

CLIMATE CONFUSION

*How Global Warming Hysteria Leads to
Bad Science, Pandering Politicians, and
Misguided Policies That Hurt the Poor*

BY

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Preface

Manmade global warming is a danger to humanity and the environment, and it must be stopped. This claim represents a leap of faith from what science tells us is theoretically possible, to a belief in worst-case scenarios in which Mother Earth punishes us for our sins against her.

Nowhere is this leap of faith better illustrated than in Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Dramatic video of weather events that occur naturally every day suddenly becomes evidence for global warming. Floods? Global warming. Droughts? Global Warming. Ice calving off of glaciers and falling into the ocean? Global warming. Hurricanes? Global warming. Do you see a pattern here? Global warming.

Not to be outdone, the actor Leonardo DiCaprio then hosted a ninety-minute documentary called *The 11th Hour*, in which nature has more human rights than humans do. I do so admire actors and actresses for their concern over our well-being.

Mr. Gore has admitted that the issue is a spiritual one for him. He is spreading the word, calling on humanity to avert the climatic cataclysm that is just around the corner. He is even training hundreds of disciples to go throughout the world, warning of the coming environmental apocalypse. All we need to do to be saved from the heat of global warming hell is to use more compact fluorescent light bulbs, hybrid cars, and purchase carbon offsets from his company.

Some schools and university professors have even required their students to watch Mr. Gore's movie. Our children are having

nightmares because of what well-intentioned teachers are telling them about climate change. Fear is gradually replacing reason as a motivating force for societal change, and in today's world we know only too well what religious zealotry can do to a society.

These "global warnings" are accompanied by an increasing tone of urgency. Not long ago we were told humanity had fifty years to solve the global warming problem. Then, we heard we have only ten years to change our polluting ways. Now, some are claiming we have only five years left. Soon, we'll be talking about sending a Terminator back through time to fix the problem for us. Maybe the Governor of California can help us with that.

As an atmospheric scientist, I will admit that harmful global warming is indeed a possible outcome of mankind's emissions of greenhouse gases from fossil fuel use. But extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. It is relatively easy to construct a simple computerized climate model that produces catastrophic global warming when its "greenhouse effect" is cranked up a notch with more carbon dioxide. I've even done it in an Excel spreadsheet. But it is much more difficult to get even a state-of-the-art climate model to behave realistically when it is compared to the real climate system.

It would be natural for a climate scientist like me to write a book about the science of global warming alone. But my motivation for writing this book is not only because I think the public is getting a biased message on the science. It's also because the human cost of what we might do as a policy response to global warming will be so high. Climate change is indeed a moral issue, but not the one that Mr. Gore claims it is.

Fortunately, amidst all of the frightful climate change news stories, those who are riding the global warming bandwagon are providing no small amount of entertainment. Movie stars, politicians-turned-movie stars, and famous musicians apparently don't notice the hypocrisy of calling for humanity to use less toilet paper while they fly their private jets from city to city. And what could be more ironic than the early 2007 trek to the North

Pole to raise awareness of global warming that had to be called off because of cold weather?

If you are interested in the global warming debate, but don't want another boring list of dry scientific facts, then you've come to the right place. The only thing that depresses me more than the thought of reading such a book is the thought of having to write one. While this book will indeed help you understand the reasons why global warming is unlikely to be a serious threat, it will also entertain you.

I believe that we need a large measure of humor when facing those who would kill us with their good intentions. I don't know about you, but I need a daily dose of humor just to keep my sanity. As that famous philosopher-turned-comedian-turned-actor Steve Martin used to say, "A day without laughter is like a day without sunshine, and a day without sunshine is like ... night."



*This is Doctor Bagshaw, discoverer of
the infinitely expanding research grant.*

Prologue

MARK TWAIN OBSERVED that "everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it." Well, today's popular view is that we finally are doing something about the weather. We are making it worse.

Because of humanity's emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, many scientists are predicting dramatic weather changes ahead. Depending upon which scientists you believe, the extra carbon dioxide we are putting in the atmosphere could melt the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, flooding coastal locations worldwide. It could shut down the Atlantic Gulf Stream and oceanic thermohaline circulation, triggering the rapid onset of a new Ice Age. Global weather circulation changes could cause more severe floods and droughts, altering or even destroying entire ecosystems.

The fear of global warming has galvanized the environmental movement and has led to billions of dollars in federal expenditures to observe and understand the climate system. It has spun off popular movies and helped to solidify political movements,

such as the Green Party in Germany. Even a former U.S. Vice President, Al Gore, has written books and made a movie addressing the problem. Global warming has given new purpose to the lives of entertainers and movie stars, some of whom have taken a special interest in the issue.

Oh, and we scientists who make our living off it think it's a pretty cool gig, too.

