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CAREN RAY, THE DARK AGES, AND CHICKEN POT PIES

By Michael F. Brown

The industrial revolution set civilization on the road to collapse, spurring population growth, which contributed slightly more than overconsumption to environmental degradation. Now population combined with affluence growth may finish the job.¹

– Stanford Professors Paul and Ann Erlich

Mid-1800's industrialization and how industrialization really set up circumstances that led to the issues of the 20th Century: two World Wars, communism in the Soviet Union, etc. etc. I'm not saying industrialization was bad, but the effects are so much more than the growth of cities and pollution. Not only did it affect our lives on a daily basis, but also affected the way we relate to the rest of the world and each other. That area of History is fascinating to me because it's so seminal... I think they're going to look back at industrialization and the 20th Century as something akin to the dark Ages. And I mean "dark" literally with the issues of pollution, but also with the mechanization of war.²

– San Luis Obispo County 4th District
Supervisor Caren Ray

What do Paul Erlich and Caren Ray have in common?

Both think that the industrial revolution was bad. Erlich, who has been America's preeminently wrong environmental doomsday prophet for the past 60 years, now forecasts that industrialization has placed civilization on the road to imminent collapse. Ray asserts that the industrial revolution is the cause of what will be regarded historically as a 20th Century "dark age" because it caused pollution and enabled the mechanization of warfare. If industrialization created a dark age, how can it not be bad? She hopes to help usher in a new post-industrial civilization: "I think that we are coming into a period now where we are leaving a lot of that behind. And, because of our interconnectivity we're coming into this era where you can't just sit in your little fiefdom anymore, you can't behave in a way that is isolated from others... I think it's a very positive di-

¹ Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich: Can A Collapse of Global Civilization Be Avoided? Proceedings Of the Royal Society on Biology, Royal Society Publishing. 2012 The Ehrlichs are Biology Professors at Stanford University. Paul Erlich is the author of the famous 1968 polemic The Population Bomb.

² Caren Ray Interview: Meet the Press, SLO Life Magazine, February/ March 2014. The interviewer asked Ray: What part of history most fascinates you?

rection.” Although this statement lacks clarity and substance, it suggests a disturbing and profound misunderstanding of history, science, and progress.

The term “dark ages” refers to conditions in Western Europe during the era from the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in 476 CE to the rise of the Renaissance city-states in the 1300’s. It is a somewhat pejorative term popularized by 19th century classicists. Ray, as a contemporary History teacher, should know that the more modern and rigorous historical and archeological assessments of that era have found that it was not so dark. In fact, the very institution of which she is an officer (the county) is an invention of the English “dark age” King Alfred I (the Great) in the 870’s. We do agree that the County does exhibit some medieval characteristics, but the form has had resiliency, including the survival of the office of Shire Reeve, which after the Norman invasion of 1066 and in the French vernacular of the day, became Sheriff.

Some powerful “dark age innovations” include the center post windmill (blades rotate on a central axis to face the wind from any direction); the horse chest collar, which allowed horses to pull heavier plows through heavier soils without hurting their necks; the stirrup, which provides stability/control and allowed riders to wield weapons and agricultural tools; and the 3-year/3 field crop system rotation system (one year cropped, one year grasses, and one year fallow). This agricultural triad substantially improved human survival and the standard of living. Other contributions include ships which could sail close to the wind, ship designs which could transit open ocean waters, and the sternpost rudder which allowed much better control of ships (particularly in rough waters). These innovations underpinned the expansion of trading, a greater variety of goods, and trade and cultural exchange with other civilizations.

The idea of banking and credit was developed in commerce, which made it possible to buy and sell goods over long distances instead of having to lug gold and silver coins all over. In turn the Venetians invented financial accounting (Venice, having been founded by refugees fleeing Attila the Hun in

the 5th century, survived by maritime trade). The idea of capitalism was also invented as monasteries practiced division of labor (specialization) and invested resulting surpluses in agricultural tools, food storage systems, improved wine making, irrigation, and creation of new branch monasteries. As they were able to develop cash reserves (specie), they entered the business of making loans to kings and other officials and merchants.

