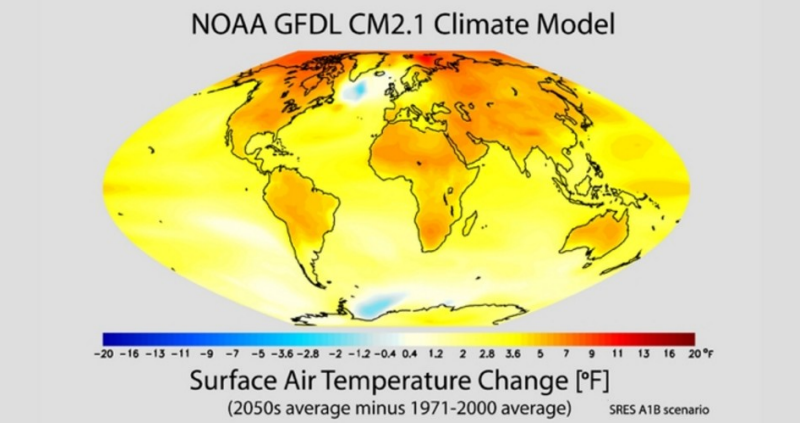
New American

Written by **Thomas R. Eddlem** on April 2, 2013

Global-warming Computer Models Fail as Temps Remain Stable



"If climate scientists were credit-rating agencies," the environment editor for Australia's largest newspaper quipped March 30, "then climate sensitivity — the way climate reacts to changes in carbon-dioxide levels — would be on negative watch but not yet downgraded." *The Australian* for March 30 concluded that "the fact that global surface temperatures have not followed the expected global warming pattern is now widely accepted."

The Australian was reacting to an article published the same day in the British magazine *The Economist*, which quoted David Whitehouse of the pro-regulatory Global Warming Policy Foundation as admitting that "If we have not passed it already, we are on the threshold of global observations becoming incompatible with the consensus theory of climate change." Whitehouse's statement means that even the hyper-regulatory zealots are now admitting their apocalyptic models are exaggerated.

According to *The Economist,* the growing gap between predicted global warming in computer models and a flat average global temperature means the scientific "consensus" manufactured by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change may have been wrong all along:

> The IPCC's estimates of climate sensitivity are based partly on GCMs [general-circulation models]. Because these reflect scientists' understanding of how the climate works, and that understanding has not changed much, the models have not changed either and do not reflect the recent hiatus in rising temperatures.
>
> The mismatch might mean that — for some unexplained reason — there has been a temporary lag between more carbon dioxide and higher temperatures in 2000-10. Or it might be that the 1990s, when temperatures were rising fast, was the anomalous period. Or, as an increasing body of research is suggesting, it may be that the climate is responding to higher concentrations of carbon dioxide in ways that had not been properly understood before.

The stable temperature of the Earth since industrial era highs in the 1990s — despite increasing CO_2 emissions from virtually every country (and especially from developing economies) since then — has also meant increasing skepticism from within the scientific community. Back in February, James Taylor of the Heartland Institute stated in *Forbes* magazine,

> Only 36 percent of geoscientists and engineers believe that humans are creating a global warming crisis, according to a survey reported in the peer-reviewed *Organization Studies*. By contrast, a strong majority of the 1,077 respondents believe that nature is the primary cause of recent global warming and/or that future global warming will not be a very serious problem.

The study Taylor mentioned, "Science or Science Fiction? Professionals' Discursive Construction of Climate Change," does not put scientific opinion into quite those simple terms. The November 2012 peer-reviewed journal article in *Organization Studies* concluded that scientists do not merely have "a

binary debate of whether climate change is 'science or science fiction.' There are more nuanced intermediary frames that are constructed by these professionals."

For example, the survey found that "virtually all respondents (99.4%) agree that the climate is changing. However, there is considerable disagreement as to cause, consequences, and lines of action." The 36-percent figure mentioned by Taylor in *Forbes* refers to what survey authors Lianne M. Lefsrud and Renate E. Meyer termed "comply[ing] with Kyoto." "Kyoto" references the Kyoto Protocol, a 1997 amendment to the 1992 international treaty signed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, that calls for radical global regulations to combat greenhouse emissions. Only 24 percent say that climate change is exclusively natural, while most of the rest of scientists believe climate change is a combination of human and natural factors.

The study did find that belief among scientists in "anthropogenic [human-caused] climate change has fallen from 75% (for the period between 1993 and 2003) as of 2004 to 45% from 2004 to 2008." The *Organization Studies* analysis of scientific opinion did not update the figures after 2008, as computer models began to fail. The analysis also noted that many scientists who believe in man-made climate change do not see it as a disaster, as the Earth has experienced in its long history several periods of significantly warmer weather than in the last 100 years.