

Alarmism by the Numbers

By Tom Still, note to Benny Peiser

Global warming alarmists who study polar ice behavior delight in using very large numbers to scare the rest of us. In an AP report of a report by a spokesman for the Britain - based Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research says the ice down there is melting "faster than we thought."



Quoting AP:

The melting "also extends all the way down to what is called west Antarctica," said Colin Summerhayes, executive director of the Britain-based Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research.

By the end of the century, the accelerated melting could cause sea levels to climb by 3 feet to 5 feet - levels substantially higher than predicted by a major scientific group just two years ago.

Summerhayes said the biggest of the western glaciers, the Pine Island Glacier, is moving 40 percent faster than it was in the 1970s, discharging water and ice more rapidly into the ocean. The Smith Glacier, also in west Antarctica, is moving 83 percent faster than in 1992.

Together, all the glaciers in west Antarctica are losing a total of around 114 billion tons per year because the melting is much greater than new snowfall, he said. "That's equivalent to the current mass loss from the whole of the Greenland ice sheet," Summerhayes said. Looked at another way, it's more weight than 312,000 Empire State Buildings.

End of quotations.

114,000,000,000 tons of ice/water per year. Run for the hills!!

But wait. By my computation the continent of Antarctica contains - get this—19,000,000,000,000,000 tons of ice. Assuming that 10% of the ice is West Antarctica Ice Sheet, it would take 167,000 years to melt all that ice at the alarming rate of 114 Bn tons per year.

The area of the oceans is 3,475,000,000,000,000 sq feet. By my calculation, if the WAIS is 10% of all the ice, then it would take 96 years to raise sea levels 12 inches at the alarming rate of 114,000,000,000 tons of melt per year (3,600,000,000,000 cuft).

Mr. Summerhayes says this rapid melt rate may have been going on since 1970 or 1993. But meanwhile a recent study by Woppelmann et al., cited at <http://www.co2science.org/> indicates that sea level rise has been very constant since 1893.

"... since mean sea-level rose at a constant rate over the entire 114 years [up to and including 2007], it seems highly unlikely that the historical increase in the atmosphere's CO₂ content—which accelerated dramatically over this time interval—could have been the ultimate cause of the steady mean sea-level rise." The rapid rate of melt since possibly 1970 (or 1993) apparently has been having no added effect on the rate of sea level rise.

So, from now on I will be very careful not to be frightened, at face value by reports of massive ice loss from Antarctica and Greenland. There really is a lot of ice at these two places.