Certainly one of the most significant achievements was the idea, which started as a faint glimmer and only grew slowly, that ordinary people should be secure in their persons and property and that they could only be deprived of these by an

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
Thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Both waking and sleeping,
thy presence my light...*

– St. Dallin Forgaill, 6th Century (Ireland)
and still sung often today.

evidentiary trial of their peers. Prior to this concept, property was owned by the king, the church, the village council, the tribe, clan, or the local strongman. Land was assigned to a family for a period of time and its use could be revoked capriciously. Another innovation was the idea of an elected council that could overrule the king. At first, as in the case of the Magna Carta (1215), it



included only the large land owning feudal barons, but gradually the principle took hold and broadened and deepened. Of course the art, architecture, poetry, philosophical litera-

ture, religious writings, and music of the “dark ages” contain some of the most profound, prolific, and aspirational treasures of human existence.

In the quote at the beginning of this article, Supervisor Ray States that “industrialization and the 20th century are something akin to the dark ages.” Since the dark ages are a misnomer, she should have narrowed her analogy to a specific violent period. For example, the first 150 years after the collapse of classical civilization in Western Europe were particularly nasty. Barbarian armies consisting of Huns, Vandals, Burgundians, Frankish pirates, Scythian cavalry, and local warlords repeatedly devastated much of what now comprise Spain, North Africa, Italy, the Balkans, France, the Low Countries, and England. The Anglo Saxons, who invaded Britain, conducted a deliberate policy of systemic annihilation of the existing Romano-Celtic population. Transportation systems, agriculture, food distribution, water and sewer systems, and policing all collapsed. It is estimated that the population of the City of Rome dropped from as many as 1 million to 15,000 within a generation. This pattern occurred

all over the west. Life expectancy dropped from 60 years of age to below 30. This did not occur in the Eastern Roman Empire, which survived for centuries, or in areas of the Middle East and southeastern Europe, which were subsequently conquered by Islamic armies (except during the actual periods of conquest and new regime establishment).

Most of the deaths leading up to and through World War II (not to mention the wars themselves) were caused by socialist dictators killing their own people (Stalin) or killing people of their neighboring countries because of their race/ethnicity/culture/religion (Hitler and Imperial Japan). Stalin eliminated 10 million people by starvation. Similarly, the early 20th century Turkish genocide of 1.5 million of Armenians had nothing to do with industrialization. It is estimated that Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution of the 1960’s resulted in the deaths of 49 million of his own citizens, mostly from government induced starvation. The totalitarian dictators killed their citizens by withholding the benefits of industrialization (bringing in food by railroad, use of mechanized farming, fertilizer etc.). Of course these death tolls

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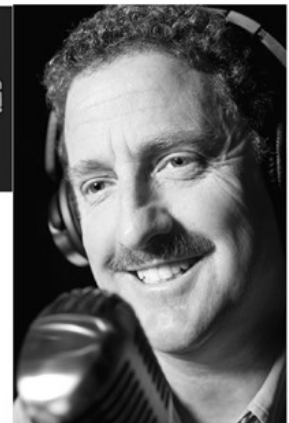
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far exceed the totals involving combatants and citizens (who were bombed or otherwise killed by direct military action). Moreover, they were deliberate national policy based on ideological doctrine of totalitarian political parties. Certainly, beginning in the 19th century the lethality of military combat increased, steadily aided by a constant progression of technologically advanced weapons that could be mass-produced in industrial factories. This combined with the imposition of mass citizen armies (first used by Napoleon) and subsequently adopted by Abraham Lincoln to crush the Confederacy and free the slaves increased the number of combatants and the potential for casualties. Both Union and Confederate generals understood the destructiveness of rifled canon, breach loading rifles, the use of railroads to concentrate and supply large forces swiftly, the use of telegraph communication to aid tactical decision making, and the use (Lee in particular) of both entrenchments and highly mobile forces. The Union pioneered the use of ironclad steam ships with rotating cannon turrets. The Confederacy experimented with early submarines. It should be noted that total Civil War combat related war deaths of 650,000 (both sides) exceeded the combined American totals for both world wars (WW I, 116,516 + WW II, 405,119 = 521,635). Of course in the two World Wars, and except for the Hawaiian Islands, some Alaskan islands, and the Philippines, US territories were spared from direct bombing, invasion, and occupation.