But now, the western world's fear of global warming and its effects has reached the point of being an obsession. The media is more than willing to spread, and even amplify, the fear that humanity is filling up the Earth, pushing it beyond its ability to sustain us. Mother Nature is suffering as a result of our sins, and humans are now being increasingly blamed for every hurricane, tornado, tsunami, earthquake, flood, and drought that occurs.

Art Bell's popular book *The Coming Global Superstorm* and its movie spin-off, *The Day After Tomorrow*, are good examples of the public's fascination with fears of global climate catastrophes. I would say that the coming global superstorm has already arrived—but it is a storm of hype and hysteria.

I believe that the environmental fears that have consumed the western world stem from two central beliefs. The first is that the Earth is fragile and needs to be protected, even to the detriment of humans if necessary. Many people feel like the climate system is being pushed beyond its limits, past some imaginary tipping point from which there will be no return.

The second belief is that the increasing wealth of nations is bad for the environment. Since technology and our desire for more stuff are to blame for environmental problems, we should renounce our modern lifestyle.

I will argue for exactly the opposite viewpoint: that the Earth is pretty resilient; and that only through mankind's ingenuity and freedom to create wealth do we solve, or at least minimize, environmental problems as they arise.

We have had no shortage of pessimistic environmental pre-

dictions over the last forty years. The birth of the modern environmental movement is usually traced to the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. A biologist, Carson was passionate about the dangers of the insecticide DDT, which was in widespread use at the time. One concern was that DDT was causing a thinning of egg shells in some birds; another was that DDT was causing problems throughout the food chain.

While Carson is still admired for paving the way for future generations of environmentalists, governmental policies resulting from her work have caused the deaths of literally millions of people by allowing malaria to thrive in Africa. Instead of greatly reducing the amount of DDT that was so indiscriminately sprayed on crops, governments banned the use of the pesticide altogether. That the most famous policy reaction to environmental concerns has caused so much human suffering should, by itself, make us wary of any sweeping efforts to "protect the environment."

While Carson's research dealt with the dangers of one particular insecticide, it wasn't long before predictions of more widespread doom from other human pressures on the environment began to appear. In Paul Ehrlich's 1968 book, *The Population Bomb*, Ehrlich predicted that worldwide crises in food supply and natural resource availability would occur by 1990. Huge famines and economic system failures were predicted, destabilizing social and political order in the world. The basic premise of the book was that, while available resources were growing linearly with time, the population of the Earth was growing faster, at a geometric rate. Eventually, the population pressure would be too much—"unsustainable" in today's environmentally-friendly lexicon.

The only problem with Ehrlich's premise was that it was not true, and the crises never materialized. This led to the economist Julian Simon winning a famous bet with Ehrlich over whether several natural resources would become less or more available between 1980 and 1990. Simon allowed Ehrlich to choose five metals that Ehrlich thought would go up in price. Ehrlich chose copper,

chrome, nickel, tin, and tungsten. A decrease in resource availability would be measured as an increase in price. Ten years later, in 1990, Dr. Ehrlich was forced to write a check to Dr. Simon, since the cost of all of the metals had decreased over the previous ten years.

While Ehrlich was correct that the amount of raw material in the ground does go down as mankind removes it, Julian Simon noted that mankind always adapts. We become more efficient in our use of those materials, or we find replacement materials. Someday we might even be mining our landfills to recover and recycle discarded materials.

In fact, almost all known reserves of resources have actually grown faster than the population over time. Even the United Nations, which never saw a crisis it wouldn't take money for to fail at solving, has projected that the global population will level off in this century. But this hasn't prevented a variety of experts to continue to claim that humanity's current rate of consumption cannot be sustained.

Not every environmentalist has bought into predictions of global doom, though. In the late 1990s, a professor of statistics and self-proclaimed environmentalist decided to examine many of the environmentalists' claims. Bjorn Lomborg and his statistics students started investigating the data that environmentalists were basing their gloomy predictions of environmental disaster on. He thus embarked on his road to conversion from environmental worry-wart to an optimistic defender of capitalism and the future of both humanity and the Earth.

By almost every measure, Lomborg found that the state of humanity and the Earth has gradually improved, most noticeably in the last hundred years. On average, people are living longer, healthier, better-fed, and more prosperous lives than ever before. Many diseases have been eradicated, and the gradual spread of free markets around the world has led to more efficient and cleaner use of natural resources.

In his book *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, Lomborg makes it

clear that there is still room for improvement in many areas. But the idea that "things are getting worse" is just plain wrong.

Even overpopulation is now much less of a concern than it used to be. As the developing countries of the world become modernized, their birth rates fall. And despite population increases in recent decades, agricultural output has gone up even faster—on less farmland!

Now, global warming is the *cause du jour*. Environmentalists, politicians, clergy, doctors, actors, musicians, and representatives of probably every other profession have all spoken out about the danger that global warming poses to both humanity and the Earth.

