

The Most Common Climate Change Falsehoods Spread by President Trump and Allies around the National Climate Assessment – And How Reporters Can Follow Up if They Try it Again at the Poland Climate Conference

President Trump and his surrogates repeatedly spread falsehoods in response to last month's National Climate Assessment – and reporters responded by fact-checking them. As officials weigh in on events at the climate summit in Poland over the next two weeks, Environmental Defense Fund is providing this resource for reporters who want to continue to hold the government accountable, in real time.

In this document, we identify recent falsehoods by President Trump and his surrogates, clearly explain the truth and science involved, and offer suggested follow-up questions for reporters.

The full text of this document is in this email, but we will be periodically updating this blog whenever we see new disingenuous talking points being used by the President and his allies.

Claim: The climate change reports in the news are based on worst-case scenarios.

"We think that this is the most extreme version and it's not based on facts,"

- [White House Spokesperson Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Nov. 27, 2018](#) (referring to the November 23, 2018 National Climate Assessment)

The report assumes "there would be limited technology and innovation, and a rapidly expanding population."

- [White House Spokesperson Lindsay Walters, Nov. 26, 2018](#) (referring to the Nov. 23, 2018 National Climate Assessment)

Facts: Climate change reports consider a wide range of scenarios. For example, [the NCA report](#) considered future scenarios ranging from net negative carbon dioxide emissions to escalating emissions.

- **Follow-up Question:** *This report does cover a wide range of future scenarios, from ones where carbon emissions decline to those where they increase. On what basis do you contend this report only considered worst-case scenarios?*

Claim: Climate change reports in the news are not based on facts, and there is debate about their results.

"The [National Climate] Assessment is full of dubious and outright junk science that does not meet the minimal standards required by the Information Quality Act. The alarmists' claims about

the rate and impacts of global warming are based on discredited computer models rather than data.”

- [Myron Ebell, Director of Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Center for Energy and Environment, Nov. 26, 2018](#) (referring to the November 23, 2018 National Climate Assessment)

Facts: Climate change reports from major climate science institutions around the world are thoroughly researched and peer-reviewed. [The NCA report](#), for example, was endorsed by NOAA, NASA, the Department of Defense, and experts at 10 other agencies. It matches the conclusions of thousands of other scientists around the world.

- **Follow-up Question: *This report was produced by hundreds of top scientists and experts, and endorsed by NASA, NOAA and the Department of Defense. Are you contending these experts were not using facts and data to reach their conclusions?***

Claim: Climate change studies are not transparent.

“The next report will “provide for a more transparent and data-driven process that includes fuller information on the range of potential scenarios and outcomes.”

- [White House Statement, Nov. 23 2018](#) (referring to the next National Climate Assessment, due in four years)

Facts: Peer-reviewed climate change studies are very transparent. For example, [the NCA report’s development was open for review at every step](#). The rough draft was open for public comment, and the authors were even required to respond to every public comment. The report was also reviewed and endorsed by major scientific institutions (see above.) Every message in the report is meticulously documented with sources and citations.

- **Follow-up Question: *What evidence do you have that this or any peer-reviewed climate study is not transparent? The draft was open to the public and outside scientists.***

Claim: The National Climate Assessment was mostly written before Trump took office, is not based on accurate, up-to-date science.

“The majority of that report was written in 2016 and it was at the direction of the previous administration.”

- [EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, Nov. 28, 2018](#)

“This is very sad... just angry anti-Trumpism. The Deep State’s 4th climate assessment is as invented, hysteric & noncredible as its 3rd, 2nd and 1st assessments. A carbon tax would accomplish nothing.”

- [Twitter, Steven J Milloy, member of the EPA transition team who runs junkscience.com](#)

“The National Climate Assessment was produced by the Obama administration and released by the Trump administration.”

- [Myron Ebell, Director of Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Center for Energy and Environment, Nov. 26, 2018](#)

The report is “nothing more than a rehash of age-old 10- to 20-year assumptions...”

- [Former Republican House Majority Leader Tom Delay, Nov. 26, 2018](#)

Facts: Actually, [the report was based on the most up to date scientific literature](#). For example, it includes the latest attribution studies for Hurricane Harvey, which made landfall and devastated parts of America just late last year. Those studies showed how human action made the storm about three times more likely to happen and increased Harvey's rainfall "by at least 15% with a best estimate of 38%." That's data culled just from Trump's two years in office.

- **Follow-up question: The report is based on current research, and was written and reviewed during the Trump administration. On what basis are you suggesting otherwise?**

Claim: Climate scientists are paid to generate false results.

