



Sen. Inhofe Advises Pope to Avoid Climate Change

Discussion

Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.), who chairs the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, said during his opening breakfast keynote speech at the Heartland Institute's Tenth International Conference on Climate Change in Washington, D.C., on June 11 that Pope Francis should stay out of the ongoing debate regarding climate change and man's alleged contribution to global warming.



"Everyone is going to ride the pope now. Isn't that wonderful," Inhofe was quoted as saying by *The Guardian*. "The pope ought to stay with his job, and we'll stay with ours."

A few moments later, Inhofe said: "I am not going to talk about the pope. Let him run his shop, and we'll run ours."

As was noted in a June 12 article in [The New American](#), Inhofe also told attendees at the conference that he agreed with former French President Jacques Chirac's statement that global warming "is the first component of authentic global governance."

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"The United Nations is the reason that this all came along. We all know that," Inhofe said.

"They want independence. They don't want to be accountable to anybody, to the United States or any other country," the senator continued, explaining that global climate change policies would give the United Nations its own funding source and make it unaccountable to its member countries.

Inhofe also said that the UN's 1997 Kyoto Protocol is "about leveling the playing field for big business worldwide," and if bureaucrats control carbon emissions, "you control life."

The Oklahoma senator has made the climate change debate an important part of his agenda, and has even written a book on the subject: *The Greatest Hoax: How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future*. He has been the foremost Republican defending the side of the climate change argument that receives scant coverage in the media — that climate change is a natural cyclical occurrence that has little to do with human activity.

Inhofe is supported in that viewpoint by a large number of scientists, including Fred Singer, professor emeritus of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia; William Happer, professor of physics at Princeton University; J. Scott Armstrong, professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School; John Coleman, founder of the Weather Channel; Howard Hayden, professor of physics emeritus at the University of Connecticut; David Legates, professor of climatology at the University of Delaware; Roy Spencer, former senior scientist for climate studies at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center; Thomas Wismuller, former NASA meteorologist for the Apollo program, and many others.

Back in January, Pope Francis told reporters that he is convinced global warming is "mostly" man-made and said he hopes his upcoming encyclical on the environment will encourage negotiators at a climate



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change meeting in Paris to make “courageous” decisions to protect God’s creation.

“I don’t know if it [human activity] is the only cause, but mostly, in great part, it is man who has slapped nature in the face,” Francis said. “We have in a sense taken over nature.”

The Pope’s opinions on climate change have been challenged not only by Inhofe, who is a Presbyterian, but also by former senator and Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum, who is Catholic.

“The church has gotten it wrong a few times on science, and I think that we probably are better off leaving science to the scientists and focusing on what we’re really good at, which is theology and morality,” Santorum said on a radio show earlier this month. “When we get involved with political and controversial scientific theories, I think the church is not as forceful and credible.”

While Catholics regard their Church as an infallible teacher on matters of faith and morals that have been proclaimed as dogma, no such authority is claimed for matters of science, unless conflicts arise, as when scientists deny moral truths such as the dignity of human life or the sanctity of marriage.

While the Catholic Church does teach respect for the environment and careful stewardship of God’s creation, the scientific debate over whether climate change is a natural occurrence or caused by man is ongoing and far from settled. Some scientists have asserted that global warming has ceased, or even reversed itself, as has happened throughout recorded history.

Inhofe’s statement at the Heartland conference apparently anticipated the release of a papal encyclical on climate change scheduled for Thursday, June 18. However, the Italian magazine *L’Espresso* broke the embargo on the document and published it online on June 15.

The Vatican said that the document posted by *L’Espresso* is only a draft and the rules of the embargo remain in place. *The New American* will respect that embargo and will publish commentary on the encyclical on Thursday.

Photo of Sen. James Inhofe: AP Images

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