

Republican Perspective

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PARIS ADIEU

“The Paris Agreement is a fraud really, fake. It’s just BS for them to say: ‘We’ll have a 2C warming target and then try to do a little better every five years.’ It’s just worthless words. There is no action, just promises.” Dr. James Hansen, Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions Program, Earth Institute - Columbia University

One could hear the outrage howls from the environmental Left even before President Trump left the White House Rose Garden. His withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord, was met with various cataclysmic scenarios.

I’m sure you have heard about the 97% consensus from scientists that the earth is warming due to manmade activity. If you dare question this consensus, you immediately earn the label of “climate denier” and prohibited to intelligently discuss the matter. But did you know how the 97% came about?

One source was a survey sent to 10,256 scientists, of whom 3,146 responded. But their number was arbitrarily reduced to 77 “expert” or “active” climate researchers, of which 75 agreed with two simplistic questions that many would support. (1. Has Earth warmed since 1800? 2. Did humans play a significant role?) Voila! 97% consensus. But what about the other 3,069 respondents? 75 out of 3,146 is barely 0.02%.

Back in the day, in 1633, astronomer Galileo was convicted by the Catholic Church for refusing to accept its doctrine that the Sun revolved around the Earth. In a like manner, scientists that challenge the 97% consensus find themselves subjected to Congressional investigation. It’s unfortunate that serious science on climate has become so politicized.

Dr. Roger Pielke, Jr., Professor, Environmental Studies Program, University of Colorado experienced firsthand the wrath of challenging the “consensus.” He was quoted in the Los Angeles Times, by Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Paige St. John. Dr. Pielke made the point that politicians use the weather-of-the-moment to make the case for action on climate change, even if the scientific basis is thin or contested. Ms. St. John was pilloried by her peers in the media. She later emailed Dr. Pielke, “You should come with a warning label: Quoting Roger Pielke will bring a hailstorm down on your work from the London Guardian, Mother Jones, and Media Matters.”

Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) later opened a formal investigation of Dr. Pielke and six other university science professors who expressed a different view than the “consensus.” The communications director for the House Natural Resources Committee explained how the seven academics were chosen to be investigated by Mr.

Grijalva: “The way we chose the list of recipients [of Mr. Grijalva’s letter] is who has published widely, who has testified in Congress before, who seems to have the most impact on policy in the scientific community.”

Dr. Pielke was ultimately vindicated for the integrity of his climate research. After a rebuke from the the American Meteorological Society and the American Geophysical Union, Rep. Grijalva deleted from his website his letter to the President of the University of Colorado suggesting that Dr. Pielke had received funding for his research from Exxon and the Koch brothers. The allegation was false and without merit.

Recently, a former member of the Obama’s administration’s Energy Department, told the Wall St. Journal that the administration often used “misleading” news releases about climate data to influence public opinion. Undersecretary Steve Koonin said: “What you saw coming out of the press releases about climate data, climate analysis, was, I’d say, misleading, sometimes just wrong.”

Mr. Koonin cited a 2014 National Climate Assessment showing that hurricane activity increased since 1980. Mr. Koonin said the assessment was technically incorrect. “What they forgot to tell you, and you don’t know until you read all the way into the fine print, is that it actually decreased in the decades before that,” he said.

Under the Paris Accord, major developing countries (China and India) offered “commitments” for emissions reduction that only mirrored their existing reduction direction. All countries were allowed to set their own baselines or choose to provide none at all. How are nations to hold one another accountable unless there was an agreed upon baseline? President Obama, however, firmly committed the U.S, without Senate approval, to an aggressive, costly climate agenda.

One refreshing outcome of President Trump’s decision is the embracement of federalism. Several states and cities have decided to continue to follow the Paris Accord’s goals. Maybe the withdrawal will lead to a return to the principles of the Constitution.