last decade is the hottest on record.

\_\_\_\_\_Some decade has to be the hottest on record. 2000 - 2009 purportedly replaced the 1930's as the "hottest". This doesn't prove much. I don't have much confidence in these records as games are always being played with them.

-Growing seasons are lengthening.

\_\_\_\_\_And this is bad? If this is even true, which is doubtful, many factors would contribute to this.

Nights have warmed more than days (this is very important to rule out the sun as the cause of the warming.)

\_\_\_\_\_Who told you that? The relationship of solar activity to to climate is more complicated than simply having more or less sunshine. Read Dr. Willie Soon.

-More wildfires are being seen around the world.

\_\_\_\_\_As myriad factors contribute to wildfire and even the "seeing" of wildfires a connection to AGW would be unprovable.

-Storm damage is rising as predicted.

\_\_\_\_\_This is bunk on so many levels. How about man's constructions have increased as predicted.

-Snows are melting earlier

\_\_\_\_\_Debunked

-Fire seasons start earlier and are harder to contain

\_\_\_\_\_LOL

-The world is loosing snow cover

\_\_\_\_\_Debunked

-The globe is losing frozen ground . permafrost.

\_\_\_\_\_I've never heard this gem. We would love to see a citation.

-World's glaciers are loosing ice each year

\_\_\_\_\_Glaciers have been on decline since the early 1800's. The great lakes were formed by glaciers. Where have those glaciers gone and better yet... when?

-Sea ice is declining

\_\_\_\_\_Debunked

-Volume of sea ice is declining

\_\_\_\_\_Debunked

-Greenland is loosing [SIC] ice

\_\_\_\_\_Debunked

-Antarctica is loosing[SIC] ice

\_\_\_\_\_Antartica is gaining ice.

-Sea level is rising at the fastest level on record

\_\_\_\_\_Debunked

-Oceans are becoming more acid

\_\_\_\_\_Debunked

-Plant and animals are moving up slope and north 3.0 miles/decade

\_\_\_\_\_LOL

-Timing of flowers, butterflies emergencies[SIC] are appearing earlier,

\_\_\_\_\_LOL

Doc, Your niavete is almost refreshing in a way, but you really should try to learn a little about the otherside of the AGW argument. I can see why you're a warmist if you've swallowed all the silly things that you just posted.

 DONALD A BROWN replied to [comment from Justa Joe | August 16, 2010 3:50 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Your claim that the all of the above have been debunked by the science depends upon citing citations that have not apparently been recognized by the mainstream scientific institutions that have responsibility and expertise for synthesizing the peer-reviewed science. In the United

States that it is the National Academy of Sciences. Their latest report was in May of this year. If you are claiming that the National Academy is corrupt, what is your evidence?. They point in each report to robust lines of scientific evidence that leads them to conclude that the Earth is warming, it is at least partially human caused, and there is reason to believe that harsh impacts from human induced climate change will be experienced under-business as usual.

ClimateEthics, is not opposed to skepticism in science. In fact skepticism is necessary for science to advance. However skeptics must play by the rules of science, that is subject their scientific conclusions to peer-review in reputable scientific journals. Many of the claims that something has been debunked are not based upon the robust lines of evidence in peer-reviewed scientific journals that the National Academy of Science relies upon.

There are sound public policy reasons for making every claim go through peer-review. It is the only way of dealing with unfounded scientific claims both on the environmental and skeptical side. Particularly in light of the enormous stakes in climate change it is important to rely on peer-review and then assign responsibility to an organization with the highest scientific credentials to examine that science and make recommendations. Synthesis is necessary because no one scientist is an expert in all of the lines of evidence that goes into making claims about likely climate impacts. The US National Academy has now done this three times and in each case supported the consensus view. If you want to fight on the science, that is how you should proceed.

ClimateEthics is not the place to fight about the science. What we do is develop the ethical implications of the the most respected scientific views.

