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Sent: 6/26/2017 5:25:46 PM
Subject: Rick Perry was right: CO2 is not the control knob of climate

<https://www.heartland.org/news-opinion/news/rick-perry-was-right-on-cnbc-co2-is-not-the-control-knob-of-climate>

Rick Perry Was Right on CNBC: CO2 Is not the Control Knob of Climate

June 23, 2017
By [Jim Lakely](#)

When you know what's going on – and know the science – you realize that it's Keith Seitter of the AMS who has some explaining to do, not Rick Perry.

To hear the corrupt, know-nothing mainstream media tell it, Energy Secretary Rick Perry really stepped in it when he said human emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) is not the major driver of global warming. And, as usual with the MSM, it's not true. The story is merely fodder for a false narrative about Perry, and the state of climate science.

On Monday, CNBC “Squawk Box” host Joe Kernan asked the secretary whether he believes carbon dioxide “is the primary control knob for the temperature of the Earth and for climate.” Perry's answer:

No, most likely the primary control knob is the ocean waters and this environment that we live in. ... The fact is this shouldn't be a debate about, ‘Is the climate changing, is man having an effect on it?’ Yeah, we are. The question should be just how much, and what are the policy changes that we need to make to effect that?

Perry's answer is miles ahead, and smarter, than his predecessors in the Obama administration – who merely parroted the bromides of the climate alarmism industry, and never looked under the hood of the science.

Is CO2 the “control knob” of the climate? No. Are the oceans? Well ... that's complicated. No serious scientist, uncorrupted by the CO2-is-to-blame racket, would say there is a single “control knob” that controls the climate. So, on this point, Perry is 100 percent correct. And CNBC is not the ideal place for a deeper discussion of how the earth's oceans absorb and release heat and CO2 as part of a very complex planetary ecosystem that we are decades away from fully understanding, if ever. Perry had 15 seconds to answer. Give him a break – and points to him for getting closer than any Obama-era cabinet official.

Yet, of course, HuffPost and other MSM outlets made a phony *big deal* about Perry's answer. They lifted up a ridiculous outrage letter by Keith L. Seitter, executive director of the American Meteorological Society (AMS), which said it is “critically important” that Perry understand that greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are, indeed, the “primary driver” of climate change.

“This is a conclusion based on the comprehensive assessment of scientific evidence,” Seitter wrote. “It is based on multiple independent lines of evidence that have been affirmed by thousands of independent scientists and numerous scientific institutions around the world. We are not familiar with any scientific institution with relevant subject matter expertise that has reached a different conclusion.”

Well, if Seitter considers the AMS a “scientific institution,” and I’m guessing he does, he’s misrepresenting his own organization. According to a 2013 survey of the AMS:

Barely half of American Meteorological Society meteorologists believe global warming is occurring and humans are the primary cause, a newly released study reveals. The survey results comprise the latest in a long line of evidence indicating the often asserted global warming consensus does not exist.

Hmmm. A signatory of that AMS report is none other than Keith Seitter. Strange. Let’s dig deeper.

The central question in the survey consisted of two parts: “Is global warming happening? If so, what is its cause?” Answer options were:

Yes: Mostly human

Yes: Equally human and natural

Yes: Mostly natural

Yes: Insufficient evidence [to determine cause]

Yes: Don’t know cause

Don’t know if global warming is happening

Global warming is not happening

Just 52 percent of survey respondents answered Yes: Mostly human. The other 48 percent either questioned whether global warming is happening or would not ascribe human activity as the primary cause.

So ... the “conclusion based on the comprehensive assessment of scientific evidence,” according to Seitter’s own organization, is that there is *no conclusion* that human-emitted CO2 is the “control knob” of climate. Is The Heartland Institute misinterpreting the data? Not according to climate scientist Judith Curry, who is no “denier.”

In summary, Heartland’s interpretation is not a misrepresentation of the actual survey results, although the authors and the AMS are interpreting the results in a different way. A better survey might have avoided some of the ambiguity in the interpretation, but there seems to be no avoiding the fact that the survey showed that 48% of the AMS professional members do not think that most of the warming since 1850 is attributable to humans.

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