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CLIMATE SCIENTISTS:

THE **97%** CLAIM – A LAYMAN'S EVALUATION!

By Stephen L. Bakke  June 10, 2017

97%

The climate debate is back in the news with the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Accord. Once again climate alarmists are relying heavily on the “consensus” argument that “97% of scientist agree that the globe is warming and that humans are the major factor cause.” We shouldn't accept that dramatic claim without a critical review.

What's the origin of the statistic? Neither the United Nations IPCC, nor the mainstream climate scientists confidently predict catastrophic results. In fact, one IPCC report states that dependable long-term climate predictions are difficult or impossible.

Careful examination seems to indicate this claim didn't originate in the scientific community. It originates in several studies performed by climate “activists” who have released the results of isolated research. These reports were picked up by the media, environmentalists, and politicians. The “97% consensus” was pounded into our consciousness, and potentially flawed research soon became accepted as fact. Consider just two examples:

First example:

- In 2008, University of Illinois researchers surveyed 10,257 recognized earth scientists – only 3,146 responded.
- The researchers used ONLY 79 responses – subjectively excluding non-peer reviewed scientists as well as others, apparently even meteorologists.
- 97% of those 79 were subjectively declared to be in agreement with the alarmists. But the survey question only asked if they thought humans were a significant factor, not the major factor.
- The most significant knock on this research is that 98% of the recognized scientists who responded were ignored.

A similar proclamation from the University of Queensland, Australia:

- Almost 12,000 climate articles were examined.
- Of the abstracts expressing an opinion, 97.1% were claimed to endorse the “consensus.”
- However, only about 2% (some reviewers claim fewer) of the 12,000 articles expressed support that humans caused most of the warming since 1950.
- The 97.1% included skeptics who agree that humans cause some warming, but aren't the major cause.

- At least 98% of the sample did not clearly express an opinion that humans are the biggest climate offender.

A more recent 2014 study was done by Professor Linda Prokopy of Purdue University. She surveyed agricultural sector scientists, including climatologists. Only about 50.4% of those surveyed contended that humans were the largest cause for climate changes. While this research was also isolated, and certainly not definitive, it does detract from what I believe are the less disciplined studies discussed earlier.

There are many legitimate scientists who disagree with the alarmists. Approximately 31,000 American scientists in climate and earth science disciplines signed a statement stating that there is “no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide.....is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth’s atmosphere and disruption of the Earth’s climate.” The Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change” aggregated “thousands of peer-reviewed scientific journal articles that do not support” the catastrophic predictions.

There are many talented scientists who believe in the aggressive interpretation of climate predictive change models, and also a whole bunch who suggest a more patient approach. My only current conclusion is that the science is not currently “settled.”