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Global Warming Conference: The Science of Climate Change

Posted By [Nicolas Loris](#) On June 2, 2009 @ 11:40 am In [Energy and Environment](#) | [12 Comments](#)

The first panel at the [Heartland](#) ^[1] Institute today brings together four of the world's best scientists when it comes to climate change study. The first speaker is Anthony Watts, creator of the website [SurfaceStations.org](#) ^[2], "created in response to the realization that very little physical site survey data exists for the entire United States Historical Climatological Network (USHCN) and Global Historical Climatological Network (GHCN) surface station records worldwide." SurfaceStations.org is a project that monitors the quality of data at America's 1,221 weather stations. Once a believer that manmade carbon dioxide had a significant effect on the earth's atmosphere, Watts' change of heart is largely based on the lack of credible science.

Watts is widely known in the climate change science community for visiting weather stations across the country. He found that several biases in the location of many of the temperature reading devices. Many are on unnatural surface temperatures: on cinder, asphalt, wood chips, and concrete. They lay on top or roofs or on airport runways. Other spots for stations included spots next to an incinerator, waste management facilities (where it's much warmer) and outside of an air conditioning unit right next to where the warm air is released. One station in Baltimore had readings of over 100 degrees F when no other nearby station did. That station has been shut down but the climate records remain. His conclusion is that most of the weather stations have an upwards bias of 1 degree Celsius and in many cases it's two degrees C. Check out Watts' project, [SurfaceStations.org](#) ^[2] for much more.

University of Virginia professor Fred Singer is up next. His main conclusion is the science is not settled. Singer is also the president of the Science and Environmental Policy project and just published an 800 page report entitled, "[Climate Change Reconsidered](#) ^[3]" that questions and debunks many of the conclusions found by the IPCC report – the report Al Gore and others use as evidence manmade carbon dioxide is a severe problem. Singer's report is one of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change, mockingly suggesting the conclusions of the original IPCC report came more from politicians than climatologists.

There are too many unsolved problems when it comes to climate sensitivity and the feedback effects of water vapor and clouds. Many scientists purport natural forcings are the chief contributor to global climate change, and scientists continue to study the effects of internal oscillations and the sun's effect on climate change, which leads us to the next speaker.

Harvard astronomer [Willie Soon](#) ^[4] follows Singer. Dr. Soon is known for his tireless work advocating that solar activity and not man-made emissions is the leading variable behind the earth's temperature change. He recently had the opportunity to tell Al Gore he "strongly disagreed" with his stance on global warming. He begins with a joke, suggesting that the reason he gets so hot in his car with the windows rolled up in the summertime is not from greenhouse effect but must be from the carbon dioxide he is breathing, a joke approved by the audience with laughter and applause. He then asserts that carbon dioxide is not an "air pollutant" but food for plants and marine life.

The focus of Soon's speech is removing politics from science, a large challenge. Soon argues the "magical" CO2 knob that we can turn to the right or left to control the weather and climate simply does not exist. He emphasizes that sun-induced climate change theories are making significant progress, which is largely Soon's own doing.

Soon, about 5'9" and 170 pounds uses an interesting analogy to discuss carbon dioxide's effect on the climate. He has three photos on a slide: himself eating a cheeseburger, Tom Brady, and a gorilla drinking water. Soon represents carbon dioxide, Tom Brady represents the climate and the gorilla represents the sun. His point is simple. He can eat as much meat as he wants but at the end of the day, it's the gorilla that can knock Tom Brady over, not

Willie Soon. The translation: Even if carbon dioxide is increasing at a rapid rate, because the sun is such a significant contributor, the smallest amount of change will have a much more dramatic effect.

Soon asks an important question: What happens if we find out carbon dioxide is not a pollutant that has significant effects on global temperature and once we spend trillions of dollars to regulate it, it disrupts the CO2 vital for plant and marine life? He warns it could be an ecological disaster.

Rounding up the panel is Harrison Schmidt, a former NASA astronaut, one of the most recent Americans to walk on the moon, an earth scientist and a former Congressman. His talk is more political than scientific. He believes that any attempt to regulate carbon dioxide will be one of the largest losses of liberty our country has ever faced. By regulating just about everything that emits carbon dioxide, the government could force people to significantly change their behavior and reduce consumer choice in ways almost unimaginable. A good message from someone who understands both the science and the politics behind climate change.

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- [1] Heartland: **<http://www.globalwarmingheartland.org/>**
- [2] SurfaceStations.org: **<http://www.surfacestations.org/>**
- [3] Climate Change Reconsidered:
http://www.heartland.org/full/25358/Climate_Change_Reconsidered.html
- [4] Willie Soon: **<http://www.marshall.org/experts.php?id=44>**

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