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Mike replied to [comment from Gary | August 16, 2010 10:27 PM | Reply](#)

Gray,

Calm down. The fact you are flying off the handle here just shows you are not being objective. Why is this such a hot button issue? If we tax carbon and develop alternative energy sources and it turns out the scientists were wrong it is not the end of the world. We will need to convert to new forms of energy sooner or later anyway. If we do nothing and the scientists are right, life will go on - we will adapt to the new climate, but it will be even more costly and of course deadly for some (think Pakistan & Russia). Perhaps you've heard of Pascal's wager.

But there is no point in screaming it is all a hoax or that Hansen is not a climatologist (climate modeling is based on physics). Hansen is very political and I don't agree with his opposition to cap and trade.

So, chill out and spend some time reading both sides. Stewart Weart's book *The Discovery of Global Warming* is a good place to start.

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[Gary | August 17, 2010 12:17 AM | Reply](#)

Mike;

Do you have even the slightest clue how much resource will be wasted on this nonsense? The best estimate is 45 Trillion Dollars.

Yes. That was Trillion.

One Tenth of that would solve all of the most critical problems for the most underprivileged people on the planet.

But nooooooo.

Because of this sill scam, we will waste it on useless idiocy in the name of ideological Socialist regulations and useless projects like windfarms.

I am concerned. Because we have real problems in the world.

I am concerned because nutbars are insisting we blow our resources on pseudo scientific idiocy.

Talk about Ethical issues.

Do you have even an inkling of what an 85% reduction in CO2 would require to pull off?

No I didn't think so.

You are still living in the green dream world of Eco nutbars and have no problem with causing millions of people in poor countries to die needless death so you can feel like a green hero.

You guys discuss me.

---

 DONALD A BROWN replied to [comment from Gary | August 17, 2010 12:38 AM | Reply](#)

The claim that economic cost will exceed \$45 Trillion, we do not believe, represents the consensus view in peer-reviewed journals. Some economists, including Sir Nicolas Stern, claim that the cost of doing nothing will far exceed the costs of reducing ghg to levels needed to protect the environment.

Stern claims that the cost of non-action could reach 20% of global GDP. (Stern 2006)

Most economists have asserted the cost of doing nothing on climate change exceed the costs of taking action. ClimateEthics will write about this in detail in upcoming posts.

In the United States, arguments have been made that 40% of the reductions that are needed could be achieved by conservation and elimination of waste--- that is by measures that save

money. Right now, Europeans use about 1/2 as much energy as the average American at no noticeable decrease in life-style.

The point of this is that cost claims are highly contested and often rest on assumptions in models about what the solutions are.

ClimateEthics is not qualified to synthesize the peer-reviewed evidence about economic costs of action on climate change (although we don't believe the commentator is either) but this issue, like the scientific uncertainty issue needs to be fought out in the peer reviewed journals, for this is the only way from protecting the public from bogus claims on both sides of the argument. The United States Academy of Sciences, knowledgeable about cost arguments, have urged the United States to take strong action on climate change.

To think through the costs issues clearly it is important also to think about who gets harmed from non action, whether those who are causing the harm to those who are vulnerable should pay the cost of damages, and whether those who will be harmed have consented to be put at grave risk.

Stern, Sir Nicolas, 2006. Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, HM Treasury, [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\\_reviews/stern\\_review\\_economics\\_climate\\_change/stern\\_review\\_Report.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_Report.cfm), (viewed, May 31, 2008) United States, 1998, The Kyoto Protocol and the President's Policies to Address Climate Change; An Economic Analysis, [http://yosemite.epa.gov/oar/globalwarming.nsf/UniqueKeyLookup/SHSU5BWJUP/\\$File/wh\\_c&b.pdf](http://yosemite.epa.gov/oar/globalwarming.nsf/UniqueKeyLookup/SHSU5BWJUP/$File/wh_c&b.pdf)

John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) | August 17, 2010 5:00 AM | Reply

To the anonymous Justa Joe

**First** I believe that anonymous voices on the internet have even less credibility than politicians in an election year, willing to ambiguously word craft their way around the facts to achieve a predetermined end, that of getting more votes at nearly any cost.

