

Hundreds of scientists urge Trump to withdraw from U.N. climate-change agency

MIT's Richard Lindzen says policies cause economic harm with 'no environmental benefits'.

By Valerie Richardson - The Washington Times - Thursday, February 23, 2017

More than 300 scientists have urged President Trump to withdraw from the U.N.'s climate change agency, warning that its push to curtail carbon dioxide threatens to exacerbate poverty without improving the environment.

In a Thursday letter to the president, MIT professor emeritus Richard Lindzen called on the United States and other nations to "change course on an outdated international agreement that targets minor greenhouse gases," starting with carbon dioxide. "Since 2009, the US and other governments have undertaken actions with respect to global climate that are not scientifically justified and that already have, and will continue to cause serious social and economic harm — with no environmental benefits," said Mr. Lindzen, a prominent atmospheric physicist.

Signers of the attached petition include the U.S. and international atmospheric scientists, meteorologists, physicists, professors and others taking issue with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], which was formed in 1992 to combat "dangerous" climate change.

The 2016 Paris climate accord, which sets nonbinding emissions goals for nations, was drawn up under the auspices of the UNFCCC. "Observations since the UNFCCC was written 25 years ago show that warming from increased atmospheric CO₂ will be benign — much less than initial model predictions," says the petition.

Mr. Trump said during the campaign he would "cancel" U.S. participation in the Paris Agreement, which was ratified in September by former President Barack Obama over the objections of Senate Republicans, who argued that the accord requires Senate ratification under the U.S. Constitution.

Myron Ebell, a Competitive Enterprise Institute scholar who led the Trump transition team on the Environmental Protection Agency, told reporters last month in London that the president would pull out of the Paris Agreement. Advocates for climate change policies have called for Mr. Trump to honor the agreement, under which nations agree to enact policies to keep the increase in global temperatures this century under 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

Last week the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops reaffirmed its support for the Paris Agreement in a letter to Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, saying the agreement is "urgently needed if we are to meet our common and differentiated responsibilities for the effects of climate change." More than 700 companies and investors have signed onto a statement urging Mr. Trump to abide by the Paris accord coordinated by nine environmental groups, including the American Sustainable Business Council, the Environmental Defense Fund and the World Wildlife Fund.

"Failure to build a low-carbon economy puts American prosperity at risk. But the right action now will create jobs and boost US competitiveness," said the statement on LowCarbonUSA.org. "We pledge to do our part, in our own operations and beyond, to realize the Paris Agreement's commitment of a global economy that limits global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius."

Challenging the catastrophic climate change narrative, Mr. Lindzen describes carbon dioxide as “plant food, not poison.” “Restricting access to fossil fuels has very negative effects upon the wellbeing of people around the world,” he says in his letter. “It condemns over 4 billion people in still underdeveloped countries to continued poverty.”

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