By the time of World War I, the semi-automatic rifle, machine gun, airplane, tank, long-range artillery, and internal combustion engine truck (to bring soldiers to the battle rather than marching them and having them arrive exhausted), and the long-range submarine all had major impacts. In World War II these destructive innovations were advanced by radar, sonar, aircraft carriers, guided missiles, long-range bombers, and the jet fighter. The destructive capacity was further amplified by ever more lethal infantry weapons, accurate artillery, and the use of massed mobile armor in close coordination with air attacks. The mass bombing of civilian populations expanded destruction far beyond the combatants. Had the British and French attacked Germany and removed Hitler in 1938 and not surrendered to the Nazi take-

over of Czechoslovakia, World War II probably would never have happened. Thus a failure of nerve, not industrialization, caused the unnecessary deaths of tens of millions, mostly noncombatants. Had the US been forced to invade Japan to achieve victory in 1945, it is estimated that several million young Americans might have become casualties. Escalating strategic bombing and naval blockade forced Japan's surrender instead. In this case, "mechanization" and "industrialization" enabled victory and allowed General MacArthur to pave the way for the transformation of Japanese society to a democratic, capitalist, industrial powerhouse characterized by a vastly improved standard of living for 100 million people. Consider the North Korean alternative.



30th Anniversary of the Tokyo Disneyland
(Note that the signature Disney "fairy castle" is a knock off of European "Dark" Age military architecture)

Today we face the threat of chemical, biological, and radiological weapons of mass destruction which are possessed by dictators in Russia, China, Pakistan, and perhaps North Korea.

But does the presence of these things prove Ray's thesis of an industrially created "dark age"? I would argue in the negative. The totalitarian dictatorships try to expropriate the technological and industrial benefits created in the intellectually free capitalist democracies. They then pervert their use to keep their own people subjugated and to try to enslave

the rest of humanity. In the end, some of their fatal flaws (suppression of truth, resistance to innovation, and legal prohibition of entrepreneurship) mean that they can never really keep up. Just when they think they have mastered the technique, someone in a garage in San Jose or Austin or any of a thousand other places will create a leapfrogging technology that leaves them in the dust. High yield rice, iPads, powerful vaccines, low- and no-emission cars, Dreamliner airplanes, Marie Callender Chicken Pot Pies, medical diagnostic imaging devices, blood pressure medicine, artificial organs, and yes, precision guided bombs, electronics that make fighter planes invisible, and space planes with directed beam weapons that can destroy ICBMs in both the lift and deployed phases, are here. Planners in Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran have to take these things into account.

The industrially mass-produced Marie Callender³ Pot Pie is full of chicken (or turkey, or beef – your choice), vege-

tables, and topped by a tasty crust. Sometimes you can get one on special for 99 cents. You can cook it in a microwave oven (another mass produced industrial product) in a few minutes. It is a complete meal. I was in line at the checkout behind a mother with two children. She bought some of the discount pies with her Cal Fresh charge card (food stamp card). The children were full of happy anticipation for their supper.

Techno-industrial civilization is a golden age.

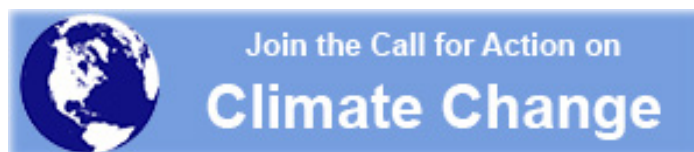


GOVERNOR JERRY DOUBLES DOWN: IT'S NOW CLIMATE DISRUPTION

By Michael F Brown

Governor Jerry Brown's official State website home page contains a prominently displayed link to a policy guide for government officials entitled *Scientific Consensus on Maintaining Humanity's Life Support Systems in the 21st Century: Information For Policy Makers*. The report is signed and endorsed by 520 scientists from all over the world. The Governor, in announcing the release of the document, warned "... Earth is rapidly approaching a tipping point at which human impacts are causing alarming levels of harm to our planet, and characterized it as a "... groundbreaking call to action on climate change and other global threats to all humanity." He

further stated, "This is not just about science, this is about activism... This is an important challenge, cause and undertaking. We can do it, but we have to do a lot more than we're doing now."



By endorsing the policy guide and its solutions, Brown is clearly signaling that current State regulatory policies will only become more robust and expensive. He is also sending

the message that there will be more economic manipulation by means of incentives for some businesses and disincentives for others. The report makes it clear that stack-and-pack housing is a major component of the entire effort, which in total is nothing less than an effort to reorder society and redistribute wealth.

