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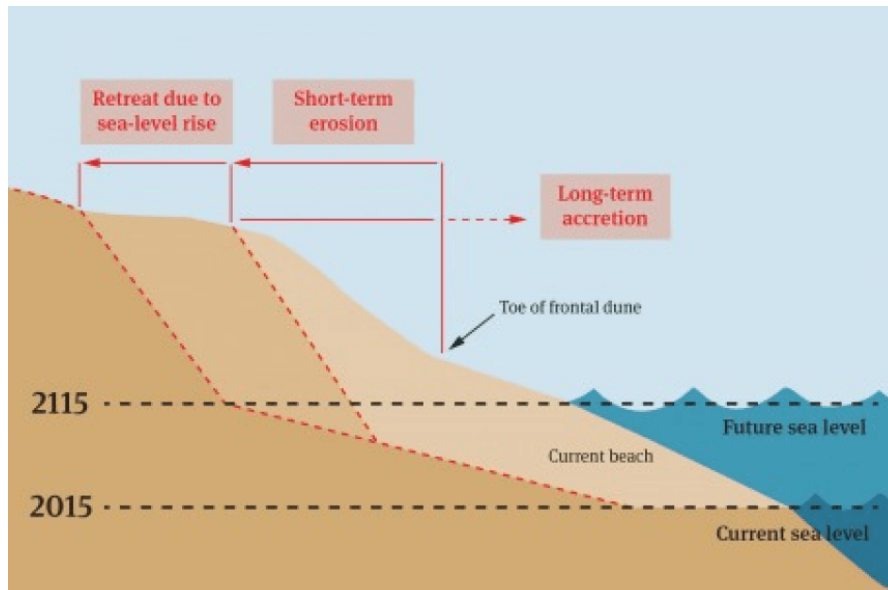


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CHCH COUNCIL SHOULD DROP CLIMATE DENIERS FROM EXPERT REVIEW PANEL

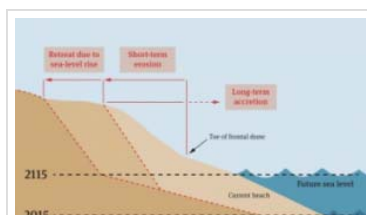
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PRESS RELEASE

The Christchurch City Council should drop the two climate deniers it recently appointed to a new panel to re-review a coastal hazards report, Coal Action Network Aotearoa said today.



As part of its district plan, the council commissioned the engineering firm Tonkin Taylor to estimate the impacts of a sea level rise of around 40cm over the next 50 years, and one metre in 100 years.

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Richard Treadgold 09/08/2016
on What's Going On At



After loud local protest from potentially affected residents, the council has **appointed a new panel** to conduct a second peer review of the report. But that

panel now has two well-known climate science deniers on it: Kesten Green and Willem de Lange, whose history of climate denial has been set out on the [Hot Topic blog](#).

“If Christchurch City Council wants to rely on sound science around its dealings with climate change, it should stick with proper scientists to review its work, not climate deniers,” said Cindy Baxter of Coal Action Network Aotearoa.

“Of course, the Tonkin Taylor report alarmed residents, because climate change IS alarming, especially the issue of sea level rise in New Zealand. But you don’t deal with it by questioning the science. The Council should drop these two from its panel.

Recent studies around the rate of melting ice in the Antarctic and Arctic are predicting much higher levels than the maximum one metre of sea level rise in the Council report: it may end up being a very conservative estimate.

“The sooner we realise that fighting the science by using climate deniers is not the way to deal with the threats coming from climate change, the faster we can get on with how we’re going to deal with this issue,” said Cindy Baxter

She noted that other councils have faced similar issues in dealing with coastal threats from climate change, such as the Kapiti District Council, where de Lange was employed by local residents to fight the science.

“This is clearly a situation where Government needs to step in and give proper scientific guidance and a national framework for the entire country, including addressing issues of compensation, instead of leaving local councils to deal with climate deniers and furious local residents,” said Baxter.

The Christchurch City Council case has echoes of a [similar situation in North Carolina](#), where, under pressure from coastal property developers, the State Assembly passed a law forbidding local councils from acting on a sea level rise report. A new report has now been written, but gives predictions only 30 years out, not 100 years.

Cindy Baxter commented: “the US is full of climate deniers, brought about through campaigns funded by the fossil fuel industry’s funding of think tanks like the Heartland Institute. Both the deniers on this new peer review panel have been associated with the Heartland Institute.”

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16 COMMENTS

1.



Richard Treadgold on 31/05/2016 at 09:46

The Heartland Institute sounds invincible! How do I join?

But, seriously, how do you justify the claim that our minor atmospheric warming dangerously heats the ocean, when the IPCC itself cannot say how that might occur?

REPLY

2.



Simon on 01/06/2016 at 22:31

Are you seriously suggesting that the ocean and atmosphere are incapable of exchanging heat? This is a classic example of the retarded discourse that the small band of NZ climate science deniers work at.

