



Chamber on Climate Change: Show Us the Evidence

On August 25, the United States Chamber of Commerce, which claims to represent some three million large and small businesses in the United States, filed a 21-page request with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to hold a public debate on climate-change science or face litigation in federal court.

The Chamber's concern originates with an April 2007 Supreme Court decision in *Massachusetts et al. v. EPA*, wherein the court sided with the 12 states that had sued the EPA for its lack of regulation of four greenhouse gases — including CO₂ — from the transportation sector. The EPA, in a (wink, wink) defense somehow reminiscent of Br'er Rabbit's admonition to Br'er Fox about the briar patch, argued that Massachusetts and the other states did not have standing to file the lawsuit. In a five-to-four decision the court ruled otherwise, finding the EPA's refusal resulted in "actual" and "imminent" harm to the State of Massachusetts, primarily from rising sea levels along the state's coast. The EPA didn't bother refuting this with numerous studies that have found no detectable sea-level rise to be occurring there or anywhere else in the world for the last decade or more, Al Gore's obituary on the Maldives to the contrary notwithstanding.



In April 2009, after the EPA performed an alleged scientific review, which ignored important findings of their own scientist/economist, Alan Carlin, the EPA issued a proposed "endangerment finding" claiming greenhouse gases contribute to air pollution that may endanger public health or welfare. During the 60-day comment period that ended on June 23, 2009, some 300,000 comments were received showing a great deal of public interest in the subject.

The Chamber is strongly opposing the "endangerment finding" that, according to Roger Pielke, Sr. of Climate Science, is the "culmination of a several year effort for a small group of climate scientists and others to use their positions as lead authors on the IPCC, CCSP, and NRC reports to promote a political agenda." Dr. Pielke urges "that there be an independent commission of climate scientists who can evaluate the assessment process that led to the EPA findings as well as the climate science upon which it is constructed."



Written by [Ed Hiserodt](#) on August 31, 2009

Bill Kovacs, Chamber VP for environment, regulatory, and government affairs said, “They don’t have the science to support the endangerment finding,” adding, “We can’t just take their word for it.”

As expected, EPA Deputy Press Secretary Brendan Gilfillan rejected the Chamber’s claims. Falling back on the worn out “the science is settled” mantra, EPA administrator Lisa Jackson said the proposed endangerment finding was based on “the soundest peer-reviewed science available, which overwhelmingly indicates that climate change presents a threat to human health and welfare.” If the science is so overwhelming in favor of greenhouse gases being the forcing agent in the warming of the Earth since the 1860s, shouldn’t the EPA be eager to show it to the skeptics?

The EPA has 60 days to respond to the request, which they will likely deny. The Chamber then has 60 days to appeal that administrative decision in court — something they (to their credit) have promised to do.

Writing in the *ChamberPost*, Brad Peck gives a succinct summary of the Chamber’s reasoning and motivation to oppose what would surely lead to the diminution or destruction of the U.S. economy as it now operates:

In order to ensure that regulations which reengineer our economy are needed and would ultimately be effective, we are pushing the EPA to reveal the data they used to justify their endangerment proposal. The agency used secondary scientific sources, studies that largely weren’t adequately peer-reviewed and the selective use of scientific studies to justify a policy decision they wanted to make. There are many questions to be asked of the EPA, and forgive the Chamber for not accepting “Trust Us” as an answer.

We owe the Chamber kudos for a job that very much needs doing.

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