The Policy Guide lists 5 overall problems, which if not proactively solved on a massive scale will tip the world off an ecological cliff resulting in catastrophic negative consequences to human society. The report states:

Humans have been an integral part of the global ecosystem since we first evolved; now we have become the dominant species in it. As such, we strongly influence how Earth's life support systems work, in both positive and negative ways. A key challenge in the coming decades is to ensure that the negative influences do not outweigh the positive ones, which would make the world a worse place to live. Robust scientific evidence confirms that five interconnected negative trends of major concern have emerged over the past several decades:

- *Disrupting the climate that we and other species depend upon.*
- *Triggering a mass extinction of biodiversity.*
- *Destroying diverse ecosystems in ways that damage our basic life support systems.*
- *Polluting our land, water, and air with harmful contaminants that undermine basic biological processes, impose severe health costs, and undermine our ability to deal with other problems.*
- *Increasing human population rapidly while relying on old patterns of production and consumption.*

These five trends interact with and exacerbate each other, such that the total impact becomes worse than the simple sum of their parts.

The accompanying illustration shows a tiny figure attempting to prevent the globe from tipping off a symbolic cliff against a background of dirty factory smoke. The view of the world places oil rich Saudi Arabia as its focal point. The recommended solutions portion of the Report is general but nevertheless calls for a fundamental restructuring of society and redistribution of wealth.

Two strategies will be required to avoid the worst impacts of population growth.

Reduce Consumption in the developed countries:

Reduce the per capita use of resources in economically developed countries, while still allowing growth in quality of life in developing countries. For example, the average U.S. citizen used about 22 barrels of oil per year in 2011, whereas the average person in China and India used only about 3 and 1 barrels, respectively. . Evening out such disparities while still preserving quality of life will require a transformation of energy and resource-consumption regimes in both rich and poor nations, as well as major technological breakthroughs in some areas.

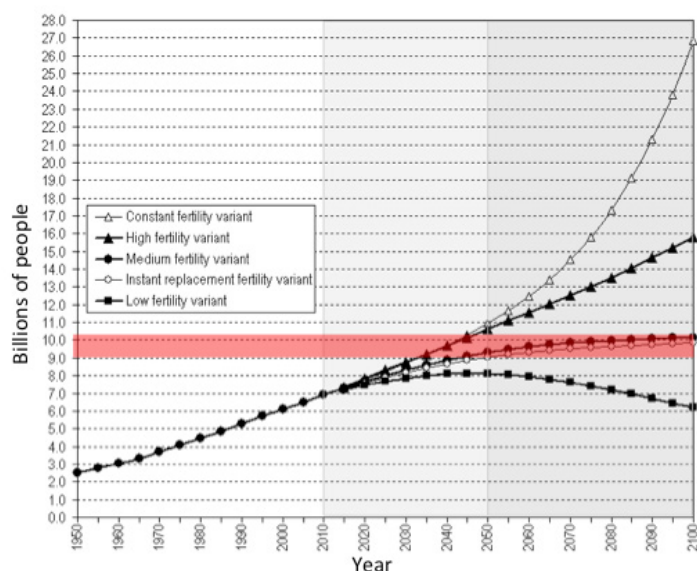
Reduce Population Growth in the Undeveloped Countries:

Today, about 40% of the population lives in countries where the fertility is already near replacement, and another 42% live in countries where the fertility rate is significantly lower. The "low"



projection (see the graph on p. 15) is achievable and should be the goal. Ending world population growth at about 8 billion requires bringing down fertility rates in the 18% of the population that live mostly in economically disadvantaged countries, where people still lack ready access to education and health care. Raising levels of education, particularly among women, and providing access to safe and effective means of contraception to those who want it, have been proven to reduce fertility rates substantially.

The referenced population alternatives chart is reproduced below:



Other recommended solutions contained in the Guide are listed below:

Use Nuclear Power?

Reduce emissions to requisite values over the next 50 years appears possible through coordinated innovation and deployment of new transportation and energy systems, which can be accomplished largely with existing technology. This will require rapid scaling-up of carbon-neutral energy production (solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, hydrogen fuel-cells, nuclear, microbe-based biofuels) to replace energy production from fossil fuels.

