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Manufacturing a Climate Consensus

The American Geophysical Union is set to launch a media-outreach service ahead of the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Mexico, which begins at the end of this month. The Union said in a press release on Monday that the service aims "to provide accurate scientific information for journalists" on climate change. But can accuracy be possible if the views of notable scientists in the field aren't included?



AGU spokesman Peter Weiss told us on Monday that the Union has asked all its members with Ph.Ds in climate-related fields to answer journalists' questions about global warming, and that hundreds have agreed to volunteer.

But as the email leaks known as "climategate" revealed last year, what constitutes "accurate scientific information" about climate change is anything but settled.

Several established scientists, including Richard Lindzen of MIT, Science and Environmental Policy Project President Fred Singer, and John Christy at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, disagree with the well-publicized hypothesis that man is causing catastrophic warming.

These scientists are all Union members whose fields are explicitly "climate-related." And all three told us they do not recall being approached to participate in the AGU's media initiative. Mr. Weiss stressed to us that "AGU hasn't selectively encouraged anyone to participate nor

discouraged anyone from participating," and that "all members of AGU sections and focus groups relating to climate science were informed of the service by their section and focus group leaders." He added that the Union's service was also publicized in its weekly newsletter.

Lapsed Union-member Willie Soon of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, whose work suggests that solar variability is the greatest factor affecting the climate, says he tried to sign up for the AGU's media service last year when he was still a member, but that the "AGU rejected my participation."

-- Anne Jolis



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