



Scientists Question Government's Climate Data Quality

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H. STERLING BURNETT

H. Sterling Burnett, Ph.D. is a Heartland research fellow on environmental policy and managing... (read full bio)

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Approximately 300 scientists, engineers, economists, and other climate experts sent a letter on January 25 to U.S. House Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) warning data the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) used to produce its June 2015 report purporting to find there had been no pause in rising global temperature during the past two decades failed to comply with the Data Quality Act (DQA).

The letter says under DQA, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget requires agencies to "ensure and maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information, including statistical information," particularly when data

are used in "highly influential scientific assessments" meant to inform the public and shape public policy.

What sparked the signatories' concerns was the fact NOAA's research conflicted with all other previous findings, including those produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which acknowledged there has been a pause in rising temperature over the past 18 years.

Many scientists have expressed serious doubts concerning the quality and objectivity of NOAA's June 2015 report published in *Science*. NOAA's adjustments to ocean temperature data between 1998 and 2012 made recent global temperature changes appear two times warmer than the original recorded measurements.

Lax Peer Review

"The House Committee on Science Space and Technology is charged and qualified to insist that federal agencies obey the law of the land, in this case the Data Quality Act (DQA), which calls for a thorough peer review of 'highly influential scientific assessment,'" said letter signatory William Happer, Ph.D., professor emeritus of physics at Princeton University. "The DQA recognizes scientific assessments of the federal government have a much greater weight than those from non-governmental research groups and should therefore be subject to more stringent peer review before publication.

"NOAA has carried out admirable internal peer reviews that fully satisfied the DQA on other controversial scientific assessments ... but the paper by Karl *et al.* was rushed into print with only the most cursory review by the journal *Science*," Happer said. "If NOAA had obeyed the law and carried out the required peer review of [the report], this whole affair could have been avoided. Hopefully NOAA will obey the law in the future."

Another signatory, Lord Christopher Monckton, chief policy advisor to the Science and Public Policy Institute, said, "We wrote our letter as a reminder that the climate science community is as much subject to the law of the land as the rest of us.

"Tampering with data at taxpayers' expense in pursuit of a nakedly political objective that would have horrified the Founding Fathers of the United States is contrary to the law and may even be fraudulent," Monckton said. "Be that as it may, the Data Quality Act must in the future be complied with."

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What's This?

William Happer, et al., Letter to Rep. Lamar Smith Concerning NOAA Data Quality Act Violation, January 25, 2016: <https://www.heartland.org/policy-documents/300-scientists-letter-rep-lamar-smith-concerning-noaa-data-quality-act-violation>



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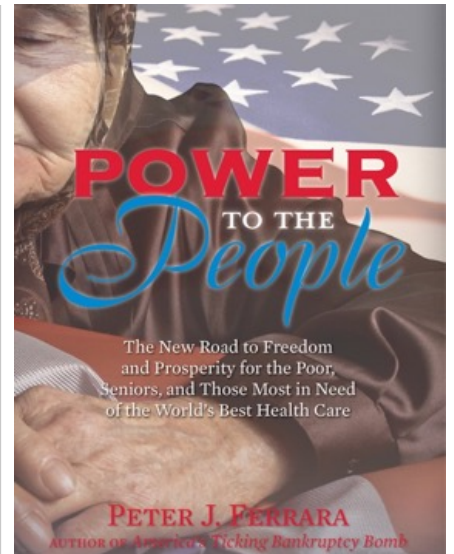
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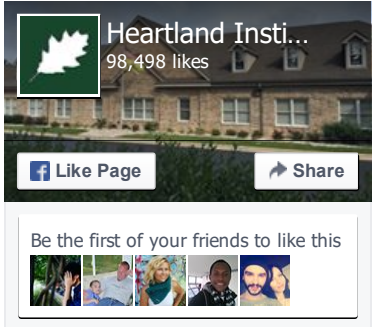
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