Climate Disruption:

This statement is significant for two reasons. One is that it notes that nuclear energy is an important part of the solution. As we have often pointed out, the enviro-socialists can't have it both ways – prohibiting both fossil fuels and nuclear

power. Will Jerry Brown launch a major initiative to take California nuclear? The second reason is that it uses the new vogue term “Climate Disruption.” As our readers are well aware, Global Warming became Climate Change when the temperature data did not conform with the ideology. Now climate change has become Climate Disruption, perhaps because both written history and geological history show considerable climate change over the eons.

Stop Ecosystem Transformation:

Minimize the human footprint to prevent extinction of other species and degradation of essential ecosystem services.

Slowing and ultimately stopping the encroachment of agriculture into currently uncultivated areas (especially the few remaining tropical rainforests and savannahs) will probably require regulatory policies and incentives for conservation.

Stack And Pack Housing

It will be necessary to avoid losing more land to suburban sprawl through emphasizing development plans that provide higher-density housing and more efficient infrastructure in existing built-up areas, rather than carving new communities wholesale out of less disturbed surrounding lands.

GOVERNOR DOUBLES DOWN AND MORE

Brown is serious and recruited highly regarded scholars to prepare the Guide, which renders it all the more potent. The actual author of the Guide is UC Berkeley Professor Anthony D. Barnosky, Chairman of the Department of Integrative Biology and Curator of Museum of Paleontology. He was assisted by a small team of fellow academics which included Professors Paul and Ann Erlich of Stanford University.¹ Erlich, who is famous for his 1968 polemic, *The*

¹ Paul Ehrlich is a Professor of Biology and President of the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University, and Adjunct Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney. His research interests are in the ecology and evolution of natural populations of butterflies, reef fish, birds and human beings. Anne Ehrlich is a Senior Research Scientist in Biology at Stanford and focuses her research on policy issues related to the environment.

Population Bomb, believes that the collapse of civilization is imminent and the radical changes must be imposed. His writings are cited prominently within the Governor's Guide for Public Officials. In a supporting referenced article entitled *Can Global Collapse be Avoided*, Erlich pronounces some striking recommendations highlighted below:

Environmental problems have contributed to numerous collapses of civilizations in the past. Now, for the first time, a global collapse appears likely. Overpopulation, overconsumption by the rich and poor choices of technologies are major drivers; dramatic cultural change provides the main hope of averting calamity.

One of Erlich's key recommendations is to achieve rapid political and social change.

BE READY FOR SACRIFICES

Societies have a long history of mobilizing efforts, making sacrifices and changes, to defeat an enemy at the gates, or even just to compete more successfully with a rival. But there is not much evidence of societies mobilizing and making sacrifices to meet gradually worsening conditions that threaten real disaster for future generations. Yet that is exactly the sort of mobilization that we believe is required to avoid a collapse.

THE CURRENT MOLD IS TO BE BROKEN - CAPITALISM, PRIVATE PROPERTY OR WHAT?

Perhaps the biggest challenge in avoiding collapse is convincing people, especially politicians and economists, to break this ancient mold and alter their behavior relative to the basic population-consumption drivers of environmental deterioration.

THE GROWTH IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING (THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION) IS AN ABERRATION AND YOU DON'T GET IT

Unfortunately, most 'educated' people are immersed in a culture that does not recognize that, in the real world, a short history (a few centuries) of exponential growth does not imply a long future of such growth.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

At the global level, the loose network of agreements that now tie countries together, developed in a relatively recent stage of cultural evolution since modern nation states appeared, is utterly inadequate to grapple with the human predicament. Strengthening global environmental governance and addressing the related problem of avoiding failed statehood are tasks humanity has so far refused to tackle comprehensively even as cultural evolution in technology has rendered the present international system (as it has educational systems) obsolete. Serious global environmental problems can only be solved and a collapse avoided with an unprecedented level of international cooperation. Regardless of one's estimate of civilization's potential longevity, the time to start restructuring the international system is right now. If people do not do that, nature will restructure civilization for us.

THE RICH (DEVELOPED CAPITALIST ECONOMIES) ARE OVERCONSUMING

Similarly, widely based cultural change is required to reduce humanely both population size and overconsumption by the rich. Both go against cultural norms, and, as long feared, the overconsumption norm has understandably been adopted by the increasingly rich sub-populations of developing nations, notably India and China.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION WAS BAD

The industrial revolution set civilization on the road to collapse; spurring population growth, which contributed slightly more than overconsumption to environmental degradation. Now population combined with affluence growth may finish the job.