**Second** You ask for citations and yet offer no proof whatsoever about the list you provided. In what peer reviewed journal were all of these things debunked?

**Third** Post your full legal name and show some spine.

**Forth** Look at the data:

<http://www.ossfoundation.us/projects/environment/global-warming/current-climate-conditions>

**Fifth** Global warming is a seriously critical issue. Ignoring it is merely neurotic.

—

**Fee & Dividend:** [Our best chance](#) - [Learn the Issue](#) - [Sign the Petition](#)

**A Climate Minute:** [The Natural Cycle](#) - [The Greenhouse Effect](#) - [History of Climate Science](#) - [Arctic Ice Melt](#)

Gary | August 17, 2010 10:02 AM | Reply

The Point is:

Global warming is NOT a serious issue it is a perfectly natural and normal cyclic event and wasting time and resources on it is merely neurotic.

We have real problems to deal with.

We don't need these manufactured ones.

If there were ANY proof or even ANY good evidence that the small warming that occurred last century was man made there might be a case to do a little something.

But since there isn't, and the latest peer reviewed science shows that the IPCC claims are false and that the Solar cycles influence climate more than man ever will, your position is clearly unethical.

Similar to the DDT farce that killed 40 million Africans before the idiot greens admitted they were wrong.

 DONALD A BROWN replied to comment from Gary | August 17, 2010 10:25 AM | Reply

Mr Williams claims that there is no evidence of human caused global warming despite the fact that every Academy of Science in the World including the US Academy of Sciences and recently NASA have not only issued statements confirming the consensus view but identified the peer-reviewed science that supports their conclusions. Of course, he gives no citations to peer-reviewed science that has been reviewed by credible scientific organizations. This would be nothing more than an odd historical development if it weren't true that there is so much at stake with climate change. This is truly a human tragedy unfolding.

John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) | August 17, 2010 11:13 AM | Reply

To the anonymous Gary

Do you have even the slightest clue how much it will cost the global monetary economy if we do nothing?

What do you do for a living? What is your background? What do or did you do for a living? You see, I think you think you're a conservative. But I don't think you are.

And speaking of ethics, please post your full name. I can not understand why people make statements without providing the integrity of their name to show that they truly stand by their words.

Of course there is plenty of evidence. One does not need a computer model to see the physical reality of a warming world.

What latest peer reviewed science are you referring to? Please provide citations.

Also, your last argument is known as a red herring. DDT has nothing to do with global warming.

—

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**A Climate Minute:** [The Natural Cycle](#) - [The Greenhouse Effect](#) - [History of Climate Science](#) - [Arctic Ice Melt](#)

Gary Williams | August 17, 2010 3:28 PM | Reply

Oh Please!!!!

Evidence??? all you can point to is the fact that the planet did warm slightly last century.

That does not in any way validate the hupotesys that man made CO2 caused it.

The only thing holding that myth together is computer models.

Models that have been proven faulty and wrong many times.

AGW is still just a loose theory. Nothing more.

the DDT issue is jsut another example of dumb concensus based bad policy. Just happens to be a good esample.

Now if anyone of you can actually show some real evidence (not computer models) that man made CO2 is causing anything other than better food production... Please Please Please show it.

Nobody else on the planet has been able to so far..... so have at it.

And please don't waste everyones time with links to IPCC Propaganda, we all already know it shows nothing conclusive on any level.



DONALD A BROWN replied to [comment from Gary Williams](#) | August 17, 2010 3:59 PM | Reply

Mr. Williams, No fingerprinting studies and attribution studies which you seem to be completely unaware of, are not dependent upon models. They include how the planet is warming. If it is the sun, the Earth warms one way, if it is the greenhouse effect, you get differential differences in how the upper and lower atmosphere warms, if changes in ocean circulation are causing warming you dont get ocean warming at depth the way we are experiencing it. If it is natural carbon versus fossil fuel carbon, you get a different carbon isotope in the atmstphere than what we are seeing, if it natural variability you can measure difference in sun output, if greenhouse effect is warming the planet, you can predictable measurements that show differences about how much infrared radiation is escaping to space, if it is fossil fuels, you get temperature rises in some proportion to fossil fuel use, we have known for 150 years how much additional inital warming will be caused by each molecule of each greenhouse gas with great precision, what we dont know is exactly how much warming will be caused because that requires knowledge of feedbacks, but can measure directly the feedbacks including water vapor in the atmosphere, and albedo of ice. If the sun is warming the planet you get on pattern of night-time versus day-time temperatures than what we are seeing