REPLY



Richard Treadgold on 01/06/2016 at 23:14

No, Simon. You know I didn't say that. I'm asking (not asserting) how the slight warming we probably create in the atmosphere might dangerously heat the ocean. Do you know? I haven't found a single paper describing such a possibility, yet much of the horror of man-made global warming depends upon ocean warming (by our agency, obviously) to raise sea levels. If you understand it, please describe it. If you know where the IPCC describe it, please cite a link to that.

You deliberately altered what I said in order to call it “retarded”. Please don't put the wrong words in my mouth; I make enough mistakes without you adding to them.

REPLY



cindybax on 01/06/2016 at 23:21

Are you ignoring the fact that the oceans have warmed considerably in recent years? They've ALREADY warmed – it's not just a possibility, it's a fact.

REPLY

Richard Treadgold on 02/06/2016 at 04:20

Some oceans have warmed and some have cooled over the last several decades. Overall, the top layers to about 700 m have warmed about 0.2 °C since 1950. This was not in the least bit dangerous, and if the oceans are not going to heat dangerously, we need not be concerned, wouldn't you say? Of course, the dangerous warming is predicted only for the far future. Anyway, I asked for a description of the physical means by which heat energy created by our emissions to the atmosphere might dangerously heat the ocean. Even the IPCC don't describe this, though they go into detail about other physical processes. In AR5 they rather obscure the matter by hiding the temperature figures in a colour-coded legend but over the last 40 years rises and falls have been a few hundredths of a degree. Can you describe the physics of this heat transfer, please?

REPLY

3.



Gareth on 02/06/2016 at 22:03

Richard – you wouldn't understand the physics if it were explained to you – not because you can't, but because you don't want to.

A word to the wise: you are being misled by the person or persons upon whom you rely for your interpretation of atmospheric physics and oceanography.

Meanwhile the oceans warm, ice melts and sea level rises.

REPLY



cindybax on 02/06/2016 at 23:45

For the wise, here's a link to a story about a paper in Nature (January) on ocean heat <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jan/18/world-oceans-warming-faster-rate-new-study-fossil-fuels>

REPLY



Richard Treadgold on 15/06/2016 at 23:19

Cindy, thanks for the link.

First, the few deep-diving Argo floats have been deployed in the Southern Ocean, so they can't give us a global picture.

Second, it's strange that the deeply buried heat they have apparently "found" somehow got past the first-generation Argo floats without being detected. That doesn't make sense.

Third, data from the entire fleet of about 4000 floats is still woefully sparse against the immensity of the ocean. Each float is alone in over 150,000 cubic kilometres of water, iirc. We have just the vaguest notion of conditions down there.

Fourth, areas of increased ocean acidification are small and localised, magnitudes are far below natural variability, the ocean remains firmly alkaline (basic) and it's difficult to





discover whether increases are caused by human activity—not a trivial point.

Fifth, it's difficult to know how much ocean heat is generated from human emissions. Again, not a minor point, considering the sacrifices being called for in some quarters.

The paper you link to offers no help with attribution of warming and acidification beyond hand-waving.

REPLY

4.



Richard Treadgold on 15/06/2016 at 23:11

[My comment is rather tardy, as comments had been turned off. The admin has temporarily turned them back on for me (thanks, Tim!!).]

Your mistrust was misplaced, Gareth, for I have been seeking an understanding of “back radiation” for a long time. Ironically, about ten minutes before I saw your intemperate comment, I may have found what I was looking for, which made your cynicism doubly wrong. A series of articles at The Science of Doom (<https://scienceofdoom.com/2010/10/06/does-back-radiation-heat-the-ocean-part-one/>) describe downwelling long-wave radiation (DLR) and seem dependable. They explain that measurable amounts of atmospheric radiation do indeed reach the ocean and affect its temperature. Hitherto, I've found just vague, unhelpful statements similar to yours.

However, since the airborne portion of our accumulated emissions of carbon dioxide seem to constitute about 3% of total atmospheric carbon dioxide, or 12 ppm, or 0.000012 of the whole atmosphere (less than the amount of neon in the atmosphere), I expect the human component of oceanic warming to be minute and any consequent SLR to be insignificant. Our meagre amount of long-wave radiation hardly penetrates the water (90% of any DLR is absorbed in the first 10µm) and goes mostly to evaporate the water molecules, which immediately removes the energy from the water.

We shall see where this new information leads.

By the way, nobody was misleading me—nobody knew the details. For some reason, over several years of asking, not a single warmist has admitted knowing this process. Strange, for I imagined more people would be curious about a process so vital to the dangerous warming meme.

REPLY



Gareth on 16/06/2016 at 00:32

I am glad that you have found a source you're prepared to trust re ocean warming. The key point, as Arthur Smith points out in the comments, is:

The effect of the absorption of downwelling radiation is best viewed as, the same as for land surface, a
reduction in the rate of cooling via radiation.

-

This is not mysterious at all, and goes a long to explain why you don't find much written on the subject. To (real) physicists the net effect is fairly obvious – even if an exact explanation of what's going on is complex.