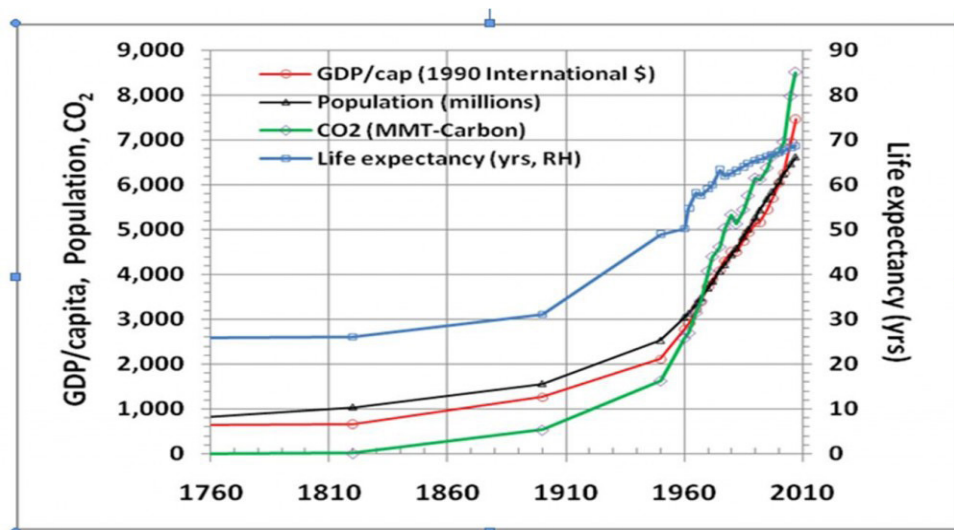
DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO DO TO MITIGATE EMISSIONS

Rather than tinkering around the edges and making feeble or empty gestures towards one or another of the interdependent problems we face, we need a powerful and comprehensive approach. In addressing climate change, for instance, developing nations need to be convinced that they (along with the rest of the world) cannot afford (and do not need) to delay action while they 'catch up' in development. Indeed, development on the old model is counterproductive; they have a great opportunity to pioneer new approaches and technologies.

All nations need to stop waiting for others to act and be willing to do everything they can to mitigate emissions and hasten the energy transition, regardless of what others are doing.

It is appallingly clear that the doctrines reported here are and will increasingly be the official policy of the State of California. Moreover it is recommended that public officials everywhere adopt them. The chart below summarizes the worldwide improvement in the standard of living resulting from the industrial revolution and its companion facilitators,

democracy, capitalism, and the spread of private property ownership. Does the Governor of California really believe that it is over? Does he believe it should be over? Are the Governor, the scientists, and the enviro- socialists going to throw the high standard of living baby out with the CO₂ bathwater?



This article was prepared by Mike Brown, Governmental Affairs Director of The Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business of San Luis Obispo County. Brown has 42 years of state and local government experience.

CLIMATE FORECAST: MUTING THE ALARMS

FROM THE *WALLSTREET JOURNAL*

Even while it exaggerates the amount of warming, the IPCC is becoming more cautious about its effects

By Matt Ridley
March 27, 2014

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will shortly publish the second part of its latest report, on the likely impact of climate change. Government representatives are meeting with scientists in Japan to sex up—sorry, rewrite—a summary of the scientists' accounts of storms, droughts and diseases to come. But the actual report, known as AR5-WGII, is less frightening than its predecessor seven years ago.

The 2007 report was riddled with errors about Himalayan glaciers, the Amazon rain forest, African agriculture, water shortages and other matters, all of which erred in the direction of alarm. This led to a critical appraisal of the report-writing process from a council of national science academies, some of whose recommendations were simply ignored.

Others, however, hit home. According to leaks, this time the full report is much more cautious and vague about worsening cyclones, changes in rainfall, climate-change refugees,



Cartoon by David Klein

and the overall cost of global warming.

It puts the overall cost at less than 2% of GDP for a 2.5 degrees Centigrade (or 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit) temperature increase during this century. This is vastly less than the much heralded prediction of Lord Stern, who said climate change would cost 5%–20% of world GDP in his influential 2006 report for the British government.

