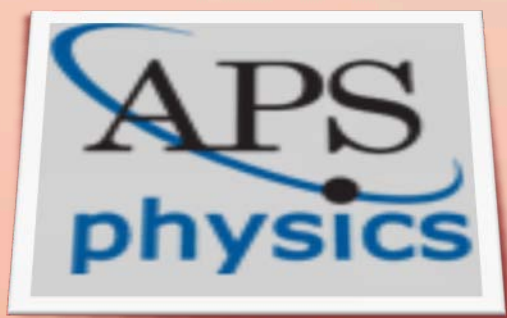


*Regarding the National Policy Statement on Climate Change
of the APS Council:*

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY



SPPI COMMENTARY & ESSAY SERIES ♦ November 19, 2009

Regarding the National Policy Statement on Climate Change of the APS Council:

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY

As physicists who are familiar with the science issues, and as current and past members of the American Physical Society, we the undersigned urge the Council to revise its current statement* on climate change as follows, so as to more accurately represent the current state of the science:

Greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, accompany human industrial and agricultural activity. While substantial concern has been expressed that emissions may cause significant climate change, *measured or reconstructed temperature records indicate that 20th 21st century changes are neither exceptional nor persistent, and the historical and geological records show many periods warmer than today.* In addition, *there is an extensive scientific literature that examines beneficial effects of increased levels of carbon dioxide for both plants and animals.*

Studies of a variety of natural processes, including ocean cycles and solar variability, indicate that they can account for variations in the Earth's climate on the time scale of decades and centuries.

Current climate models appear insufficiently reliable to properly account for natural and anthropogenic contributions to past climate change, much less project future climate.

The APS supports an objective scientific effort to understand the effects of all processes – natural and human – on the Earth's climate and the biosphere's response to climate change, and promotes technological options for meeting challenges of future climate changes, regardless of cause.

The statement of the APS Council, adopted on November 18, 2007 is as follows:

“Emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities are changing the atmosphere in ways that affect the Earth's climate. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide as well as methane, nitrous oxide and other gases. They are emitted from fossil fuel combustion and a range of industrial and agricultural processes.

The evidence is incontrovertible: Global warming is occurring. If no mitigating actions are taken, significant disruptions in the Earth's physical and ecological systems, social systems, security and human health are likely to occur. We must reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beginning now.

Because the complexity of the climate makes accurate prediction difficult, the APS urges an enhanced effort to understand the effects of human activity on the Earth's climate, and to provide the technological options for meeting the climate challenge in the near and longer terms. The APS also urges governments, universities, national laboratories and its membership to support policies and actions that will reduce the emission of greenhouse gases."

— APS News; January 2008 (Volume 17, Number 1)

APPENDIX 1

Published Nature Letter

NATURE | Vol 460 | 23 July 2009 OPINION

Petitioning for a revised statement on climate change

SIR — We write in response to your issue discussing “the coming climate crunch”, including the Editorial ‘Time to act’ (Nature 459, 1077–1078; 2009). We feel it is alarmist.

We are among more than 50 current and former members of the American Physical Society (APS) who have signed an open letter to the APS Council this month, calling for a reconsideration of its November 2007 policy statement on climate change (see open letter at <http://tinyurl.com/lg266u>; APS statement at <http://tinyurl.com/56zqxr>). The letter proposes an alternative statement, which the signatories believe to be a more accurate representation of the current scientific evidence. It requests that an objective scientific process be established, devoid of political or financial agendas, to help prevent subversion of the scientific process and the intolerance towards scientific disagreement that pervades the climate issue.

On 1 May 2009, the APS Council decided to review its current statement via a high-level subcommittee of respected senior scientists. We applaud this decision. It is the first such reappraisal by a major scientific professional society that we are aware of, and we hope it will lead to meaningful change that reflects a more balanced view of climate-change issues.

S. Fred Singer University of Virginia Hal Lewis University of California, Santa Barbara Will Happer Princeton University Larry Gould University of Hartford Roger Cohen Durango, Colorado Robert H. Austin Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, USA e-mail: austin@princeton.edu.

APPENDIX 2

A GAGGLE IS NOT A CONSENSUS

You have recently received a letter from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), purporting to convey a “consensus” of the scientific community that immediate and drastic action is needed to avert a climatic catastrophe.

We do not seek to make the scientific arguments here (we did that in an earlier letter, sent a couple of months ago), but simply to note that the claim of consensus is fake, designed to stampede you into actions that will cripple our economy, and which you will regret for many years. There is no consensus, and even if there were, consensus is not the test of scientific validity. Theories that disagree with the facts are wrong, consensus or no.

We know of no evidence that any of the “leaders” of the scientific community who signed the letter to you ever asked their memberships for their opinions, before claiming to represent them on this important matter.

We also note that the American Physical Society (APS, and we are physicists) did not sign the letter, though the scientific issues at stake are fundamentally matters of applied physics. You can do physics without climatology, but you can’t do climatology without physics.

The APS is at this moment reviewing its stance on so-called global warming, having received a petition from its membership to do so. That petition was signed by 160 distinguished members and fellows of the Society, including one Nobelist and 12 members of the National Academies. Indeed a score of the signers are Members and Fellows of the AAAS, none of whom were consulted before the AAAS letter to you.

Professor Hal Lewis, University of California, Santa Barbara
Professor Fred Singer, University of Virginia
Professor Will Happer, Princeton University
Professor Larry Gould, University of Hartford
Dr. Roger Cohen, retired Manager, Strategic Planning, ExxonMobil

APPENDIX 3

APS Names and Affiliations List (November 6, 2009)
6 November 2009 206 Signatures

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Sarnoff Corporation

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White House Science Councilor (1982 -1989)

Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory (1970 -1979)

E.O. Lawrence Award 1966, Enrico Fermi Award 1978, Los Alamos Medal (with H.A. Bethe) 2001

Member National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering; Fellow APS, AAAS

Sol Aisenberg

President, International Technology Group

Formerly Staff Member, MIT; Lecturer, Harvard Medical School;

Visiting Research Professor, Boston University

Ralph B. Alexander

Former Associate Professor of Physics

Wayne State University

President, R.B. Alexander & Associates

Technology and market analysis in environmentally friendly materials and coatings

Author, Global Warming False Alarm (Canterbury)

Moorad Alexanian

Professor of Physics and Physical Oceanography

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Member Mexican Academy of Sciences, American Scientific Affiliation

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Senior Member IEEE

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Otto Schade Prize (Society for Information Display) 2006
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Secretary of Defense Medal for Distinguished Meritorious Civilian Service (1970)

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