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PETER FERRARA: We're Doomed If the EPA Continues to Embrace Bad Science

***By Peter Ferrara* Director of Entitlement and Budget Policy, Institute for Policy Innovation**

Last Friday, the Environmental Protection Agency began implementing Obama administration policy with a “finding” that man-made global warming is a threat to human health. This finding provides the legal foundation for massive regulation of American life that would ultimately chase remaining manufacturing out of the country, sharply reduce America’s standard of living, and tumble the American economy into long term decline.

The EPA and Obama are just following the reports of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). But the UN is as self-interested on this issue as the oil companies — except that it tilts in the completely opposite direction — because global warming provides a powerful excuse for a massive expansion of UN powers. That is why the UN’s global warming reports involve shoddy science skewed to favor the theory of man-made global warming. Nevertheless, Obama and his left-leaning liberals have readily embraced the global warming theory because it provides a fabulous excuse for a massive expansion of the federal government as well.

The Obama administration’s embrace of the global warming theory continues despite growing evidence from first-rate, blue chip scientists who are increasingly concluding that humans have little effect on global temperatures, and that natural causes and temperature patterns continue to dominate. These scientists include Richard Lindzen, Alfred P. Sloan Professor of Meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Roy Spencer, Principal Research Scientist at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, and U.S. Science Team Leader for the AMSR-E instrument flying on NASA’s Aqua satellite, William Happer, Cyrus Fogg Brackett Professor of Physics at Princeton University, Syun-ichi Akasofu,

Professor of Physics and former director of the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska, Patrick Michaels, Research Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia, and past President of the American Association of State Climatologists, David Douglass, Professor of Physics at the University of Rochester, and hundreds, if not thousands, of others. Physics icon Freeman Dyson recently expressed similar views in The New York Times.

An intellectual leader of this emerging new science of global warming is Fred Singer, Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science at the University of Virginia, and the founder and first Director of the National Weather Satellite Service. He is currently Director of the Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP) — a discussion of the true science of global warming can be found at their Web site, www.sepp.org. Hundreds of scientists with similar views attended a recent international global warming conference sponsored by the Heartland Institute. Conference lectures can be found at the Heartland Web site, www.heartland.org.

These scientists note that satellite measured temperatures show that the global atmosphere has cooled over the last 10 years, with the decline in temperatures accelerating over the last two years. They argue that temperature variations throughout the 20th century can be explained by natural causes. U.S. temperatures rose from 1977 to 1998, but they fell from 1940 to 1977. The hottest decade was the 1930s. Yet carbon dioxide increased continuously throughout the century, which should have produced a trend of consistent temperature increases if it was causing global warming.

Global temperatures were warmer than today than during the Medieval Warm Period — a span of several hundred years around 1000 A.D. Even higher temperatures prevailed during a period known as the Holocene Climate Optimum, which ran from roughly 8,000 years ago (6000 B.C.) to 4,000 years ago (2000 B.C.). Yet, there was no significant human burning of fossil fuels during these periods to cause these higher temperatures and none of the catastrophes ascribed to global warming occurred.

Carbon dioxide is not pollution, but a natural substance in the earth's atmosphere essential to all life on the planet. Humans breathe out carbon dioxide, and plants take it in. More carbon dioxide has been proven to cause plants and crops to grow faster. Moreover, atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ were much higher in the past than today. For hundreds of millions of years prior to 400 million years ago, atmospheric CO₂ concentrations were well over 30 times greater than today. But CO₂ concentrations have actually been in sharp decline since then. From roughly 50 million to 350 million years ago, fluctuating CO₂ concentrations were generally 3 to 15 times current levels. Yet, the human species evolved and flourished, and there is no evidence of the catastrophes predicted by global warming hysterics.

In fact, scientists at the Heartland Conference and at SEPP argue that recent data disproves the theory of man caused global warming. The UN's own climate models project that if man's greenhouse gas emissions were causing global warming, there would be a particular pattern of temperature distribution in the atmosphere, which scientists call "the fingerprint." Temperatures in the troposphere portion of the atmosphere above the tropics would increase with altitude producing a "hotspot" near the top of the troposphere, about 6 miles above the earth's surface. Above that, in the stratosphere, there would be cooling. But higher quality temperature data from weather balloons and satellites now show just the opposite: no increasing warming with altitude in the tropical troposphere, but rather a slight cooling, with no hotspot, no fingerprint.

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