

# The Agenda Behind Climate Change Catastrophism



by Michael Rectenwald

Democrats on Capitol Hill are pressuring the Biden administration to declare a climate emergency, voicing their doomsday predictions that without immediate action to curb and ultimately end our dependence on [fossil fuels](#), “the planet” and, by implication, every living creature that inhabits it, will die. “If we don’t really begin to lower emissions, this planet has no chance,” [said](#) Representative Alan Lowenthal, a California Democrat. “We have a few years left and that’s it. The planet is dying.” This dire assessment and apocalyptic warning echoes Al Gore’s 2006 book and documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth,” and his subsequent statements that climate inaction would cause the complete summertime meltdown of the North Pole ice by 2013.

Even though such ridiculous predictions as Gore’s have been

put forth and have been proven false, it appears that, thanks to the rise of “[stakeholder capitalism](#)” and the Environmental, Social, and Governance ([ESG](#)) Index, [climate change](#) catastrophism’s heyday has finally arrived. It becomes necessary, therefore, to address it directly. This does not necessarily mean readjudicating the climate change science, since others have done well to subject the narrative to withering critique and debunking. Critics have raised the following issues with climate change catastrophism:[1]

- the previously peddled “crises” of global *cooling*, acid rain, and ozone layer depletion, which proved to be unfounded;
- the complete dismissal of the benefits of fossil fuel use;
- the failure to acknowledge that fossil fuel–powered technologies significantly mitigate the effects of climate emergencies;
- the fact that deaths from extreme weather events have decreased during the so-called climate emergency;
- the fact that solar and wind energy technologies, after fifty-plus years of development, are far from capable of replacing fossil fuels;
- the disingenuous use of the coldest period in the Holocene as the starting point for measuring rising temperatures;
- the manipulation of surface temperature readings to counter satellite readings, which show no significant recent warming;
- the exaggerated synthesis of scientific studies by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the further exaggeration in disseminating synthesized findings to the public by designated “experts” and the media;
- the IPCC’s hiding of its raw data and methodology, its blocking of outside investigations attempting to replicate its results, and its blocking of climate

- change-skeptical scientists from publishing their findings in peer-reviewed journals (“Climategate”);
- the alteration of IPCC reports—after scientists had written and approved the final texts—to remove skepticism regarding claims that human activities are having a major impact on climate and global warming;
  - the fifteen-year period (1998–2013) of no significant warming, despite a 7 percent rise in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels;
  - the rate of global warming has decelerated since 1951, despite a 26 percent increase in CO<sub>2</sub> levels;
  - the fact that temperature reconstructions of the past show temperatures as high as recent temperatures in some regions (the Medieval Climate Anomaly);
  - recent IPCC estimates of the transient climate response (TCR, or the climate estimate for the remainder of the twenty-first century) fall within the range of natural climate variation over the past six million years;
  - research shows no increases in droughts or tropical cyclone activity over the past forty years;
  - the Antarctic Sea ice extent *increased* between 1979 and 2012, contradicting global circulation models (GCMs);
  - climate modeling has failed to accurately predict climate trends;
  - the strong likelihood that warming is not necessarily negative at all but may, in fact, be positive;
  - the well-known greening of the planet due to increased CO<sub>2</sub> levels and the benefits derived thereof, including for agriculture and cooling;
  - the fact that there is no known optimal or “natural” global temperature, even if global temperatures could be accurately measured, which is doubtful.

This is but the skeleton of a body of reasons for concluding that climate change catastrophism is overwrought and hyperbolic, if not based on outright fraud. As S. Fred Singer, David R. Legates, and Anthony R. Lupo have [remarked](#):

“Contrary to some accounts of the history of the scientific debate, there was no gradually emerging “consensus” on the human role in climate change. Rather, politics quickly overtook science as environmental advocates and other interest groups recognized the utility of the climate change issue in advancing their own agendas.”

Why, then, is the establishment so hell-bent on pushing climate catastrophism? And what are these agendas?

It’s clear that climate catastrophism is not primarily about the climate. If it were, as Rupert Darwall has noted in “[Green Tyranny](#),” then Germany, facing rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions *since* its implementation of Energiewende (energy transition), would not have hastened the closure of its nuclear power plants, the only reliable source of zero-emissions electricity other than hydroelectric plants, which environmentalists also abjure. The same goes for [California and New York](#).

Philosophically, as Alex Epstein has made clear in “[Fossil Future](#),” climate catastrophism is fueled by an “anti-impact framework,” which hamstringing humanity by attempting to eliminate the human impact on the environment altogether. It is antihuman at base. It places the well-being of “the environment” [above human flourishing](#), while denying that human beings are part of the environment.

The necessary outcome of climate change catastrophism is curtailed economic growth. This is ironic because the global elites at the [World Economic Forum](#) (WEF) regularly suggest that one of their objectives is to achieve “fairness” for people in underdeveloped countries. To date, this “fairness” has involved wealth transfers from the developed to the developing world that amount to bribes for stemming further development.

Climate catastrophism boils down to renouncing and eliminating cheap and reliable energy and enriching climate alarmists like

Al Gore—all in the interest of furthering a globalist political agenda. Most importantly, that is, climate change catastrophism has to do with the vaunted “solidarity,” “inclusivity,” and “international cooperation”—the means that the WEF, the United Nations, favored corporations, and their proxies in government deem necessary to mitigate the supposed crisis. These code words stand for a totalitarian regime under which a newly refurbished collectivism will abrogate individual rights and vastly curtail human freedom. As it turns out, *the means* for mitigating climate change are *the ends* sought by climate catastrophists.

## Note

1. See Bjørn Lomborg, “Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist’s Guide to Global Warming” (London: Marshall Cavendish, 2010); Rupert Darwall, “The Age of Global Warming: A History” (London: Quartet Books, 2014); Bjørn Lomborg, “The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Rupert Darwall, “Green Tyranny: Exposing the Totalitarian Roots of the Climate Industrial Complex” (New York: Encounter Books, 2019); S. Fred Singer, David R. Legates, and Anthony R. Lupo, “Hot Talk, Cold Science: Global Warming’s Unfinished Debate” (Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 2021); Alex Epstein, “Fossil Future: Why Global Human Flourishing Requires More Oil, Coal, and Natural Gas—Not Less” (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2022).

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