

Climate Alarmism Is Now Wrong

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19 October 2009, revised 2 December 2009

Web address: sciencespeak.com/AlarmismIsWrong.pdf

The theory that we caused the global warming with our emissions of carbon dioxide is based on two assumptions (guesses), made in the early 1980s when there was insufficient data. One assumption has since been disproved, and the second is looking dubious.

Otherwise alarmist and skeptic scientists are in broad agreement over how much global warming is caused by carbon dioxide.

Assumption 1

The first assumption is that water feedbacks strongly amplify the warming due to the extra carbon dioxide. We can calculate how much the global temperature will rise if carbon dioxide levels rise by a certain amount, *if the earth does not respond in any way to being warmer* — that is, in the absence of “feedbacks”. All the factors in this calculation are based on well understood physics and observed data, and climate alarmists and skeptics are in broad agreement.

But of course the earth does respond to being warmer, by increasing rainfall and evaporation and so on, and this response in turn alters the temperature further. The effect of changing the temperature is to “feed back” into more temperature change! Particularly important are the feedbacks due to water in the atmosphere in all its forms—clouds, rain, water vapor, humidity, snow, ice, and so on. (“Water feedbacks” here includes closely related feedbacks sometimes treated separately elsewhere, such as cloud and lapse rate feedbacks.)

There was no data on water feedbacks in the early 1980s, so the alarmists *assumed* that nearly all the warming since 1750, the beginning of the industrial revolution, was due to rising carbon dioxide levels. Under that assumption, the feedbacks would have to amplify the warming due to carbon dioxide by a factor of 3, to correctly calculate the observed temperature rise since 1750.

This amplifying warming would be nearly all due to extra water vapor in the atmosphere, due to extra evaporation. That extra water vapor would expand the warm, lower troposphere into some volume previously occupied by the cooler upper troposphere, which contains little water vapor. This would create a “hotspot” in the atmospheric warming pattern, at the top of the lower troposphere, particularly over the tropics.

But radiosonde observations of the atmospheric warming pattern from 1979 to 1999, the last period of global warming, show beyond reasonable doubt that there is [no hotspot](#). None at all. So there is in fact no extra water vapor, and water feedbacks do not amplify the warming

due to extra carbon dioxide. The assumption is wrong, and so are the alarmist calculations and the climate models because they are based on it.

Alarmist scientists responded by disputing the radiosonde data, effectively saying it is too poor to show *any* warming pattern. But radiosondes can reliably detect temperature differences of 0.1°C, and the hotspot would be at least 0.6°C warmer. And there were hundreds of radiosondes (weather balloons), and they cannot all have missed it. The alarmists objections are plainly weak, and ever since the observed data came they have done their utmost to distract people from the problem, and to give the impression that they have found the hotspot without actually saying they have. Shameful.

While there is plenty of evidence that global warming has been occurring, and ample evidence that carbon dioxide causes warming and that the level of atmospheric carbon dioxide is increasing, there is [no evidence](#) that carbon dioxide emissions are the main cause of the recent global warming. All predictions of the *amount* of warming caused by rising carbon dioxide are only theoretical, calculated as described above. Those calculations are wrong, so it is not surprising that we have been unable to find any evidence to support them—despite the US Government spending \$32 billion on climate research since 1990.

Since 2005, observations of clouds and observations of outgoing radiation by satellites have both independently shown that water feedbacks in fact **dampen** the warming due to increased carbon dioxide, cutting its warming effect in half.

So the effect of adding carbon dioxide is smaller than the alarmists want you to believe, by a factor of about 6. By 2100 we might see temperatures rise by 0.5°C, not the 3.3°C predicted by the alarmists and their models.

The carbon dioxide theory of global warming is now bogus, but the public and government scientists are kept in place by a wall of money and government propaganda. Outside a few scientists, hardly anyone even knows that the real nature of the climate debate is over the water feedbacks assumption.

Chronology is important. Unfortunately the missing hotspot evidence only came to light in 1999, *after* the IPCC had been set up, Kyoto was signed, a huge bureaucracy was in place to deal with carbon emissions, and the western climate research establishment was lavishly spending billions looking to blame carbon dioxide for global warming. Too many jobs and careers were at stake for the bureaucracy and scientists to turn back. Scientists working in climate change who disagree tend to either keep quiet and take the money, or leave and speak out (if they can cope with the vilification from the alarmist propagandists).

What seemed like a plausible assumption in 1984 has spawned a climate alarmism movement that, 30 years later, will slow or prevent much of the third world from industrializing and will make plane travel and big cars unaffordable for the lower bulk of the developed world—even though the assumption was shown to be false just 15 years later. Even now, 10 years after the hotspot was found to be missing, scarcely anyone knows that climate alarmism is based on a false assumption.

Assumption 2

The second assumption is that the increased carbon dioxide levels we observe are entirely or even mainly due to human emissions. As of 2009 this assumption is neither proven nor disproven, but it is looking dubious.

The oceans hold about 50 times as much carbon dioxide as the atmosphere, and the ratio of dissolved carbon dioxide in the ocean to atmospheric carbon dioxide depends mainly on the temperature of the ocean. Adding more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere from some external source (such as car exhausts) will, *in the long term*, just raise the amount of carbon dioxide in the ocean, and leave the atmospheric level of carbon dioxide virtually unchanged. This is just high school chemistry and is well known and undisputed.

The question is, what constitutes “long term”? The IPCC claims our emitted carbon dioxide effectively stays in the atmosphere for two hundred years, but no one else can understand what they are on about. The atmospheric bomb tests put lots of the carbon isotope C14 into the atmosphere, and from observing the fall in C14 levels after the atmospheric tests were ended in 1963 we know that the half life of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is about four to five years. This also fits with the turnover of carbon dioxide: about a quarter of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is exchanged each year with the oceans or plants. Finally, umpteen studies of the residence time of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere have concluded it is less than twenty years.

According to the alarmists, carbon dioxide levels started to rise in 1750 at the beginning of the industrial revolution, and nearly all the global warming since then is due to that carbon dioxide. However, figures for human consumption of hydrocarbons, mainly coal, wood, and oil, are fairly reliable and tell a different story: human hydrocarbon use before 1850 was negligible, and it wasn't until 1950 that hydrocarbon consumption was significant by today's standards. Yet the bulk of the global warming since 1750 took place before 1900. The carbon emission theory just doesn't make sense.

What Is Going On

Something cooled the earth from the medieval warm period, when it was warmer than today, and caused the little ice age, whose coldest periods occurred around 1700 or 1750. As it happens, 1750 is also when the industrial revolution started. Could it be that this natural cooling force passed away or eased up starting in 1750, and the earth is simply warming naturally back to the temperature of the medieval warm period (which is the same as the temperature during the Roman optimum, and in the Holocene optimum before that)? On current knowledge, it would seem likely.

Excerpted from [this essay](#), which discusses the connections between banking and global warming. Banks want carbon trading. Banks do not make a profit from a carbon tax, which would be fairer and simpler, but governments are not offering a carbon tax, only cap and trade. Curious?