

At Last – A Credible Consensus on ‘Climate Change’!

*by Hon Barry Brill,
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Scientists have endlessly pointed out to the media that, while politics may often advance on *consensus*, science advances only on *evidence*.

For their part, the corporate media have proved impervious to the available evidence that determines all the numerous real issues that arise in the study of human-caused global warming (aka climate change). Instead, they have repeatedly told us that an “overwhelming consensus” or “97%” of scientists hold the belief that climate change is being driven by human activities.

Fortunately, that distorted view has recently been thoroughly and comprehensively discredited by the many studies listed in [“97 articles refuting the 97 consensus”](#) as well as [“The Myth of the Climate Change Consensus”](#) and [“Fraud Bias and Public Relations”](#). In the aftermath of this barrage, no journalist can now resort to the 97% canard without flashing “advocacy” as visibly as a neon sign.

However, a recently published consensus between three of the world’s leading academic physicists is decidedly worthy of note. It is a concise [“Climate Science Overview”](#) (Happer, Koonin, Lindzen) which condenses our existing state of knowledge into four key statements.

This new evidence-based consensus was filed as part of an amicus curiae brief in a San Francisco Federal Court, in response to a request by the Judge for a ‘climate change tutorial’ – in a proceeding by two cities against a group of oil companies.

The factual positions taken by the parties in the case tightly constricted the range of relevant argument. Oil and gas producers are huge beneficiaries of climate policies directed against coal – their only real competitor – and most are therefore enthusiastic supporters of the UN’s IPCC. So the only disputed science had to arise from varying interpretations of the extensive evidence described in the IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report (5AR) along with new evidence that has arisen since the 2012 shut-off date of the 5AR.

In light of this constraint, the “3 professors” confine themselves to analysing and interpreting the evidence set out in the 5AR – updated by the Climate Science Special Report ([CSSR](#)) issued by the US Government in November 2017. So none of the evidence for the four key statements is disputed or controversial – it all comes from the IPCC ‘overwhelming consensus’.

Here are the four statements:

- 1. The climate is always changing; changes like those of the past half-century are common in the geologic record, driven by powerful natural phenomena;**
- 2. Human influences on the climate are a small (1%) perturbation to natural energy flows;**
- 3. It is not possible to tell how much of the modest recent warming can be ascribed to human influences;**
- 4. There have been no detrimental changes observed in the most salient climate variables and today's projections of future changes are highly uncertain.**

The effect of these four statements is profound. They clearly mean that, as global warming is unlikely to be anthropogenic, policies to “mitigate” warming by reducing emissions cannot be justified. Also there is no [evidence](#) of any material detriment, let alone “danger”, and it is just not possible (in the present state of knowledge) to reliably forecast future changes in climate.

I do not mean to suggest that climate bureaucrats should seek more productive employment merely on the basis of the consensus reached by these three distinguished scientists. Arguments from authority are as anti-science as arguments from consensus. But I do most earnestly suggest that it is the duty of all such bureaucrats – and all other academic scientists – to pay careful heed to the uncontroversial evidence and the logic of this concise paper.

As befits judicial proceedings, each of the four conclusions is fully supported by compelling [evidence](#), drawn from the thousands of pages of the two source documents – but concisely and readably summarised.

The 3 professors say in their covering letter to the Court:

“As independent senior scientists and educators long involved in climate matters, we are well-positioned to offer a clear and informed perspective on what is known, and unknown, about the earth’s changing climate. During our individual careers, we have provided scientific advice on diverse complex decisions, always striving to be dispassionate and “call it like we see it”. That ethos not only best informs decisions, which must consider the science in the context of many other factors but also preserves the integrity of science, preventing its degradation by bias or agenda.”

Authors

The very eminence of these three leading scientists assures the reader that their time will be well spent in absorbing and digesting the “*Overview*” case that is set out in these eight short pages. The brief contains lengthy biographies showing degrees secured, awards won, chairs held, etc, but I offer a much briefer introduction below:

William Happer is a Professor of Physics Emeritus at Princeton University. Dr. Happer served President GHW Bush’s administration as the director of energy research in the Department of Energy. He is also the president of the CO2 Coalition.

Steven Koonin is a Professor at New York University and former provost of the California Institute of Technology. He served as Under Secretary for Science at the Department of Energy in President Obama’s administration, overseeing science, energy, and security activities. Dr Koonin chaired the committee appointed by the American Physical Society to review its formal statement on climate science.

Richard Lindzen is a Professor of Atmospheric Science Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was formerly Director of the Centre for Earth and Planetary Physics at Harvard University. He was a lead author of the IPCC’s Third Assessment Report (2001).

Each of the professors has published over 200 peer-reviewed papers and all three have been elected to the prestigious National Academy of Sciences.

Each of them have been trusted to provide objective scientific advice to the US government. Professors Happer and Koonin have both served as [Chairmen](#) of JASON, an independent group of elite scientists which advises the US Government on matters of science and technology, mostly of a sensitive nature.

Their “*Climate Science Overview*” is limited to those key IPCC issues on which the three physicians have a unanimous view. But it is quite comprehensive enough to tell any non-specialist scientist everything they really needs to know about climate science.