Climate scientists who worked on the NCA "get paid to further the politics of global warming."

- [Former Republican House Majority Leader Tom Delay, Nov. 26, 2018](#)

"The reality is that a lot of these scientists are driven by the money that they receive."

- [Former Republican U.S. Senator Rick Santorum, Nov. 25, 2018](#)

Facts: The NCA authors did not receive compensation for writing the NCA report. In addition, academics who are usually tasked with writing climate reports -- such as earth science and environmental studies professors -- [generally make less than their peers in the humanities or social sciences](#).

What's more, fossil fuel companies fund climate studies themselves. And in peer-reviewed climate studies by Exxon Mobil from 1977 to 2014, [83 percent acknowledged the reality of climate change](#), and that it is caused by humans.

Follow-up question: *The authors are not paid. What evidence do you have these or any major climate change reports are driven by financial incentives to falsify the results?*

Claim: Climate change reports are not credible because Trump did not appoint the scientists who wrote them.

"All climate bedwetters can do is lie. The climate assessment was not done by @realdonaldtrump's 'own scientists.' The responsible science frauds belonged to Obama and the deep state."

- [Twitter, Steven J Milloy, member of the EPA transition team who runs junkscience.com](#)

"This is a report generated by people who are in the bureaucracy. These are not Trump appointees."

- [Former Republican U.S. Senator Rick Santorum, Nov. 25, 2018](#)

Facts: This report is credible because scientists, not politicians, wrote it. These are not Trump appointees, but impartial, independent civil servant scientists whose work is not directed by the politicians but by the facts.

- **Follow-up question: *Independent, civil scientists write these reports. How would Trump political appointees be more credible on the science than real scientists?***

Claim: We don't believe in man-made climate change.

"Brutal and Extended Cold Blast could shatter ALL RECORDS - Whatever happened to Global Warming?" (Twitter)

- [Donald Trump, Nov. 23, 2018](#)

"The climate has changed and is always changing."

- [Trump Administration statement, Nov. 3, 2017](#)

Facts: There is a deeply held consensus among nearly all the world's climate scientists, based on thorough, peer-reviewed science that is agreed upon by every major scientific organization in the world that man-made climate change is real.

- **Follow-up question: NASA, the National Academies of Science, and every major scientific organization in America and around the world recognizes that human-produced pollution is causing climate change that is real, and dangerous now. On what basis are you disputing this widespread agreement by scientists?**

Claim: Some scientists disagree that climate change is real and man-made.

"You're wrong about this scientific consensus... What you need to do is stimulate thinking among people who are knowledgeable."

- [Bob Murray, CEO of Murray Energy, Nov. 29, 2018](#)

Facts: [97 percent of climate scientists](#) worldwide agree climate change is real, and driven by human activity. In the scientific world, that is consensus.

- **Follow-up question: 97 percent of climate scientists and all leading scientific organizations agree climate change is real and man-made. Doesn't that constitute broad agreement?**

Claim: The Trump Administration prioritizes clean air and water.

"Our focus is on making sure we have the safest, cleanest air and water, and the president is going to do exactly that."

- [Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Nov. 27, 2018](#)

"One of the problems that a lot of people like myself, we have very high levels of intelligence, but we're not necessarily such believers... You look at our air and our water and it's right now at a record clean."

- [Donald Trump, Nov. 27, 2018](#)

Facts: The Trump administration, in fact, is trying to gut Obama-era [clean water](#) and [air protections that are responsible for our air and water getting cleaner](#).

- **Follow-up question: Trump has worked to weaken legal safeguards and cut budget and staff essential for both air and water. Doesn't that suggest clean air and water aren't priorities for Trump?**

Claim: Addressing climate change will hurt the economy.

"I don't wanna give trillions and trillions of dollars. I don't wanna lose millions and millions of jobs. I don't wanna be put at a disadvantage."

- [Donald Trump, Oct. 15, 2018](#)

Facts: Working to stop climate change can drive economic growth, while unchecked climate change is expected to have dire economic consequences. For example, Citibank estimates [the costs of unchecked climate change at more than \\$40 trillion by 2060](#). Meanwhile, there are now as many clean energy workers as there are school teachers in America. [More than 3.2 million Americans work in wind, solar, energy efficiency, and other clean energy jobs](#). And experts estimate that [investing in revitalizing America's water infrastructure could generate 1.3 million jobs](#).

- **Follow-up question: Citibank estimates the costs of failing to act on climate change at over \$40 trillion, which is more than the cost of addressing the problem. Doesn't that constitute a threat to the economy?**