

Google goes off the climate change deep end

Chairman Eric Schmidt should heed his own advice – and base energy policies on facts

Paul Driessen and Chris Skates

In a [recent interview](#) with National Public Radio host Diane Rehm, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt said his company “has a very strong view that we should make decisions in politics based on facts. And the facts of climate change are not in question anymore. Everyone understands climate change is occurring, and the people who oppose it are really hurting our children and our grandchildren and making the world a much worse place. We should not be aligned with such people. They’re just literally lying.”

While he didn’t vilify us by name, Mr. Schmidt was certainly targeting us, the climate scientists who collect and summarize thousands of articles for the [NIPCC’s *Climate Change Reconsidered*](#) reports, the hundreds who participate in Heartland Institute [climate conferences](#), and the 31,487 US scientists who have signed the [Oregon Petition](#), attesting that there is no convincing scientific evidence that humans are causing catastrophic warming or climate disruption.

All of us are firm skeptics of claims that humans are causing catastrophic global warming and climate change. We are not climate change “deniers.” We know Earth’s climate and weather are constantly in flux, undergoing recurrent fluctuations that range from flood and drought cycles to periods of low or intense hurricane and tornado activity, to the Medieval Warm Period (950-1250 AD) and Little Ice Age (1350-1850) – and even to Pleistocene glaciers that repeatedly buried continents under a mile of ice.

What we deny is the notion that humans can prevent these fluctuations, by ending fossil fuel use and emissions of plant-fertilizing carbon dioxide, which plays only an insignificant role in climate change.

The real deniers are people who think our climate was and should remain static and unchanging, such as 1900-1970, supposedly – during which time Earth actually warmed and then cooled, endured the Dust Bowl, and experienced periods of devastating hurricanes and tornadoes.

The real deniers refuse to recognize that *natural* forces dictate weather and climate events. They deny that computer model predictions are completely at odds with real world events, that there has been no warming since 1995, and that several recent winters have been among the coldest in centuries in the United Kingdom and continental Europe, despite steadily rising CO2 levels. They refuse to acknowledge that, as of December 25, it’s been *3,347 days* since a Category 3-5 hurricane hit the US mainland; this is by far the longest such stretch since record-keeping began in 1900, if not since the American Civil War.

Worst of all, they deny that their “solutions” hurt our children and grandchildren, by driving up energy prices, threatening electricity reliability, thwarting job creation, and limiting economic growth in poor nations to what can be sustained via expensive wind, solar, biofuel and geothermal energy. Google’s corporate motto is “Don’t be evil.” From our perspective, perpetuating poverty, misery, disease and premature death in poor African and Asian countries – in the name or preventing climate change – is evil.

It is truly disturbing that Mr. Schmidt could make a statement so thoroughly flawed in its basic premise. He runs a multi-billion dollar company that uses vast quantities of electricity to disseminate information throughout the world. Perhaps he should speak out on issues he actually understands. Perhaps he would be willing to debate us or Roy Spencer, David Legates, Pat Michaels and other climate experts.

Setting aside the irrational loyalty of alarmists like Schmidt to a failed “dangerous manmade climate change” hypothesis, equally disturbing is the money wasted because of it. Consider an article written for the Institute of Electric and Electronic Engineers’ summit website by Google engineers Ross Koningstein and David Fork, who worked on Google’s “RE<C” renewable energy initiative.

Beginning in 2007, they say, “Google committed significant resources to tackle the world’s climate and energy problems. A few of these efforts proved very successful: Google deployed some of the most energy efficient data centers in the world, purchased large amounts of renewable energy, and offset what remained of its carbon footprint.”

It's wonderful that Google improved the energy efficiency of its power-hungry data centers. But the project spent countless dollars and man hours. To what other actual benefits? To address precisely *what* climate and energy problems? And how exactly did Google offset its carbon footprint? By buying "carbon credits" from outfits like the [New Forests Company](#), which drove impoverished Ugandan villagers out of their homes, set fire to their houses and burned a young boy to death?

What if, as skeptics like us posit and actual evidence reflects, man-made climate change is not in fact occurring? That would mean there is no threat to humans or our planet, and lowering Google's CO2 footprint would bring no benefits. In fact, it would keep poor nations poverty stricken and deprived of modern technologies – and thus unable to adapt to climate change. Imagine what Google could have accomplished if its resources had been channeled to solving *actual* problems with *actual* solutions!

In 2011, the company decided its RE<C project would not meet its goals. Google shut it down. In their article, Koningstein and Fork admit that the real result of all of their costly research was to reach the following conclusion: "*green energy is simply not economically, viable and resources that we as a society waste in trying to make it so would be better used to improve the efficiencies in established energy technologies like coal.*"

Skeptics like us reached that conclusion long ago. It is the primary reason for our impassioned pleas that that the United States and other developed nations *stop* making energy policy decisions based on the flawed climate change hypothesis. However, the article's most breathtaking statement was this:

"Climate scientists have definitively shown that the buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere poses a looming danger.... A 2008 paper by James Hansen, former director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies... showed the true gravity of the situation. In it, Hansen set out to determine what level of atmospheric CO₂ society should aim for 'if humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted.' His climate models showed that exceeding 350 parts per million CO₂ in the atmosphere would likely have catastrophic effects. We've already blown past that limit. Right now, environmental monitoring shows concentrations around 400 ppm...."

We would never presume to question the sincerity, intellect, dedication or talent of these two authors. However, this statement presents a stunning failure in applying Aristotelian logic. Even a quick reading would make the following logical conclusions instantly obvious:

1. Hansen theorized that 350 ppm of atmospheric CO₂ would have catastrophic results.
2. CO₂ did indeed reach this level, and then exceeded it by a significant amount.
3. There were **no** consequences, much less catastrophic results, as our earlier points make clear.
4. Therefore, real-world evidence clearly demonstrates that Hansen's hypothesis is wrong.

This kind of reasoning (the scientific method) has served progress and civilization well since the Seventeenth Century. But the Google team has failed to apply it; instead it repeats the "slash fossil fuel use or Earth and humanity are doomed" tautology, without regard for logic or facts – while questioning [CAGW skeptics](#) intelligence, character and ethics. Such an approach would be disastrous in business.

We enthusiastically support Eric Schmidt's admonition that our nation base its policy decisions on facts, even when those facts do not support an apocalyptic environmental worldview. We also support President Obama's advice that people should not "engage in self-censorship," because of bullying or "because they don't want to offend the sensibilities of someone whose sensibilities probably need to be offended."

In fact, we will keep speaking out, regardless of what Messrs. Schmidt, Hansen and Obama might say.

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