

CO2-Taxes in Switzerland

Can we really control the climate?

Open Letter to:

OcCC¹ - Advisory Body on Climate Change Research and Policy

ProClim² - Forum for Climate and Global Change

SCNAT – Swiss Academy of Science

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kyoto Protocol was ratified 16-2-2005. It aims at preventing changes to the composition of the atmosphere and potential adverse climate changes caused by anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. In this context and in an effort to curb CO₂ emissions, the Swiss Government implemented 1-1-2008 on the advice of OcCC and ProClim a CO₂-tax on fossil fuels. In March 2011 the Swiss Council of States and the National Council decided to increase the CO₂-tax threefold to meet the hitherto not yet reached CO₂ emission targets set by the Kyoto Protocol. So far there is, however, no scientific proof that the atmospheric CO₂ concentration has a major effect on climate, as postulated by UN-IPCC³. So, why this firm believes in the IPCC and Al Gore advocated concepts on climate change and climate control?

The web sites and publications of OcCC and ProClim (e.g. “Recommendations to the Swiss Climate Policy Post 2012, 2007” (OcCC-Empfehlungen zur Schweizerischen Klimapolitik Post 2012); “Arguments of the Climate Skeptics” (Die Argumente der Klimaskeptiker) Hintergründe der Klima- und Global Change-Forschung Nr. 29 / November 2010) clearly show that these organizations, which are closely associated with the SCNAT, fully and unquestioningly support the IPCC concept and consensus on anthropogenic CO₂ emissions causing dangerous Global Warming. According to IPCC models, this warming could reach by 2100 in response to a doubling of the atmospheric CO₂ content as much as 2.0 – 4.5 °C. This concept remains, however, a hypothesis, as IPCC has not yet been able to provide scientific proof for it.

By mail of 18-11-2010 I alerted OcCC to the fact that there is a large number of highly qualified scientists which are independent from IPCC that seriously question the validity of the basic assumption underlying this IPCC postulate. Their arguments for the prevalence of natural climate changes are generally well founded and cannot be turned down out-of-hand as the views of cranks, deniers or skeptics sponsored by the Petroleum Industry. So far, IPCC and its supporters have turned a blind eye to the arguments advanced by these critics or have tried to denigrate them. I attached to my mail of 18-11-2010 a PDF-presentation entitled

1 OcCC was installed 1997 by the Swiss Department of the Interior (EDI) and the Department for Environment, Traffic, Energy and Communications (UVEK). The members of OcCC are designated by the SCNAT. OcCC stands under the umbrella of the Federal Office of the Environment (BAFU).

2 ProClim was founded 1988 as the Climate Program of Switzerland and later was renamed to Forum for Climate and Global Changes. It forms an integral part of the SCNAT.

3 UN-IPCC: United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

“Global Warming and Phanerozoic Climate Changes” that elucidates the concerns about the postulated Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) concept (><http://www.nipcc.ch/datei/1290446298.PDF><).

In response to my message, Dr. Christoph Ritz of ProClim contacted me 29-11-2010 and suggested that I discuss my reservations about the anthropogenic cause of climate change at a peer level with Prof. Gerald Haug (ETH-Zürich, Climate Geology). After some further communications Prof. Gerald Haug and Prof. Jörg Beer (EAWAG & ETH-Zürich, cosmogenic nuclides) visited me 7-2-2011 at my home for extensive and very constructive discussions. During of these it transpired that amongst others IPCC underestimates the scope of solar variability, that the cloud feedback to warming is not positive as assumed in IPCC climate models but is negative, that the radiative effect of increasing CO₂ concentration is the atmosphere increases asymptotically and not linearly as assumed by IPCC, and that the residence time of CO₂ in the atmosphere is considerably shorter than claimed by IPCC. The leveling out of temperatures during the last 10 years, paralleled by decreasing solar activity, was doubted in the face of continuously rising atmospheric CO₂ concentrations. These discussions motivated me to expand my presentation on mechanisms controlling climate change, paying heed to comments by Profs. Haug and Beer.

On 9-3-2011, I contacted Dr. Christoph Ritz and enquired about the reaction of ProClim and OcCC to our discussion meeting and particularly to my mail of 18-11-10. I repeated this enquiry 20-3-2011 sending him at the same time a link to the revised and publically available presentation entitled “Climate Change during Geologic and Recent Times”.
<http://www.friendsofscience.org/assets/documents/Global.Warming_Ziegler.pdf>

On 21-3-2011 Dr. Ritz responded to me with “I certainly agree with your statement that we should use fossil fuel cautiously, as it was produced over millions of years and is a very valuable resource. The same holds for many other resources as well - including the atmosphere”.

Although his response addresses the important point of long-term fossil energy availability, it did not touch on the crucial point, whether the science backing up the IPCC postulate on AGW is sound or is flawed and politically slanted, and ought to be critically re-assessed by an independent top research organization, as advocated for instance by ex-chancellor Helmut Schmidt (lecture to Max-Planck-Gesellschaft on the “Responsibility of Research in the 21st Century” held 11-1-2011: <http://www.mpg.de/print/990353>).

It is beyond doubt that the concept of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions controlling climate change has become a first-order political issue shortly after the Swedish meteorologist Ben Santher had formulated it in 1995. IPCC was founded in 1998 on its base and ever since has devoted its efforts to prove that indeed anthropogenic CO₂ emissions are responsible for Global Warming, rather than impartially assessing whether this is actually the case. Now the AGW concept forms the basic creed of IPCC and of such organizations as the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace, has been elevated by IPCC consensus to the status of an axiom, and is now defended with an almost religious fervor. IPCC is a tightly knit network, which selective quotes peer-reviewed literature and each other, advances tendentious modeling and in some instances is even accused of data manipulations. IPCC activities were accompanied an immense Public Relations effort and related press coverage, proclaiming imminent rapid Global Warming accompanied by all kinds of disastrous consequences. Critical comments were discouraged with catch phrases like “The Science is settled”, blindly repeated by politicians.

Yet, open discussions addressing all pro- and contra-arguments are the primary requirement for any type of scientific research and particularly for research on matters having a tremendous bearing on the entire humanity and its socio-economics, such as Climate Change. By now, various panels and commissions have lately urged IPCC and its associated bodies to be more open to outside criticism (e.g.: Royal Society, Rees/Oxburg; House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, University of East Anglia, Muir Russel).

In this context, and owing to their responsibility to the Swiss Federal Government, OcCC and ProClim are strongly advised to review the IPCC advocated concepts on AGW with an unbiased and open mind due to serious reservations about their scientific validity. For ease of reference, the salient questions on the AGW concept are summarized in the above referred to PowerPoint presentation, (download this presentation and double-click on the orange balloons in the upper left corner of the slides for explanatory notes and references).

Before Switzerland puts its economy and standard of living at risk by implementing an onerous CO₂-tax, thus heeding to a dubious hypothesis on anthropogenic climate change, common sense demands that the IPCC postulate on AGW is subjected to close impartial scrutiny. Are the Swiss misguided by pseudo-science and the political motivation of Green organizations? What could be the role of the Swiss Academy of Science in such an evaluation?

OcCC and ProClim and with it the SCNAT can ignore this advice at the peril of serious embarrassment should in time the “consensus” sway away from the IPCC concept of anthropogenic climate change to the prevalence of natural controls on climate change.

A shorter version of this letter was sent 28-3-2011 to OcCC and ProClim, who so far have not responded to it.

Sincerely Yours,

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