The forthcoming report apparently admits that climate change has extinguished no species so far and expresses “very little confidence” that it will do so. There is new emphasis that climate change is not the only environmental problem that matters and on adapting to it rather than preventing it. Yet the report still assumes 70% more warming by the last decades of this century than the best science now suggests. This is because of an overreliance on models rather than on data in the first section of the IPCC report—on physical science—that was published in September 2013.

In this space on Dec. 19, 2012, I forecast that the IPCC was going to have to lower its estimates of future warming because of new sensitivity results. (Sensitivity is the amount of warming due to a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide.) “Cooling Down Fears of Climate Change” (Dec. 19), led to a storm of protest, in which I was called “anti-science,” a “denier” and worse.

The IPCC’s September 2013 report abandoned any attempt to estimate the most likely “sensitivity” of the climate to a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide. The explanation, buried in a technical summary not published until January, is that “estimates derived from observed climate change tend to best fit the observed surface and ocean warming for [sensitivity] values in the lower part of the likely range.” Translation: The data suggest we probably face less warming than the models indicate, but we would rather not say so.

The Global Warming Policy Foundation, a London think tank, published a careful survey of all the reliable studies of sensitivity on March 5. The authors are British climate scientist Nic Lewis (who has no academic affiliation but a growing reputation since he discovered a glaring statistical distortion that exaggerated climate sensitivity in the previous

IPCC report) and the Dutch science writer Marcel Crok. They say the IPCC’s September report “buried good news about global warming,” and that “the best observational evidence indicates our climate is considerably less sensitive to greenhouse gases than climate scientists had previously thought.”

Messrs. Lewis and Crok argue that the average of the best observationally based studies shows the amount of immediate warming to be expected if carbon dioxide levels double after 70 years is “likely” to be between one and two degrees Centigrade, with a best estimate of 1.35C (or 2.4F). That’s much lower than the IPCC assumes in its forthcoming report.

In short, the warming we experienced over the past 35 years—about 0.4C (or 0.7F) if you average the measurements made by satellites and those made by ground stations—is likely to continue at about the same rate: a little over a degree a century.

Briefly during the 1990s there did seem to be warming that went as fast as the models wanted. But for the past 15–17 years there has been essentially no net warming (a “hiatus” now conceded by the IPCC), a fact that the models did not predict and now struggle to explain. The favorite post-hoc explanation is that because of natural variability in ocean currents more heat has been slipping into the ocean since 2000—although the evidence for this is far from conclusive. None of this contradicts basic physics. Doubling carbon dioxide cannot on its own generate more than about 1.1C (2F) of warming, however long it takes. All the putative warming above that level would come from amplifying factors, chiefly related to water vapor and clouds. The net effect of these factors is the subject of contentious debate.

In climate science, the real debate has never been between “deniers” and the rest, but between “lukewarmers,” who think man-made climate change is real but fairly harmless, and those who think the future is alarming. Scientists like Judith Curry of the Georgia Institute of Technology and Richard Lindzen have moved steadily toward lukewarm views in recent years.

Even with its too-high, too-fast assumptions, the recently leaked draft of the IPCC impacts report makes clear that when it comes to the effect on human welfare, “for most economic sectors, the impact of climate change will be small relative to the impacts of other drivers,” such as economic growth and technology, for the rest of this century. If temperatures change by about 1C degrees between now and 2090, as Mr. Lewis calculates, then the effects will be even smaller.

Indeed, a small amount of warming spread over a long period will, most experts think, bring net improvements to human welfare. Studies such as by the IPCC author and economist Professor Richard Tol of Sussex University in Britain show that global warming has probably done so already. People can adapt to such change—which essentially means capture the benefits but minimize the harm. Satellites have recorded a roughly 14% increase in greenery on the planet over the past 30 years, in all types of ecosystems, partly as a result of man-made CO2 emissions, which enable plants to grow faster and use less water.

There remains a risk that the latest science is wrong and rapid warming will occur with disastrous consequences. And if renewable energy had proved by now to be cheap, clean and thrifty in its use of land, then we would be right to address

that small risk of a large catastrophe by rushing to replace fossil fuels with first-generation wind, solar and bioenergy. But since these forms of energy have proved expensive, environmentally damaging and land-hungry, it appears that in our efforts to combat warming we may have been taking the economic equivalent of chemotherapy for a cold.

