

Climate Science vs. Fossil Fuel Fiction

An Infographic from the Union of Concerned Scientists

www.ucsusa.org/fossilfuelfiction

Source Material and Background Information

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“The cause of this trend and whether it is abnormal remain in dispute.” – ExxonMobil, 2005

Source

Reports produced by ExxonMobil in 2005 contained the following phrases: “ExxonMobil recognizes that although scientific evidence remains inconclusive, the potential impacts of greenhouse gas emissions on society and ecosystems may prove to be significant,” and “the earth has experienced a warming trend in global surface air temperatures during the twentieth century, but the cause of this trend and whether it is abnormal remain in dispute.”^{i,ii}

Exposing the Disinformation: Science Facts

At the time of this quote, the scientific evidence of the cause and impacts of climate change was well documented. The National Climate Assessment, produced by the U.S. Global Change Research Program as required by an act of Congress, report released in 2000 states “Long-term observations confirm that our climate is now changing at a rapid rate.” The “increase [in carbon dioxide] has resulted from the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas, and the destruction of forests around the world. Rising concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases are intensifying Earth’s natural greenhouse effect.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established in 1988 in recognition of the problem of global warming. Climate experts from around the world synthesize the most recent climate science findings in periodic reports. The 2001 IPCC report states “An increasing body of observations gives a collective picture of a warming world and other changes in the climate system.” and “There is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities”^{iv}

More about ExxonMobil

ExxonMobil has been spreading climate denial and disinformation for decades, as documented in UCS's "[Smoke, Mirrors, and Hot Air](#)."^v In a 2009 comment on the EPA's endangerment finding filed by the "BCCA Appeal Group" (named for the Greater Houston Partnership's Business Coalition for Clean Air) on behalf of its members, including ExxonMobil, the following statements are found: "Here, as in other areas, the specific effects of climate change remain too uncertain to justify a welfare-related endangerment finding," and "[B]y attempting to regulate a global problem with domestic regulation, EPA will not only wreak havoc on the U.S. economy but global GHG emissions may actually increase as a result."^{vi}

ⁱ Mokhiber, R. and R. Weissman. 2005. The 10 Worst Corporations of 2005. *Multinational Monitor*, Nov/Dec 2005. Online at <http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/mm2005/112005/mokhiber.html>, accessed December 8, 2014.

ⁱⁱ Goldman, G. and P. Rogerson. 2013. Assessing trade and business groups' positions on climate change. Union of Concerned Scientists. Online at http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/scientific_integrity/corporate_profiles/exxon-mobil.pdf, accessed December 8, 2014.

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Global Change Research Program. 2000. Climate change impacts on the United States: The potential consequences of climate variability and change. In the *National Climate Assessment*, Washington, DC. Online at <http://data.globalchange.gov/assets/9a/aa/ec5b4bb3b895bc8369be2ddac377/nca-2000-report-overview.pdf>, accessed February 25, 2015.

^{iv} Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2001. Summary for policymakers. In *Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, edited by J.T. Houghton, Y. Ding, D.J. Griggs, M. Noguer, P.J. van der Linden, X. Dai, K. Maskell, and C.A. Johnson. Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Online at http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/tar/wg1/pdf/WG1_TAR-FRONT.PDF, accessed February 25, 2015.

^v Union of Concerned Scientists. 2007. *Smoke, Mirrors & Hot Air: How ExxonMobil Uses Big Tobacco's Tactics to Manufacture Uncertainty on Climate Science*. Online at http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/global_warming/exxon_report.pdf, accessed December 9, 2014.

^{vi} BCCA Appeal Group. 2009. Comments in Endangerment and cause or contribute findings for greenhouse gases under section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act (U.S. EPA document EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-01271). Washington, DC. Online at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0171-3509>, accessed December 9, 2014.