That mankind inadvertently influences the weather is true, at least to some extent. It would be surprising indeed if the climate system did not notice that six billion people live on the Earth. *Everything* influences the weather. Why should it be any different for humans? A forest changes the weather from what it would otherwise be if the forest did not exist. The same goes for lakes and oceans, rivers, plains, and mountains. We might have a fond attachment to deserts, but think objectively about what they really are: vast stretches of nearly dead land.

The Romantic notion that nature untouched by man is "pristine" is a philosophic, even religious, point of view. Why do we give nature a pass, but not ourselves? I find such attitudes fundamentally anti-human, and certainly not scientific. As long as we keep being told, explicitly in news stories, or implicitly through movie themes, that we are the enemies of the environment, then we will be too meek to stand up for ourselves and our right to use nature for our own purposes. I believe that the only rights that the natural world has are those conferred upon it by humans.

Once we elevate the concerns of nature above those of people, we abdicate our authority to do the things that are necessary to improve the human condition. Yet you seldom hear this point of view being advanced. It is considered politically incorrect, anthropocentric, arrogant, or even worse—capitalistic.

I am part of the relatively small, infamous minority of climate researchers known as global warming “skeptics.” Despite the oft-repeated claims of our detractors, it is not true that we do not believe in global warming. Al Gore has grown fond of calling us “global warming deniers,” apparently hoping to confuse the public through propaganda, knowing full well that none of us deny that global warming has taken place. What we are skeptical of is the theory that all (or even most) of global warming is caused by mankind, or that we understand the climate system and our future technological state well enough to make predictions of global warming in the next fifty to one hundred years, or that we need to reduce fossil fuel use now.

There are two themes in environmentalist rhetoric that seek to discredit us so-called skeptics on global warming issues. The first is that corporations with lots of wealth buy influence from skeptics, and therefore we can’t be trusted. The second is that skeptics use scientific disinformation in their attempts to undermine the scientific consensus that global warming is real.

On the first point, contrary to what most would expect, the financial incentive for individual scientists to speak out on global warming is on the side of the global warming alarmists. While private industry would seem to have the most money available to “buy” opinions, big corporations tend to shy away from that kind of influence. For instance, in my case I have never been approached by any energy company seeking to pay me for any service. I wrote “skeptical” articles and book chapters, for no pay, for thirteen years before a science and technology website, TechCentralStation.com, offered to pay me to write articles about the latest newsworthy events that involved global warming.

While I have given talks to organizations which are partly funded by “Big Oil,” I have also given similar talks to state environmental organizations. Left-leaning websites like ExxonSecrets.org mention only the former in their attempts to make it look like we global warming optimists are simply shills for big business. This guilt-by-association tactic helps them avoid having to address our arguments based on science.

Corporations recognize the need for government-sponsored research to help answer scientific questions since that research is presumably unbiased. But as we shall see, the governmental funding of researchers is definitely biased toward work that demonstrates that global warming is a threat, since this helps to maintain research programs at NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the EPA, and the Department of Energy.

In contrast, philanthropic foundations with leftist boards of directors routinely give money to alarmist causes. For instance, \$500,000 no-strings-attached grants have been awarded by the MacArthur Foundation to climate researchers who speak out publicly against the global warming threat. James Hansen, the director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies, received a \$250,000 grant from a foundation headed by John Kerry’s wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry. That Hansen publicly endorsed John Kerry for president in 2004 is claimed to be an unrelated coincidence.

There are no such conservatively funded monetary awards that I am aware of. And based upon its historical record, you can bet that a Nobel Prize will never be awarded to the scientist who ever demonstrates that global warming is not the huge threat to mankind that it is advertised to be.

While there are a number of pro-free market organizations that receive funds from big corporations, the dollar amounts pale in comparison to the budgets of environmental organizations. By far the largest supporter of environmental groups and climate researchers is the federal government, with your tax dollars. And the dirty little secret is that many environmental organizations are also funded by Big Oil.

For many years now, well over \$100 million a year has been flowing from the federal government to environmental lobby groups. The federal government routinely funds so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that turn right around and lobby the government to support environmental causes that the NGOs depend upon for their survival. Yes, I know this seemingly incestuous relationship would be inconsistent with the high regard you have for politicians, but trust me, it is true.

The environmental movement is indeed a huge financial machine with all the power and influence that comes with money. What happens to this machine if interest in environmentalism wanes? At least for-profit corporations offer goods and services that people will continue to need. In contrast, without a constant supply of environmental scares, environmental organizations will simply die.

I am *not* claiming that environmental organizations shouldn't be funded. I *am* saying that they should not be throwing stones while operating out of glass buildings.