Given this your claim that there is no scientific basis for concern is more than baseless. Everything I have just mentioned is the actual basis for the overwhelming consensus in those scientific institutions that have expertise, that the planet is warming and that it is at least partially human caused.

Only compassion stops me from putting words to the damage you are doing by claiming that there is no scientific evidence. You are encouraged to reach your own conclusions about the science of climate change, but please dont make claims that there is no scientific evidence when every scientific institution in the world that has looked at this not only disagrees with you but explains in painstaking detail the evidence they relied upon. This by the way includes the United States National Academy of Sciences.. You are free to draw your own conclusions but people who claim there is no scientific basis for concern are not only spreading mis-information , they are endangering millions of people around the world by convincing others that there is no scientific basis. I am sure you are only claiming what you believe to be true. I will not stoop to use the tactics used by others among the more vocal skeptics that attack our character. But I beg you to be very, very careful of claims you make, particularly in light of the fact that you dont know the peer-reviewed evidence.

John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) | August 17, 2010 6:09 PM | Reply

Gary Williams

I was just up in the Alps about 10 days ago and visited a glacier that is around 85 to 90% gone since 1930. Glaciers melting don't rely on models to melt, or do they?

I outlined multiple lines of evidence in my recent 'Leading Edge' report. These lines of evidence derive from observations, and the observations are not reliant on models.

<http://www.ossfoundation.us/projects/environment/global-warming/summary-docs/leading-edge/2010/aug-the-leading-edge>

You don't need models to visible see what is happening. Plus it is false logic to assume something is not happening, just because you don't believe it.

As to better food production, studies already indicate that while increases in atmospheric CO2 can increase plant growth, there are indicators that show that anything that does not fix proteins loses those proteins. That's not a benefit for a wide variety of crops.

You make a lot of claims, yet you have cited no evidence for your claims in the peer reviewed literature? Why is that?

Now, you stated "and the latest peer reviewed science show that the IPCC claims are false and that the Solar cycles influence climate more that man ever will"

I would very mush like to review this peer reviewed science of which you speak. Please provide links.

[sound of crickets in background . . . ]

—

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**A Climate Minute:** [The Natural Cycle](#) - [The Greenhouse Effect](#) - [History of Climate Science](#) - [Arctic Ice Melt](#)

John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) | August 18, 2010 10:09 AM | Reply

Gary Williams,

**Correction to my last.** Sorry, it was past midnight in Switzerland when I wrote that

"there are indicators that show that anything that does not fix proteins loses those proteins. That's not a benefit for a wide variety of crops."

should be

there are indicators that show that plants that do not fix nitrogen lose those proteins. That's not a benefit for a wide variety of crops.

Point being, that while there may be some benefit to plant growth which relates to the capacity of the land based carbon sink, we lose proteins. So the nutritional content of some crops are indicated to drop (ref. the FACE experiments Free Atmosphere Carbon Enrichment, performed during the Bush administration).

Plus, the decreased soil moisture content in current agricultural regions combined with high precipitation events in various regions as they occur add up to increased fires, floods that wipe out crops and infrastructure shift.

Remember, it's all about the economy.

Please note that the reason the scientific method is so robust, and can be better relied upon than mere opinion, is that it corrects itself. Scientists often correct themselves. Wouldn't it be nice if everyone did that. If individuals did not get to hung up on always being right and admitted when we are wrong, **we would make faster progress if people exercised humility and just admitted when they notice they are wrong.**

Unlike Professor Brown, as to which words I choose, I have fewer compuncions constrained by compassion towards those that exhibit willful ignorance of the relevant science.

