



Written by on June 9, 2008

Polar Bears Thrive but Interior Dept. Calls Them “Threatened”

“Today’s decision is based on three findings,” Kempthorne said, explaining the government’s logic. “First, sea ice is vital to polar bear survival. Second, the polar bear’s sea-ice habitat has dramatically melted in recent decades. Third, computer models suggest sea ice is likely to further recede in the future.”

Kempthorne also stated: “Although the population of bears has *grown from a low of about 12,000 in the late 1960s to approximately 25,000 today*, our scientists advise me that computer modeling projects a significant population decline by the year 2050. This, in my judgment, makes the polar bear a threatened species.” (Emphasis added.)



Fortunately, Secretary Kempthorne showed some restraint in noting that the Endangered Species Act was never intended to regulate “global climate change,” stating: “Listing the polar bear as threatened can reduce avoidable losses of polar bears. But it should not open the door to use of the ESA to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.... The ESA is not the right tool to set U.S. climate policy.”

Kempthorne did not state what would be the “right tool” to set U.S. climate policy, or explain exactly where in the Constitution our government is mandated to even have a climate policy.



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