

An alarmist modeler's history of climate change

Climate changes and their causes through the ages, as explained by Gore and modelers

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Behind the persistent global warming scare is the hypothesis and assertion that increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are causing Earth to warm dangerously. The thesis is espoused most prominently by Al Gore, James Hansen, modelers and other alarmists. It is the fundamental assumption behind the computer models that consistently conjure up headline-grabbing climate change disaster scenarios.

A basic principle of geology and other sciences is that the same natural processes we observe today – erosion, plant growth, species evolution and so on – occurred in a similar manner throughout Earth's history. Therefore, if carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are causing global warming today, they must have done so in the past, and certainly in the recent historic past.

The challenge, then, is to discover the sources of that CO₂ climate villain throughout history. This brief summary of key events is intended to aid in that quest, and explain how the Gore-Hansen thesis worked through the ages.

Sea levels have risen 400 feet since the last Ice Age ended, melting mile-thick Pleistocene glaciers, drowning land bridges and creating new coral reefs. The current interglacial period was initiated by rising levels of mammoth flatulence and emissions from cave man fires, the only sources of substantial greenhouse gases (GHG) 11,000 years ago.

In northern Africa, green river valleys were once home to contented hippopotami and happy human villagers. Then, 4,000 years ago, the region metamorphosed into the Sahara Desert, as Egyptian slaves cooked over open fires and breathed heavily, while building pyramids for pharaohs.

Earth warmed further during the Roman and Medieval Warm Periods, as fires from constant warfare and sacked cities dramatically increased GHG. The burning of English and Irish villages by Viking raiders raised global temperatures even further, enabling Eric the Red to colonize Greenland. As the Vikings swapped raiding for farming, however, atmospheric CO₂ levels declined, and the Little Ice Age set in.

For centuries, peaceable Anasazi Indians built cliff dwellings and farmed the land in Arizona and New Mexico. But then other tribes began setting forest fires to create farmland, and lightning started prairie fires. GHG levels rose, causing a prolonged drought that finally made life unbearable for the Anasazi, who abandoned their magnificent stone villages on the Colorado Plateau.

In more recent times, American families tamed and farmed the Great Plains. But then the automobile, airplane and World War I drove CO₂ and GHG to previously unheard of levels. The resultant Dust Bowl devastated the region, forcing millions to leave their homesteads.

Fortunately, World War II intervened, and even higher concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, dust, and particulates from burning oil and cities ended the warming and droughts, and ushered in a new era of global cooling. It was marked by snows and freezing cold at Stalingrad and the Battle of the Bulge, and later by the “new Little Ice Age” scare headlined by *Newsweek* in 1975.

CO₂ levels continued to “soar” – all the way from 250 ppm at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution to an unheard of 380 ppm today (from 0.0250% of Earth's atmosphere to 0.0380% ... equivalent to 38 cents out of \$1000. “Frightening” global cooling gave way to a new bout with “runaway” global warming. But then planetary temperatures mysteriously stabilized around 1998 and then began to decline slightly. The world entered the age of “climate change,” or more accurately “manmade catastrophic climate change,” in which every temperature and weather anomaly is blamed on emissions from human use of hydrocarbons.

This brief recounting of human history is admittedly incomplete, and fails to address historical events in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, historians can certainly fill in those gaps.

Alternatively, scientists, journalists, academics, modelers and politicians could begin to examine the climate change issue from a more scientific, less ideological perspective. They could worry less about perpetuating or expanding the one-track \$89-billion (1989-2009) gravy train of federal government grants for breathless studies of how “manmade climate change” causes terrifying increases in everything from house cats, hurricanes and prostitution to malaria, rainfall, droughts and suicides. (An online search under “everything is caused by global warming,” will locate a complete list.)

Gore, Hansen, Stephen Schneider, and Senators Boxer and Kerry could actually engage in a real debates about catastrophic global warming/climate change science and economics.

They might be surprised to learn that “climate change” has actually brought benefits to mankind and planet Earth, including a greening of the Sahara Desert over the last twenty years, due to increased rainfall and CO2 levels. Even trees and animals are coming back (four millennia after Egyptian slaves turned a once-verdant region into Earth’s largest desert).

They might be stunned to find that ice core and other data demonstrate that temperatures warmed first during past climate changes, and then atmospheric CO2 levels increased, as warming ocean waters released some of the carbon dioxide that they sequestered during colder periods.

They might be amazed to discover that our ancestors, who were even more dependent on agriculture than we are – and even less technologically advanced – somehow managed to cope with climate change. They adapted! As James Burke, Brian Fagan and other historians have noted, they responded to the Little Ice Age by modifying their houses, heating systems, clothing and farming practices. (Optimists might suppose that our far more advanced technologies will make us even better able to adapt to whatever climate changes nature, or man, might visit upon us in the future.)

Alarmists might be shocked to think the causes of past climate changes were the same natural forces and influences that drive changes in Earth’s complex, chaotic, unpredictable weather and climate today: continental movements and volcanoes, and periodic shifts in water vapor and cloud cover, evaporation and precipitation, ocean currents and jet streams, planetary alignments and the shape of the Earth’s orbit, the tilt and wobble of Earth’s axis, solar energy output, and cosmic rays hitting the planet.

Meanwhile, hard-pressed consumers and taxpayers might finally realize that the fear-mongering over global warming has little to do with scientific “evidence” to back up the speculation, assumptions and assertions that mankind faces a climate cataclysm. (Models are not evidence.) It has everything to do with money, prestige, careers, power and control over energy use and economic opportunity – and an abiding distaste for hydrocarbons, personal freedom, modern living standards, and real environmental justice.

But don’t hold your breath for a debate. Climate alarmists are scared to death to debate. They prefer to dismiss and intimidate climate realists, assert “consensus,” and assiduously ignore both Earth’s history of natural climate change and the 31,000 “Oregon Petition” natural scientists who vigorously contest their claims of manmade Climate Armageddon.

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