The second accusation about global warming skeptics is that we sow scientific disinformation to undermine the scientific consensus that "global warming is real." I would call *that* disinformation. Every scientist-skeptic I know believes that global warming is real. Instead, the central questions being debated are: How much of the Earth's current warmth is the result of natural processes versus the activities of mankind? How bad will global warming be in the future? And maybe most importantly, what can and should be done about it?

While science can give us some useful information on the threat of global warming, it has nothing to say about our response to it. Science is values-neutral and policy-neutral. Instead, what should be done about global warming comes from people's belief systems: their opinions of the proper role of government, understanding of economics, and even their religious faith and worldview.

Like previous authors, I could have written a book on the dry, scientific evidence for and against global warming theory, and what scientists currently believe about the threat that global warming poses to mankind. And this book does include explanations of how hurricanes, tornadoes, and less newsworthy weather events relate to global warming. But as scientific understanding changes, such books can quickly become outdated.

While I will refer to a few important works that support my views, I will avoid detailed listings of scientific findings, pro or con. These give the impression that stacks of evidence in the pro-

warming or anti-warming pile determine who wins the scientific debate. And while it is true that more scientific findings are supportive of global warming theory than those that aren't, we will see that this is largely the result of the research funding deck being stacked against us skeptics.

Rather than discussing the latest global warming research and what it means, I will instead address the overriding issues and concepts that will not soon change in the scientific debate. I will describe why I believe that the Earth's climate system is not nearly as fragile as most computerized climate models tell us it is, and what amounts to the climate system's thermostatic control mechanism.

An informed public is vital during this age of political pandering to constituent's views. The mainstream news media not only decides what you should know, but tells you what you should think about it. They uncritically accept every environmental scare. In their imaginary world, environmental regulations have no downside, and we can have all benefits with no risks.

This book is one small effort to help balance those influences in the global warming arena. I am now convinced that currently proposed global warming policies will actually do more harm than good—to both humanity and the environment. I will explain, in simple terms, why so many scientists believe that manmade global warming is a dangerous threat, and why I believe that they are wrong.

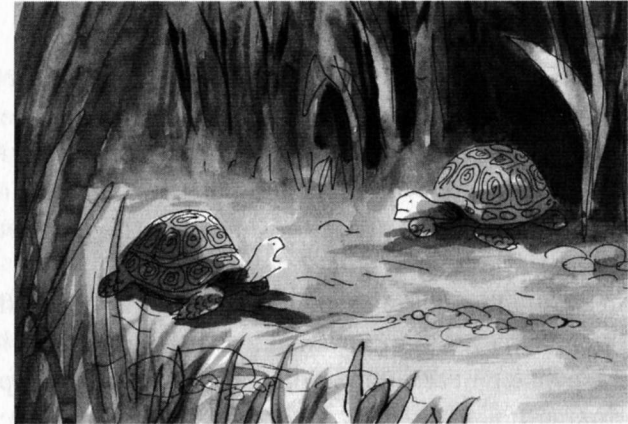
I will explain why the theory of manmade global warming will always remain just a theory, despite increasing numbers of people who are trying very hard to convince you it is fact. The emotional attachment that these people have to catastrophic global warming can be traced to a variety of self-interests—careers, political and social policies, philosophies and religious beliefs—all masquerading as science.

And since policy decisions are usually economic decisions, unless we understand basic economic principles, it is impossible

for us to have any meaningful opinions on what should be done about global warming. Even though environmentalists are insisting that we do something now about global warming, I will demonstrate why the unintended negative consequences of such a view might well do more harm than good. If you read only one chapter in this book, I suggest Chapter 6 (It's Economics, Stupid)—it really is that important.

So, while we are waiting for the predicted meltdown of planet Earth, I would like to guide you through not only the science issues, but also the philosophical, economic, political, and even religious elements that cannot be separated from how we view the global warming problem.

Critics of this book will say that my treatment of global warming is obviously biased. And they are right. I have studied the issues enough to have developed some very strong biases on the subject. But it is not a question of whether bias exists—for we are all biased. It is a question of which bias is the best bias to be biased with.



Run for your life! Run for your life!

The ice age is coming!!

Chapter 1: Global Warming Hysteria

It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents—except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the house-tops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness. Had Jack known that such meteorological chaos, long predicted by climate experts and his favorite movie stars, would have ensued after his purchase of that petrol-guzzling behemoth, he would not so quickly have given in to the siren calls of the TV commercials that had relentlessly nagged him into buying his Hummer—an acquisition that would trouble his heavy heart, a good heart, right up to this very moment.

IN CASE YOU have not noticed, all natural disasters are now caused by global warming. Tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, heat waves, and snowstorms are all being blamed on mankind's use of fossil fuels. The latest flood and drought were both caused by global warming. Al Gore's movie and book *An Inconvenient Truth* make it sound like chunks of glaciers breaking off and falling into the ocean, arctic sea ice melting, and major hurricanes strik-