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US Committee on Energy and Commerce



Dr. Pat Michaels was invited as a witness to a **hearing of the subcommittee on Energy and Environment** on "The Climate Crisis: National Security, Economic, Public Health Threats". He was one of 6 witnesses, the only one defending a more realistic point of view regarding climate change and the urgency of action. Speaking time was very limited, and enforced without any mercy (Comment Reblog Subscribe ...). The whole debate, with the arguments of many senators, the testimonies of the witnesses, and the questions of the senators to the witnesses can be found as a video stream [here](#). I heartily recommend to take 2 hours of your time watching the debate.

The chairman should be a person with neutral opinion. This was not the case, as his opening speech gave the same partisan opinions (*the science is settled,...*) as were repeated many times in the debate. The arguments of the senators were often very poor and simplistic; those who are in favor of drastic action seem to expect that any weather related problems happening in their states (droughts, floods, storms...) will vanish miraculously when the US go the road to carbon-free energy. Of the 6 witnesses, 5 did not oppose this naive expectation. Whatever the motive to go the carbon-free or carbon-less road (and there are many GOOD reasons for this), one should not hope that in all regions of the US extreme weather events (which happened all the time, even more frequently in past when atmospheric CO2 concentrations were low) will not happen anymore. The retired general, presenting the military point of view, presented a very confuse testimony; his answers to questions were not much clearer. J. Woolsey (former director of the CIA) was more precise and concise, but did absolutely stick to the IPCC consensus and constantly warned of the potential dangers to the national US electricity grid (I think rightly so). Prof. Schrag from Havard University was in favor for drastic measures, cited alternative energies and did not speak about nuclear energy, as if didn't even exist. A very poor testimony on the health issues was given by Dr. K. Ebie. She represented the litany ad nauseam: rising temperatures will bring more illnesses, ozone concentrations will increase very much causing an explosion of asthma etc. The ground ozone case was really presented in a profoundly partisan manner: it is true that ozone chemistry is driven (among other parameters) by temperature; the small warming expected from GW (if it will happen!) is negligible in comparison to the natural seasonal temperature swings which cause for instance the June/July/August O3 peaks. What she did not tell was that in many parts of the world (as in Europe, see [here](#)) ozone levels are actually falling. I am disgusted that a member of the scientific community is politicised to such a degree and forgets any scientific rigor and impartiality.

Dr. Pat Michaels gave a very calm and sober presentation (full text [here](#)); he demonstrated that the observed warming is at the lowest (or even below) of the 95% confidence limit of the 21 models ensemble runs of the IPCC. So if real observations of the past years show the models to be unreliable, should we not be careful and not use these models to decide upon stringent policy actions?

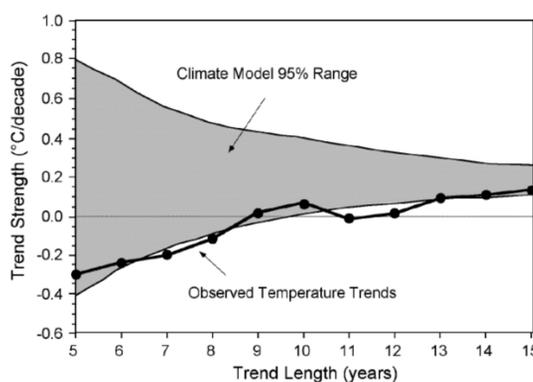


Figure 3. Climate model 95% confidence range of projected surface temperature trends of varying lengths (gray area) and the current observed values for these trends (through December 2008) (black line).

In the question and answers part some senators warned on the economic consequences of drastic anti-carbon actions (Senator Barton gave a skeptical point of view, but I did not appreciate his somewhat negligent behaviour). A senator from New York crusading to save the planet was very aggressive and rude to Pat Michaels, who nevertheless remained calm and polite.

To me the deepest impression of this debate was the parroting of the usual arguments by the defenders of drastic actions, without any mentioning of the recent stand-still of warming, of new insights into ocean warming etc.

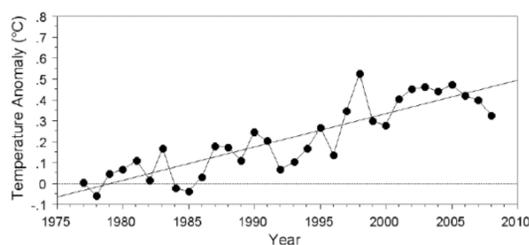
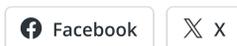


Figure 2. Annual global average temperature anomalies, 1977-2008, from the HadCru3 temperature history.

The Stern report as well as the IPCC 4AR were taken as sources of biblical truth. These same persons stubbornly ignored a nuclear energy solution as if that carbon poor nuclear energy did not exist and did not hold much future promises. CSS (carbon storage and sequestration) was naively taken as a functioning risk less technology, in sharp contrast to reality.

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