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## The Climate Change Climate Change

*The number of skeptics is swelling everywhere.*

By KIMBERLEY A. STRASSEL



Steve Fielding recently asked the Obama administration to reassure him on the science of man-made global warming. When the administration proved unhelpful, Mr. Fielding decided to vote against climate-change legislation.

If you haven't heard of this politician, it's because he's a member of the Australian Senate. As the U.S. House of Representatives prepares to pass a climate-change bill, the Australian Parliament is preparing to kill its own country's carbon-emissions scheme. Why? A growing number of Australian politicians, scientists and citizens once again doubt the science of human-caused global warming.

Among the many reasons President Barack Obama and the Democratic majority are so intent on quickly jamming a cap-and-trade system through Congress is because the global warming tide is again shifting. It turns out Al Gore and the United Nations (with an assist from the media), did a little too vociferous a job smearing anyone who disagreed with them as "deniers." The backlash has brought the scientific debate roaring back to life in Australia, Europe, Japan and even, if less reported, the U.S.

In April, the Polish Academy of Sciences published a document challenging man-made global warming. In the Czech Republic, where President Vaclav Klaus remains a leading skeptic, today only 11% of the population believes humans play a role. In France, President Nicolas Sarkozy wants to tap Claude Allegre to lead the country's new ministry of industry and innovation. Twenty years ago Mr. Allegre was among the first to trill about man-made global warming, but the geochemist has since recanted. New Zealand last year elected a new government, which immediately suspended the country's weeks-old cap-and-trade program.

The number of skeptics, far from shrinking, is swelling. Oklahoma Sen. Jim Inhofe now counts more than 700 scientists who disagree with the U.N. -- 13 times the number who authored the U.N.'s 2007 climate summary for policymakers. Joanne Simpson, the world's first woman to receive a Ph.D. in meteorology, expressed relief upon her retirement last year that she was finally free to speak "frankly" of her nonbelief. Dr. Kiminori Itoh, a Japanese environmental physical chemist who contributed to a U.N. climate report, dubs man-made warming "the worst scientific scandal in history." Norway's Ivar Giaever, Nobel Prize winner for physics, decries it as the "new religion." A group of 54 noted physicists, led by Princeton's Will Happer, is demanding the American Physical Society revise its position that the science is settled. (Both *Nature* and *Science* magazines have refused to run the physicists' open letter.)

The collapse of the "consensus" has been driven by reality. The inconvenient truth is that the earth's temperatures have flat-lined since 2001, despite growing concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>. Peer-reviewed research has debunked doomsday

scenarios about the polar ice caps, hurricanes, malaria, extinctions, rising oceans. A global financial crisis has politicians taking a harder look at the science that would require them to hamstring their economies to rein in carbon.

Credit for Australia's own era of renewed enlightenment goes to Dr. Ian Plimer, a well-known Australian geologist. Earlier this year he published "Heaven and Earth," a damning critique of the "evidence" underpinning man-made global warming. The book is already in its fifth printing. So compelling is it that Paul Sheehan, a noted Australian columnist -- and ardent global warming believer -- in April humbly pronounced it "an evidence-based attack on conformity and orthodoxy, including my own, and a reminder to respect informed dissent and beware of ideology subverting evidence." Australian polls have shown a sharp uptick in public skepticism; the press is back to questioning scientific dogma; blogs are having a field day.

The rise in skepticism also came as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, elected like Mr. Obama on promises to combat global warming, was attempting his own emissions-reduction scheme. His administration was forced to delay the implementation of the program until at least 2011, just to get the legislation through Australia's House. The Senate was not so easily swayed.

Mr. Fielding, a crucial vote on the bill, was so alarmed by the renewed science debate that he made a fact-finding trip to the U.S., attending the Heartland Institute's annual conference for climate skeptics. He also visited with Joseph Aldy, Mr. Obama's special assistant on energy and the environment, where he challenged the Obama team to address his doubts. They apparently didn't.

This week Mr. Fielding issued a statement: He would not be voting for the bill. He would not risk job losses on "unconvincing green science." The bill is set to founder as the Australian parliament breaks for the winter.

Republicans in the U.S. have, in recent years, turned ever more to the cost arguments against climate legislation. That's made sense in light of the economic crisis. If Speaker Nancy Pelosi fails to push through her bill, it will be because rural and Blue Dog Democrats fret about the economic ramifications. Yet if the rest of the world is any indication, now might be the time for U.S. politicians to re-engage on the science. One thing for sure: They won't be alone.

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