



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 18, 2014

Obama Ludicrously Links California Drought to Climate Change

President Obama had plenty of photo ops in California February 14 as he [strolled in farmlands](#) parched by the ongoing drought. To the farmers he added the inevitable offer of government money to help those suffering — money that presumably belongs to taxpayers outside the drought area. He reiterated the long-questioned connection between climate change and the drought:



What we have to do is all come together and figure out how we all are going to make sure that agricultural needs, urban needs, industrial needs, environmental and conservation concerns are all addressed....

We're going to have to stop looking at these disasters as something to wait for [before responding]. And then, on cue, he pulled out the government's checkbook and ticked off just where that money was going to go: Food banks serving drought victims would get some, and new government grants would be passed out to so-called scientists to study the problem and come up with more government-funded solutions. The president also whipped out his executive order pen and ordered federal agencies to cut back on their water usage. If the president has his way with the recalcitrant Congress, the total will be in excess of a billion dollars to make the problem go away.

But it's going to take far more than a paltry billion to make that problem go away. He added:

These actions will help but they're just the first step. We have to be clear. A changing climate means that weather-related disasters like droughts, wildfires, storms [and] floods are potentially going to be costlier and they're going to be harsher.

The New York Times [was gentle but firm](#) in its rebuke of the president's claim of his undebatable connection between the drought that has been hammering the Southwest for the past two years and its alleged cause, climate change:

[The president is] pushing the boundaries of scientific knowledge about the relationship between climate change ... there is no scientific consensus that [drought] is a worldwide phenomenon. Nor is there definitive evidence that it is causing California's problems.

The *Times* then noted that various computer projections predicted that California ought to be getting wetter as the climate gets warmer, not drier, and enlisted various climate changers to explain the anomaly. These included Richard Seager, a climate-change skeptic at Columbia University, who observed, "I'm pretty sure the severity of this thing is due to natural variability." The *Times'* writers even found a skeptic on the president's staff, John Holdren (who recently claimed that the severe cold snap experienced across the country [was due to global warming](#)), who changed his tune when it came



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to the California drought. Said Holdren just last week, “Scientifically, no single episode of extreme weather, no storm, no flood, no drought, can be said to have been caused by global climate change.”

This remarkable divergence of opinion in the White House reflects an increasing abundance of evidence that droughts are droughts, cyclical in nature but not predictable, going back hundreds of years. They occurred long before environmentalists started measuring man’s “carbon footprint” and his emissions of greenhouse gases.

Scientists have come up with all manner of paper theories about why California is so dry, including a high-pressure ridge off the coast that is keeping storms from dumping their moisture onto the land. Other research has, according to the *Times*, “come to somewhat different conclusions”: One is that the drought is being caused by dry air flowing up from the tropics. Still other studies show, instead, that that dry air isn’t the problem at all, predicting that the California Sierras should shortly be getting much more rainfall, significantly ameliorating the current drought — all without government interference.

Outside of Washington, where the real world exists, the conclusion is that there is no connection between climate change and California’s drought whatsoever. [An assessment](#) penned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) about the cause of the lack of rainfall between May and August 2012 — the driest stretch since 1895 — “resulted mostly from natural variations in weather,” explaining that:

- Moist Gulf of Mexico air failed to stream northward in late spring....
- Summertime thunderstorms were infrequent and when they did occur [they] produced little rainfall.
- Neither ocean states nor human-induced climate change ... appeared to play significant roles in causing several rainfall deficits....

There’s Dr. John Christy, professor of atmospheric science at the University of Alabama Huntsville, who, after examining evidence from five separate databases, said that there has been no statistically significant global warming for the past 17 years. In the process he panned the UN’s latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which touted 73 different computer models as proving the existence of warming:

All 73 models’ predictions were on average three to four times what occurred in the real world....

When 73 out of 73 [climate models] miss the point and predict temperatures that are significantly above the real world, they cannot be used as scientific tools, and definitely not for public policy decision-making.

History isn’t on the president’s side either. Drought struck the American Southwest [as far back as the 13th century](#) with other droughts recorded between the 14th and 16th centuries. There were droughts in Iowa in 1721, 1736 and from 1771 to 1773. There were droughts reported in the mid-1850s, one in the 1870s and one in the 1890s.

There was the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, another one from 1944 until 1950, and the most severe drought in recorded history hit Texas from 1950 to 1957. California suffered a drought in 1958-59, and the record continued with droughts in the 1960s, the mid-1970s, the early 1980s and the late 1990s. The California drought in 2001-02 was the driest since records began in 1877. And so on.

The president is back in Washington, having had his opportunity to claim a connection between climate



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change and the drought where none exists. As a result he may have missed [the summary of the weather](#) from the U.S. Drought Monitor dated February 11: "During the past 7 days, the first significant storm of the wet season inundated parts of central California and the northern Sierra Nevada with 6-12 inches of precipitation [and] locally up to 15 inches."

Not that this news would have any impact on such pronouncements from the president. Although the link between drought and climate change is nonexistent, the connection between claims of global warming and government handouts remains secure.

Photo of cracked dry bed of Almaden Reservoir in San Jose, Calif., Feb. 7, 2014: AP Images

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