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## THE CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE: THAT MYSTERIOUS AND ELUSIVE 97%!

By Stephen L. Bakke  December 26, 2016



The climate change debate will pick up some steam now that a new administration will be in charge of energy and environmental policy. One of the things we will keep hearing is that there is “97% consensus” as to the predictions being proclaimed by the most zealous climate change activists. Before any of us relies on that statistic, it behooves us to be sure we trust that claim. I dug a little bit into this issue and came up with some information.

John Cook, Australian communications fellow with Global Change Institute is frequently quoted as a source of the “97%.” His claims: “.....found that over 97% of papers surveyed endorsed the view that the earth is warming up, and human emissions of greenhouse gases are the main cause.” Several studies have been made of Cook's findings, with similar results. I will summarize just a few.

One independent review of Cook's findings found that almost 70% of the articles expressed NO POSITION WHATSOEVER on human-caused global warming. Another review of those same papers showed that less than 2% of them actually AGREED WITH Cook's claim. So how did Cook ultimately arrive at the 97%? This second review found that, in order to arrive at the 97%, he first added papers that explicitly said there was man-made warming, but DIDN'T SAY HOW MUCH! Next, Cook added papers that didn't even say there was man-made warming, but he (Cook) thought it was implied. In total, according to this review, well over 99% of the sample DID NOT express an opinion that humans cause MOST of the warming.

Investigative journalists at *Popular Technology* reported that according to some scientists included in Cook's review, their papers were falsely included in the 97%.

Another separate source for the “97%” is a 2008 study by University of Illinois researchers. “Recognized earth scientists” were surveyed and 3,146 responded. Of those, the researchers chose ONLY 79 responses – those whose opinions had been published in “peer reviewed” journals. Keep in mind that it has been established that “peer reviews” are SELDOM offered to “skeptics” – they are ignored. 97% of those 79 responses agree with the theory that human CO<sub>2</sub> production is the main cause of climate change. BUT 98% of the entire body of these recognized scientists were IGNORED!

James Barrante, retired college professor of physical chemistry recently wrote: “When I began my study of global warming about 20 years ago, I never assumed it was a scam or a hoax. I assumed it was an inaccurate interpretation of good data.....I'm beginning to change my mind. I'm convinced data presented by NASA and NOAA should be considered suspect until proved otherwise.”

That's the type of information that makes me a "skeptic" or at least "non-denier." But some have explained that the 97% includes scientists that are at least "non-deniers." The flaw in that argument is that many of these "skeptics" don't reject the assertion that CO2 probably does have some influence on climate, but they have not been convinced humans are the main contributor, nor that probable effects will be catastrophic.

Remember, only models have been used to predict climate changes, and these have proven to be very undependable when their predictions are compared to actual measurements. Scientific models are mathematical theory, not complete "science." My understanding is that accurate measurements must be added to a "theory" before there can "settled science." That hasn't happened, so we "skeptics" aren't ready to "bet the (economic) farm" on the conclusions and policy imperatives of radical alarmists.

I think the great Albert Einstein had so-called "settled science" claims in mind when he said: "The important thing is not to stop questioning."