

Flawed climate models lead to costly public policy

Governments advised to wait 2 to 4 years before deciding on new climate policy

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CALGARY, AB/June 12, 2014/ Troy Media/ - During a presentation in Calgary recently, economist Ross McKittrick told his audience that we should be more concerned about the flaws inherent in climate models than the current 16-plus year pause in global warming.

McKittrick pointed out that historically computer models had had some parity with recorded temperatures, but that changed when the models began to dramatically depart from observed temperatures after 1998. Prior to that, the longest previous span of separation was nine years. The present disparity is now into its 16th year.

Climate models are based on perhaps the most complex mathematical models ever designed, but they are still just a crude approximation of the intricacies of natural forces, such as that of the ocean-atmospheric systems.

While the models have been consistently predicting significantly rising temperatures, actual temperatures are flat. From 1998 to 2014 carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels rose 9 per cent with no rise in temperatures, contradicting the fundamental premise of Anthropogenic Global Warming. That must mean there is a basic flaw in the climate model. Climate model error growth is cumulative and compounding.

McKittrick told his audience that warming trends have in fact fallen off since 2000, which indicates that global temperatures are actually cooling.

Using another forecasting tool called the Integrated Assessment Models, economists try to assess the 'social costs of carbon' to set policy on carbon taxes. Unfortunately, as these are calibrated to the faulty climate models, errors are amplified.

The margins of error in the climate model, McKittrick said, are by no means small. The climate models' predicted a global surface temperature rise from 1998 to 2013 that is five times the actual temperature rise as determined by the Hadley Center in the UK. In fact, he said the divergence between observed temperatures and climate model predictions is now so great it is unlikely they will converge again.

Basing public policy on these exaggerated and flawed models should concern us all, McKittrick added, because governments use them to set greenhouse gas reduction targets and climate policies. Those policies affect the cost of everything, from our

insurance rates to our vehicle prices to our home energy bill, to the sustainability of our investments and pension funds.

The likely error in the models, McKitrick said, stems from the fact that the effect of CO₂ on warming, or the climate sensitivity of CO₂, has been exaggerated.

Further, as Israeli astrophysicist Nir Shaviv says, the models exclude the quantifiable effect of the sun: “. . . the IPCC is still doing its best to avoid the evidence that the sun has a large effect on climate. They of course will never admit this quantifiable effect because it would completely tear down the line of argumentation for a mostly man-made global warming of a very sensitive climate.”

And while governments are using flawed calculations to set emissions taxes and targets, ironically these calculations generally omit the benefits of our modern, carbon-based society – such as medical, educational, work and recreational opportunities, not to mention the benefits of higher crop production which results from CO₂ fertilization.

McKitrick also warned his audience not to be fooled by the apparent precision of the social cost of carbon damages, calculated to seven digits, citing economist Robert S. Pindyck who wrote in the *Journal of Economic Literature* that: “[The] models are so deeply flawed as to be close to useless as tools for policy analysis. Worse yet, their use suggests a level of knowledge and precision that is simply illusory, and can be highly misleading.”

McKitrick advises policy makers to wait two to four years before deciding if any drastic new climate policy measures are necessary.

In the meantime, public and policy makers should also be wary of claims of the alleged social costs of carbon that fail to account for the benefits.

Michelle Stirling-Anosh is the Communications Manager of Friends of Science. Ross McKitrick's presentation "The Pause in Global Warming: Climate Policy Implications" can be viewed online <http://www.friendsofscience.org/index.php?id=750>

References

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