



CLIMATE FORECASTS DESERVE SKEPTICISM

Due to data imperfections, a lack of scientific understanding, and arbitrary assumptions, the public should be skeptical of global-warming projections.

FACT: RECENT RESEARCH
SUGGESTS THAT CLIMATE
MODEL PREDICTIONS ARE
INCORRECT

Forecasts of future global warming, based on artificial statistical models, are frequently reported in today's media. These projections have become the basis for policies that dramatically expand government influence in order to fight global warming. Alarmists claim such policies are necessary because the results of inaction will include severe droughts, intense rainstorms, and the destruction of entire ecosystems.¹

But are the assertions of global-warming activists realistic? Recent scientific findings that global climate forecasts are not in line with actual, observed temperatures suggest that they are not.² Activists' contentions are unfounded because, while being based on scientific projections, they also ignore a few simple facts about statistical models that confound even the best scientific forecasts.

One ignored fact is that the data on which global-warming projections are based, like almost all scientific data, are imperfect and have sig-

nificant, and widely acknowledged, limitations.³ The limitations on temperature data, for instance, have led climate researchers to state that there is no accepted standard for measuring temperature and that "...various methods may lead to drastically different results."⁴

A second overlooked fact is the lack of scientific understanding of the effects that global climate change will have at a local level.⁵ In other words, despite any confidence about the warming of the globe, there is relatively little understanding of what that will mean for Utah.

A final fact that is ignored is that arbitrary assumptions exist in any statistical model. The planet's climate is very complex, and in order to make climate models workable, modelers must make simplifying assumptions about some aspects of the world's climate.⁶ If these assumptions are incorrect, the predictions of the model will likely be wrong as well. Climate research published in 2007 suggests

that incorrect assumptions do occur in climate modeling, and so it should not be a surprise when climate projections fail to actually materialize.⁷

While these three facts are technical and somewhat abstract, their implications for Utah are very real. The public policies being proposed – based on flawed climate projections – will lead to significant expansions of government influence into Utah families, and a subsequent reduction in freedom and liberty. Given that two, oft-cited scientific principles declare that nothing can be proven and that further research is always necessary, Utah should be wary of any public policy based solely on the results of scientific study and guesswork.

ENDNOTES

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