



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 19, 2015

Obama Applauds Pope's Environmental Encyclical; Climate Realists Disagree

The encyclical on the environment released by Pope Francis on June 18 has drawn both praise and criticism from leaders around the world, with defenders of the theory that the planet is doomed because of "global warming" caused by "carbon pollution" praising it. Those who recognize that there is no provable connection between human activity and the Earth's natural warming and cooling cycles are wary of the encyclical, however, and regard it as dangerous ammunition that global warming alarmists may use to advance the UN's environmental programs that threaten both the world's economy and national sovereignty.



President Obama released a statement posted on the White House website on June 18, saying, in part:

I welcome His Holiness Pope Francis's encyclical, and deeply admire the Pope's decision to make the case — clearly, powerfully, and with the full moral authority of his position — for action on global climate change.

As Pope Francis so eloquently stated this morning, we have a profound responsibility to protect our children, and our children's children, from the damaging impacts of climate change. I believe the United States must be a leader in this effort, which is why I am committed to taking bold actions at home and abroad to cut carbon pollution, to increase clean energy and energy efficiency, to build resilience in vulnerable communities, and to encourage responsible stewardship of our natural resources.

Other leaders, who are less visible because they do not enjoy the prestige of the presidential bully pulpit, have taken issue with the premise on which the encyclical ([Laudato Si](#), on the "Care for Our Common Home") was based. The *New York Times* reported that several candidates for the Republican presidential nomination who are Catholic took issue with the papal statement.

Speaking at a campaign event in New Hampshire on June 16, after an unauthorized draft of the encyclical had been leaked by an Italian magazine, former Florida Governor Bush made it clear that he felt no obligation to accept the Pope's views on non-religious topics:

I hope I'm not going to get castigated for saying this by my priest back home, but I don't get economic policy from my bishops or my cardinals or my pope. And I'd like to see what he says as it relates to climate change and how that connects to these broader, deeper issues before I pass judgment. But I think religion ought to be about making us better as people and less about things that end up getting in the political realm.

The *Times* reported that another Catholic candidate, Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), while not



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commenting on the encyclical, said he believes that the Earth's climate is constantly changing but that "humans are not responsible for climate change in the way some of these people out there are trying to make us believe."

As we shall elaborate further, those views are supported by many credible voices in the scientific community.

Another Catholic presidential candidate, Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), told a Philadelphia audience earlier this month that the church shouldn't take public positions on scientific matters:

The church has gotten it wrong a few times on science, and I think we probably are better off leaving science to the scientists and focusing on what we're good at, which is theology and morality.

One of the most outspoken critics of the overall message underlying the encyclical (and also one of the most knowledgeable members of Congress on the topic of climate change) has been Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.), who chairs the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. Anticipating the release of the encyclical, Inhofe (a Presbyterian) said during his speech at the Heartland Institute's Tenth International Conference on Climate Change in Washington, D.C., on June 11 that Pope Francis should stay out of the ongoing debate regarding climate change and man's alleged contribution to global warming.

"Everyone is going to ride the pope now. Isn't that wonderful," Inhofe was quoted by Britain's *Guardian*. "The pope ought to stay with his job, and we'll stay with ours." A few moments later, Inhofe said: "I am not going to talk about the pope. Let him run his shop, and we'll run ours."

Inhofe was critical of the growing power of the United Nations that has been assumed to combat the unproven threat of man-made global warming, noting that the UN's 1997 Kyoto Protocol is "about leveling the playing field for big business worldwide," and if bureaucrats control carbon emissions, "you control life."

Vatican spokesmen have repeatedly confirmed the Pope's desire to influence UN climate talks scheduled to begin this November and his encyclical has already received strong praise from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Inhofe has made the climate change debate an important part of his political career, and has even written a book on the subject: *The Greatest Hoax: How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future*. He has been the foremost senator defending the side of the climate change argument that receives scant coverage in the media — that climate change is a natural cyclical occurrence that has little to do with human activity.

Inhofe is supported in that viewpoint by a large number of scientists, including Fred Singer, professor emeritus of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia; William Happer, Professor of Physics at Princeton University; J. Scott Armstrong, professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School; John Coleman, founder of the Weather Channel; Howard Hayden, professor of physics emeritus at the University of Connecticut; David Legates, professor of climatology at the University of Delaware; Roy Spencer, former senior scientist for climate studies at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center; Thomas Wismuller, former NASA meteorologist for the Apollo program; and many others.

The voices of these and other scientists who maintain that climate change is a natural phenomenon and not caused by manmade "carbon pollution" have influenced our society to the extent that Vice President



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Joe Biden lamented at the Clean Energy Investment Summit hosted by the White House on June 16 that “many investors are pulling back from early-stage research in clean energy, labs and startups,” and “There has been an 85 percent decline in traditional state early stage venture capital investment in clean energy over the last seven years.”

Unfortunately, this latest encyclical may influence many undecided citizens to take the opposite position in support of more government control of energy to prevent “carbon pollution.” More education is needed and the voices that provide evidence that climate change is natural and unrelated to human activity need to be given a fair hearing.

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