However, you are making some very strange assumptions about the accumulated emissions of CO₂ in the atmosphere. The sum is a simple one: before humanity started adding large amounts of CO₂ to the atmosphere, there was about 280 ppm of the gas in the atmosphere. We now have 400 ppm. The difference between those two is 120 ppm, or a little over 40% of the starting amount. We know (by doing sums) that the total amount of carbon emissions over that time are greater than the amount we see in the atmosphere, but we observe the oceans becoming more acidic and see evidence of some “greening” of the biosphere, which shows that the planet is doing us a big favour by absorbing some of our excess carbon.

How important is that 40% increase? It might be helpful to think of the difference between the depths of an ice age, when the planet is on average about 5°C cooler than 150 years ago and CO₂ was about 180 ppm, and an interglacial period such as the current one, when CO₂ is (before we mucked it up) usually around 280-300 ppm. That difference caused by the extra CO₂ is enough to radically transform the planet, raising sea levels by 120 meters.

We've added an extra 120 ppm, and we see the planet warming. Sea level rise is a certainty as the great ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica respond to that warming. Once again, we can learn a lot from the climate history of the planet. The last time CO₂ stood at 400 ppm, the sea level was around 20 m higher than now.

It might take a few hundred years to get the full 20 meters, but that's where we are inevitably heading, unless we can both stop emitting CO₂ and get levels back down under 300 ppm.

REPLY



Richard Treadgold on 16/06/2016 at 01:30

You say thinking of heating caused by DLR as “reduced cooling” explains “why you don't find much written on the subject.” But that doesn't follow at all. I don't know what you mean.

You say “the net effect is fairly obvious”, but everyone says that and it's not true.

You then muddy the waters by adding: “even if an exact explanation of what's going on is

complex.” You reckon what’s obvious is complex? I don’t think so. Anyway, the exact explanation isn’t complex, it’s missing. It’s absent. No such description exists. No paper has been written on it. I’ve found a preliminary tutor, no more than that. The quest goes on.

You say we now have 400 ppm atmospheric CO₂; I agree. For the sake of discussion, I accept your figures on the conditions during glaciation. But you imply humans have added the 120 ppm since the Industrial Revolution, and assert that the “extra CO₂” was responsible for SLR of 120 m during the last thaw.

These are unjustified assertions unless there’s evidence that increasing CO₂ precedes temperature rise. The evidence so far is the reverse.

You say the planet is warming when it has not warmed significantly since the 1980s. The most accurate and comprehensive global mean surface temperature datasets are from the two satellite-based teams, which show little warming since the 1990s. You may have noticed that in the last few days the May records have been released, showing a steep drop from the peak of the El Nino. Apparently there might be a cooling La Nina later this year, though I have learned to take climate forecasts with a grain of salt.

“We’ve added an extra 120 ppm, and we see the planet warming.” Probably better expressed as: “An extra 120 ppm has been added, and we see the planet warming.” But that still shows mere correlation, not causation; and it’s still the wrong way around, because what warming we’ve had has come before the CO₂ increase.

But thanks for your comments.

REPLY



Richard Treadgold on 16/06/2016 at 01:52

“However, you are making some very strange assumptions about the accumulated emissions of CO₂ in the atmosphere.”

Yes, on checking, this could be incorrect. I took the figure from WryHeat, who got the data from the IPCC. But it's headed "Sources and absorption of greenhouse gases in the 1990s". I took it to mean the accumulated anthro contribution, which it might be, but now I'm unsure.

So our contribution could be larger, but I must stand by the assertion that temperature rises to cause CO2 outgassing, not the other way around. That's not to say we don't contribute to the increase in CO2, just that any temperature increase is trivial (as evidenced so far!).

REPLY

5.



Gareth on 16/06/2016 at 06:34

Sorry Richard – I tried to be helpful, but it appears that you are so entrenched in your misunderstanding of the physics of what's going on that it would take a very long time to unpack it all. And past experience suggests you wouldn't take much notice anyway.

You have a duty to educate yourself – not continually demand answers from other people. Simply repeating contrarian talking points that have been debunked over and over again wins you no friends.

REPLY

6.



Mike Jowsey on 18/06/2016 at 09:26

Gareth, so condescending, but still unhelpful.

REPLY



Gareth on 18/06/2016 at 23:51

I would be very happy to be helpful, Mike, if I thought there were a genuine chance that RT would allow himself to understand the basics of the science. Sadly, his reply above contains so many errors and misunderstandings that it would take me many, many hours to unpack them all – and, frankly, I have far better things to do with my time...

REPLY

7.



Gareth on 21/06/2016 at 09:25

Perhaps this introduction to the history of CO2 on earth would help with the misunderstanding of what comes first, CO2 or temperature:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RffPSrRpq_g

REPLY

TRACKBACKS/PINGBACKS

1. [Challenge to converse | CCG](#) - [...] I made comments at Coal Action Network, Gareth Renowden piled in and there was a brief discussion before he...
2. [The Lost Art Of Conversation... – Hot Topic](#) - [...] wants me to engage in an exchange of views. Following a brief flurry of comments at the Coal Action Network..
3. [Gareth, who has nothing | CCG](#) - [...] o' the hat for citing it). The author, one "cindybox", crafted the blunt headline Chch council should drop climate...

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