It is neurotic (aka denialism) to ignore (deny) the 'well established' science, as well as the observed changes that are already fitting said well established science (attribution).

You said it's the sun above. Okay. Prove it.

The current radiative forcing mean above thermal equilibrium is estimated at 1.6 W/m2. Since the Schwabe solar cycle is 11.1 years average periodicity (9-14 year range) adding and taking away 0.2 W/m2. How can you reasonably claim it is the sun?

[sound of crickets chirping . . . ]

—

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**A Climate Minute:** [The Natural Cycle](#) - [The Greenhouse Effect](#) - [History of Climate Science](#) - [Arctic Ice Melt](#)

Justa Joe | August 18, 2010 2:23 PM | Reply

"Second You ask for citations and yet offer no proof whatsoever about the list you provided. In what peer reviewed journal were were all of these things debunked?" - Mr. Reisman

I only asked for one citation regarding the loss of permafrost because I've only ever heard speculation regarding potential loss of permafrost. There's a lot of speculation in the CAGW

game.

Nextly somehow you have no problem with Dr. Brown's original listing of items without citations that purport to prove the existense of CAGW, but you insist that I provide citations. As Dr. Brown has already pointed out this isn't really the forum to hash out scientific disputes, and you no doubt can see that Dr. Brown's list is quite long. If you pick a couple of items I will provide a link to the scientific counter argument against that claim.

As far as posting my given name. I don't see the necessity in doing so at this time. I'm not in the global warming racket, and I'm not seeking personal funding from the tax payers using AGW as the vehicle.

L. Lindbergh | [August 19, 2010 7:08 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

Just like there are 'spambots' filling up comments at other blogs, there seem to be 'sceptic-bots' active on this blog... Except instead of offering 'Vi&gr\*' they spout the same old nonsense that has been disproven so many times before... see <http://www.realclimate.org/>



DONALD A BROWN replied to comment from L. Lindbergh | [August 19, 2010 12:25 PM](#) | [Reply](#)

Yes, ClimateEthics has been receiving many comments that have no substance, but simply are comprised of ad hominem o otherwise insulting attacks or scientific claims that demonstrate no knowledge of the vast scientific literature.

For instance, a recent comment said that the scientific basis for attribution of human causation of climate change was all based upon models, thus displaying amazing ignorance of the fact that much of the fingerprinting and attribution conclusions have nothing to do with models but consist of such things as direct temperature measurements of upper and lower atmosphere, measurements of incoming and outgoing radiation levels from the Earth, direct measureable knowledge of sun cycle energy differences between night and day temperatures, measurement of how the oceans are warming, measurement of carbon isotopes, etc, etc, thus proving that people are making claims that must be understood to be dangerously misleading. ClimateEthics is not a place to fight on the science, that is the function of peer-reviewed literature and organizations such as the National Academy of Sciences that have the depth and breadth of expertise to make judgments on the science.

Those people who are making baseless claims are causing great damage and ClimateEthics will not simply pass on these claims, it would be irresponsible for us to do so. ClimateEthics also gets comments that sometimes strongly disagree with our conclusions and these will be posted as they have in the past , but only if there are no ad hominem or insulting accusations that are clearly not an invitation to reasoned discussion and as long as they do not contain scientific claims that are so at odds with what is not in dispute that they demonstrate irresponsibility.



DONALD A BROWN replied to comment from John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) | [August 20, 2010 12:08 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

The ad homiem attacks, and substantively empty insults are not posted. We, as you can see, let disagreements on the site but not comments that are not an invitation to reasoned discourse.

Scott A. Mandia | [August 20, 2010 8:08 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

Many people are driven by one or both of the Big Two: Money or Fame

#### Money:

Some here have suggested that grant funding is driving an agenda. I prove otherwise at the two links below which show that **scientists cannot get rich from public money**:

[Taking the Money for Grant\(ed\) – Part I](#)

[Taking the Money for Grant\(ed\) – Part II](#)

#### Fame:

Did Galielo, Einstein, and Darwin get famous for agreeing with the consensus? Of course not.

