

The Shepherd of the Hills Gazette

Rebuttal to Geological Society of London Scientific Assertion on Local Weather Change – Watts Up With That?

By Sammy Edwards / January 13, 2021

Guest essay by David Middleton and Andy May

The Geological Society of London recently published a statement on climate change:

Geological Society of London Scientific Statement: what the geological record tells us about our present and future climate.

Geologists Andy May and David Middleton have spent the past few days reviewing the Geological Society of London Scientific Statement and have assembled a rebuttal to some of the more questionable items in the paper.

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Texas State Geologist and Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology Scott Tinker summed it up very well in this OEd on carbon pricing:

Aug 23, 2019

Carbon Pricing Is Not a Fix for Climate Change

By: Scott Tinker

There is much talk today about carbon pricing to reduce CO₂ emissions and address climate change. Unlike many environmental pollutants that have a local or regional impact, carbon dioxide (CO₂) is global — there is only one atmosphere. If actions taken to reduce atmospheric emissions in one region result in increased emissions elsewhere, then the one atmosphere suffers.

Some form of carbon pricing — carbon tax, carbon trading, carbon credits — is favored by many politicians, NGOs, academics and even some in industry. But the reality is that a price on carbon will not be imposed by developing and emerging economies because it makes their energy more expensive, and they are too busy trying to build their economies and lift themselves from poverty.

In the developed world, carbon pricing increases the cost of manufacturing and products, which in turn drives manufacturing to developing nations where it is more affordable because of lower labor costs and less stringent environmental regulations and emissions standards. Global emissions rise in the one atmosphere.

Said differently, the good intentions of carbon pricing have an unintended negative impact on climate change. This is not hypothetical. It is happening.

If carbon pricing won't work, what will? Energy science tells us how to actually lower CO2 emissions into the one atmosphere in the time frame needed. Unfortunately, those who are the most passionate about addressing climate change seem to not like the answers from the energy experts.

[...]

So what options does energy science suggest will have a major impact on climate change?

Natural gas and nuclear replacing coal for power generation in major developing nations such as India, China and Vietnam would have a major impact. Carbon capture, utilization and storage; direct carbon capture from the atmosphere; and perhaps nature-based solutions such as increasing the size of forests would help, especially in fossil fuel producing regions such as the U.S., Russia, China and the Middle East.

[...]

These scientifically sound and economically underpinned energy solutions present a problem. Many are not favored by people who are the most concerned about climate change. Thus, politicians seeking climate votes continue to passionately promote programs and policies that won't actually address climate change.

But we have a remarkable opportunity. The right can acknowledge the need to tackle climate change. The left can acknowledge the energy science needed to accomplish real global emissions reductions into the one atmosphere. And developing and emerging nations can continue to climb out of energy poverty.

Unfortunately, this appears to be far from happening. Climate politics seems to trump energy solutions in Europe and the U.S., and the developing world continues to burn coal.

Scott Tinker is the Allday Endowed Chair of Subsurface Geology and director of the Bureau of Economic Geology at The University of Texas at Austin.

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To the extent that climate change is a problem, we can only tackle it, if we pursue economically viable pathways that preserve access to affordable, reliable energy and enable the further expansion of human prosperity. And the private sector is far better at doing this than any government.

