

CLIMATE CHANGE SKEPTICISM. Humans started contributing to climate change approximately five thousand years ago, when they began farming. Anthropogenic global warming primarily is a result of agriculture - especially animal husbandry - and the resulting deforestation, as well as industrial development and the burning of fossil fuels. This process had been gradual over millennia, but has sped up in the twentieth century. Climate science is conducted world-wide by about three thousand climate scientists in over one hundred and thirty countries, most of whom - approx. ninety seven percent - agree climate change and global warming are occurring and is largely caused by human activity. "To gain an understanding of the level of scientific consensus on climate change, one study examined every article on climate change published in peer-reviewed scientific journals over a ten-year period. Of the nine hundred twenty eight articles on climate change the authors found, not one of them disagreed with the consensus position that climate change is happening and is human-induced" says academic and environmental activist David Suzuki.* It is baffling that people - laypersons as well as academics - allow themselves an 'opinion' on the matter and have a 'belief' whether climate science is accurate, or whether climate change is human made. Yet, the phenomenon of climate change skepticism is very real. It is near incomprehensible, embarrassing and dismaying** that otherwise intelligent people fall into the trap of misinformation, denial and propaganda, as they follow the blinkered line of arguments provided by vested interests - such as mining and energy industries - who oppose the vitally necessary steps required to counter climate change.

**David Suzuki Foundation - www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/climate-change-basics/climate-change-deniers*

***Newspaper (The Australian) wages campaign against climate change science
Robert Manne, The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), 3 Sept 2011*

Two Climate Change Skepticism myths debunked:

Climate Change has been happening for millions of years, it is not unusual at all.

Correct. Climate Change - in principle - is a natural phenomenon. However, what is unnatural and unusual is the speed with which it has occurred from 1900 to 2000, the period of the Industrial Revolution. In those one hundred years temperatures have risen globally by one degree Celsius. This is extraordinary - such a rise in temperature normally takes place over thousands, if not tens of thousands of years.

Humans produce just three percent of carbon dioxide, nature ninety seven per cent.

Correct. Humans' output of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide is small compared to the amounts output by nature. However, while nature has produced large amounts of CO2 for millions of years, no less than one hundred percent of natural CO2 gets absorbed again by nature; whereas human production of CO2 largely is not naturally absorbed - it is cumulative, and as a result we have global warming.

With the widespread consensus on climate science, is there any disagreement at all? Is the science settled in every detail?

Climate change skeptics invariably say: "The science on climate change and global warming is not settled - there is not widespread agreement among scientists." Well, they're right, that is correct too: "In regard to scores of other questions ...

*as to the precise impact on global temperatures, sea levels, acidification of oceans, the rate of melting of ice sheets and glaciers, the pace of extinctions, intensity of hurricanes, bushfires, drought and disease ... of course the science is not settled."***

It has been said climate change skepticism is given far too much attention seeing how incongruous, illogical and indeed irrelevant it is; this is also correct, but for the proportionless and demagogic impact it has on public opinion and our government's policies.

*dem·a·gog·ic
appealing to popular desire and prejudice
rather than utilizing rational arguments*