

Freedom Matters

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

Sustainable Development Is Unsustainable. Part 9. Global Warming: Politics or Science?

by Bob Bowman

Our readers, devoted to constitutional freedoms, may wonder what "sustainable development" and "global warming" have to do with freedom. Sadly, a lot. Those slogans serve as excuses to impose socialistic chains on us. Thus, to preserve our freedoms, we must understand those threats to our freedoms.

The global warming hypothesis is based on data **suggestive** of a warming trend for the earth, and on attempts to **correlate** such warming with man-made emissions of so-called greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide from burning of fossil fuels. Yet, the predicted "warming" is within the natural variation for the past 10,000 years, and thus, what effects it might produce must also be in that natural range. As to man-made emissions, climate results from many factors, not well understood scientifically.

Those incomplete data and imperfect theories have been seized upon by groups with political agendas, to try to control the rest of us. This makes it necessary, in a democratic republic, for citizens to inform themselves enough regarding the science of weather and the basis of scientific proof, that they can make an informed vote regarding those climate issues. This is a crucial necessity, because the advocates of the theory that humans are causing a harmful warming of the earth's climate have proposed very drastic remedial measures indeed, which they claim are essential to slow or halt "global warming."

For global warmers, the burning issue in American politics is the refusal of the U.S. to adopt the Kyoto Treaty binding the nation to major reductions in fossil fuel usage as a way to curtail increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide. That treaty would greatly reduce the prosperity of the nation, resulting in a severe economic recession. Woe betide the politician who plunges us into a recession. Yet, woe betide the politician who leads us into an inhospitably hot earth. Those are the horns of the dilemma.

Beckerman, in his book *A Poverty of Reason*, concludes that even if global warming is really happening, the amount of warming of the earth over the next hundred years, up to 2100, as projected by the **main scientific models**, namely a 0.6 degree C. increase, is so small that it will amount to a cost burden of only 1% of our economy. That, Beckerman says, is too small to justify the drastic measures of the Kyoto Treaty to try to curtail it. Thus, he treats the consequences of global warming as an economic issue (that's his expertise), for though he recognizes there are non-economic concerns, he notes that if we destroy our economy, we will destroy most of our quality of life, and of our ability to adapt to climate changes such as global warming. It should be noted that very few governments have signed onto or instituted the drastic measures of the Kyoto Treaty.

In other words, most governments act as if Beckerman's assessment is correct. That political accommodation also includes non-economic issues like the **environmental** changes that may occur with global warming. Of these, the melting of the great ice caps (Greenland, the Arctic and Antarctic), and a resultant rise in sea level, are now discounted. Data now say that predicted global warming will produce added snowfall in those glacial regions that more than compensates for the increased rate of melting of their ice caps, at least up to 2100 A.D.

The above issues aside, how accurate are predictions of global warming? The answer lies in the science of climate, for which an excellent survey is a 15 page article, "A Global Warming Primer," by Gerald E. Marsh, a physicist at Argonne National Laboratory and advisor to The National Center for Public Policy Research (www.isodarco.it/html/candriai01marsh.html).

Marsh bases his primer on the **final report** of Working Group 1 of the IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, published in 1990. The IPCC reports are the "official" source on the topic, and the 1990 report was the basis for the Kyoto Protocol and Treaty of 1997. Marsh addresses 7 major questions: (1) what is the natural climate variation; (2) what is the greenhouse effect; (3) how much warming is due to the sun; (4) how much is due to carbon dioxide; (5) is warming causally linked to carbon dioxide; (6) how much has atmospheric carbon dioxide changed; and (7) how good are the scientific predictions.

The major tools in predicting climate change are big "tinker toys;" i.e., the super computers that do the extensive calculations for complex mathematical models embodying many factors known to alter weather. A basic caveat with computer modeling is this: **"garbage in, garbage out."** In other words, models are no better than the data they use. In the weather modeling business (and it is a business, wherein market incentives influence outcomes), there are too many unknowns. All such models incorporate "parameters," which are variables for which one must insert numerical values to enable the computer to generate predictions. The modelers tinker with the values of parameters until they get results that match past global climate as observed. So, critics call such tinkered parameters "fudge factors."

Next issue looks at these tinker toys for big girls and boys.

Vol 3, #17 - #21 were misdated 2002

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