**There is far more incentive for a scientist to prove AGW is not driving climate and yet there have been no conclusive papers that falsify AGW.** Either these scientists do not wish to become famous or just maybe AGW is real. Common sense should reveal the obvious correct choice.

Donald, I suggest directing your commenters to [Skeptic Arguments and What the Science Says](#) when they raise issues that have been long debunked. You will save much time.

Scott A. Mandia, Professor of Physical Sciences  
Selden, NY

[Global Warming: Man or Myth?](#)

[My Global Warming Blog](#)

[Twitter: AGW\\_Prof](#)

["Global Warming Fact of the Day" Facebook Group](#)

Adam R. | August 22, 2010 7:08 PM | Reply

The democracy of ideas fills every modern technical debate with a great deal of ignorant noise, as we see in the comments. On every side, science is afflicted by those who don't have the knowledge or training to understand the subject, yet are undeterred from attacking the professionals who do.

Evolutionary biology, immunology, etc. are all beset by faux skeptics like Gary Williams. What is the point of entertaining their hackneyed arguments here? Why attempt to reason with them? Will they learn anything? Will their minds be changed? Of course not; research in fact indicates the opposite. I urge ClimateEthics to use its powers of moderation to attenuate the noise and let the grownups converse in relative peace.

John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) | August 23, 2010 11:48 AM | Reply

To the Mike replied to comment from Gary | August 16, 2010 10:27 PM

It really helps when you use your full name, since there are apparently two Mikes in this thread commenting, I think? Confusing though.

An acquaintance of mine, that happens to have been the director of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, did a quantitative analysis of the Cap & Trade proposals for COP15. The result was at atmospheric concentration of 700ppm CO2 by 2100. To put it as delicately as possible, that is generally a place we don't want to go.

We are already experiencing serious issues at 389ppm CO2 (think Pakistan & Russia). Security estimates indicate:

<http://www.ossfoundation.us/projects/environment/global-warming/security>

we will have countries failing most likely before we get to 450ppm, and serious global food issues. I did a lot of hard looking at Cap & Trade and am strongly opposed to it for cause.

I have also examined as many alternate proposals as I find that looked reasonable. Fee & Dividend, from a scientific point of view (translated means from a resource and monetary economy point of view) is the wisest course I have seen. I am open to a better proposal, but have not found one.

I have already addressed many economic arguments that were received from Europe and America through friends of mine deeply involved in conservative economic perspective. You can take a look at the responses here:

<http://www.climatelobby.com/fee-and-dividend/q-a/>

I'd really like to know if you have any meaningful issues with the policy and why? I'm a conservative and a pragmatist. I have looked at this very carefully. If I have missed something important, I would like to know.

PS Stewart Weart and I worked together on a one minute video of Climate Science history to give a quick view of the development of the science. You can view it on the OSS site

<http://www.ossfoundation.us/projects/environment/global-warming/climate-science-history>

or YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czRDS3jTM4o>

 DONALD A BROWN replied to comment from John P. Reisman (OSS Foundation) | August 23, 2010 12:08 PM | Reply

We agree with Mr. Riesman's comment, which we understand to suggest that basic prudence would require action even if there is some uncertainty.

We would also supplement this concern with the observation that the IPCC results and the conclusions about the risks reached by the United States Academy of Sciences could turn out to be wrong. There is the possibility, although it is viewed to be very low, in probability that there is an unknown negative feedback in the system that would lead to less warming than the IPCC lower bounds. In his recent book, James Hansen himself says this. But there is also possibility that appears to be more likely that the warming will be outside the upper bounds identified by IPCC. The historical record is full of rapid non-linear changes before the last 10,000 years. And so if you want to place the bet on the basis of uncertainty, you must admit the uncertainty goes both ways. Given it is the poorest people in the world that have the most to lose, acting in response to uncertainty is not only a scientific question but a moral issue that raises the questions of who should have the burden of proof and what quantity of proof should satisfy the burden of proof.

And so, we agree that basic prudence if not moral obligation requires action unless those who we put most at risk agree to be put at risk.

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