Almost every global environmental scare of the past half century proved exaggerated including the population “bomb,” pesticides, acid rain, the ozone hole, falling sperm counts, genetically engineered crops and killer bees. In every case, institutional scientists gained a lot of funding from the scare and then quietly converged on the view that the problem was much more moderate than the extreme voices had argued. Global warming is no different.

Mr. Ridley is the author of “The Rational Optimist” (HarperCollins, 2010) and a member of the British House of Lords.



Picture Courtesy of Elite Daily:
The Voice of Generation Y

CALIFORNIA'S CARBON SPENDING RUSH

FROM THE *WALLSTREET JOURNAL*

Sacramento proves that cap and trade is about income redistribution.

California seems to be the place where bad ideas go to live—and reproduce. Behold Senate President Darrell Steinberg's brainstorm to spend cap-and-trade revenues on income redistribution and the state's bullet train, among other boondoggles.

The Senate leader last week proposed a "long-term investment strategy" to divvy up the revenues from California's cap-and-trade program, which requires businesses that emit more than 25,000 carbon metric tons annually to purchase permits for the privilege. The state is now giving away about 90% of permits for free and auctioning off the rest.



California Gov. Jerry Brown. Getty Images

So far the auctions have generated \$1.5 billion, but cash will start to pour in next year when the cap is applied to fuel suppliers, which account for nearly 40% of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Revenues will balloon as the California Air Resources Board reduces both the cap and the free allowances. The state legislative analyst predicts that cap and trade will raise between \$12 billion and \$45 billion in toto by 2020.

While state law requires that these cap-and-trade "fees" fund programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Governor Jerry Brown last year seized, er, "borrowed" nearly all of the auction proceeds for general-fund expenses. Mr. Steinberg now plans to raise Mr. Brown by spending future cashflows on his personal favorites: 40% for "sustainable communities" (i.e., affordable housing in urban areas); 30% for mass transit; 20% for high-speed rail; and 10% for roads and bike paths. To appease green groups and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, he also wants an additional \$200 million each year for "natural resource, waste, and water" (e.g., wetland development, recycling and "clean vehicles"), and \$200 million for "electric vehicle deployment." Another \$10 million in "green bank funding" would go toward bolstering the \$200 million the state spends annually subsidizing electric cars and "alternative fuel" dreams. In case these investments don't pan out,

the Senate leader suggests a \$200 million “climate dividend for transportation consumers.”

This rebate would come on top of the \$750 million “climate credit” that the California Air Resources Board has required utilities to pay electricity consumers annually to compensate for the soaring cost of renewables. Mr. Steinberg’s “climate dividend,” as he calls it, is likewise intended to offset rising gas prices caused by the state’s green policies.

California gas prices are the nation’s second highest after Hawaii and about 55 cents more than the national average. Lo, the Western States Petroleum Association estimates that cap and trade will cost consumers 12 cents more per gallon next year, and Mr. Steinberg has warned that gas prices could spike by 40 cents per gallon.

Neither estimate accounts for the impact of the state’s low-carbon fuel standard, which kicks into high gear next year. The Boston Consulting Group in 2012 figured that the one-two punch will slap an extra \$0.49 to \$1.83 per gallon onto the price of gas by 2020.

The kicker is that Mr. Steinberg’s spending plans would all be subject to annual legislative appropriations except for high-speed rail, whose revenue stream would be guaranteed. The Senate leader suggests that the cap-and-trade revenues could be securitized to finance the \$68 billion bullet train. Just one problem: The cap-and-trade revenues must be used to reduce carbon emissions, and as the state legislative analyst has noted, the train’s construction will increase emissions. The state Air Resources Board has endorsed the high-speed rail authority’s plan to circumvent this annoying legal requirement by recycling concrete and steel from demolition, planting thousands of trees as well as purchasing “farmland conservation easements” and low-polluting school buses—which merely demonstrates the board’s farcical carbon-accounting rules.

We’ve written for years that cap and trade’s real purpose was to create another revenue stream for politicians, and California businesses are suing the board for illegally imposing a tax disguised as a regulatory fee. Mr. Steinberg’s “investment strategy” proves their case.

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California High Speed
Rail Simulation

Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business
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