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Lawmaker: Climate change just ruse to control population

House » Panel votes 10-1 for resolution denouncing the science and proposed bill.

By Judy Fahys
The Salt Lake Tribune

Updated: 02/05/2010 11:26:26 AM MST

Rep. Mike Noel, the Legislature's chief climate-change skeptic, declared Thursday that global warming is a conspiracy to control world population.

The House Natural Resources Committee then approved a resolution that expresses the Utah Legislature's belief that "climate alarmists' carbon dioxide-related global warming hypothesis is unable to account for the current downturn in global temperatures."

The resolution, sent to the House on a 10-1 vote, would urge the Environmental Protection Agency to drop plans to regulate the pollution blamed for climate change "until a full and independent investigation of the climate data conspiracy and global warming science can be substantiated."

"We're at the breaking point,"



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said Rep. Kerry Gibson, the resolution's sponsor, who warned that the

supply of safe and affordable food is already threatened by over-regulation.

Eleven Brigham Young University scientists defended climate science in a point-by-point rebuttal to parts of the resolution and urged the panel in an e-mail to reject the measure.

"Even if all the political solutions proposed so far are flawed," they said, "this does not justify politicians attacking the science that indicates there is almost certainly a serious problem."

The Utah Farm Bureau, a strong backer of the resolution, pressed many of the same scientists, along with LDS Church-owned BYU, to apologize for comments they had made critical of a previous legislative

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State Rep. Mike Noel, left, says climate change regulation is a bad idea. (Jim Urquhart/The Salt Lake Tribune)

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climate discussion and the remarks of one witness who disputes humankind's role in global warming.

"I would call on Brigham Young University and Summer Rupper to apologize for what they have said," said Farm Bureau CEO Randy Parker, who assisted Gibson, an Ogden farmer, in presenting the measure.

Both BYU and one of the scientists involved indicated Thursday there won't be an apology for comments regarding University of Alabama researcher Roy Spencer's work.

"We attacked some of his positions," said geochemist Barry Bickmore, who signed both BYU letters. "We didn't attack him."

BYU spokesman Michael Smart noted that the scientists who have written to the Legislature have said all along they do not represent the school's views.

"The faculty have always been clear they are speaking for themselves and not for the university," he said. "The university doesn't take a position on this issue, so we don't have any comment on it."

Parker, a member of the 2007 Governor's Blue Ribbon Advisory Council on Climate Change, and Gibson told the committee that climate science was motivated by the chase for research dollars, that climatology suffers a "credibility crisis" and that the work of skeptical scientists is being squelched.

They also described devastating impacts on the economy and farmers if the EPA succeeds with proposed regulation of carbon dioxide as a pollutant under the Clean Air Act and if Congress enacts a "cap-and-tax" law.

"It would be crippling to the economy," said Gibson. "What it comes down to is: Agriculture is being regulated and taxed to death under this kind of mentality."

Parker said proposed policies would hit U.S. farmers and families hard, putting a \$2,000 or greater burden on each family, trigger energy shortages and slash farm income by half. He also said the EPA's "cow tax" would cost Utah's farmers and ranchers nearly \$104 million, although the agency insists the regulation would not apply to small businesses like farms.

Rep. Phil Riesen, D-Holladay, questioned Gibson about the "conspiracy" wording in the resolution. "A conspiracy?" he asked. "By whom? To what end?"

"I'm not sure we'll ever know the depths of it," said Gibson, adding that it was hard to separate the hype because "we only hear one side of the argument."

Rep. Roger Barrus, R-Centerville, who supported the anti-regulation part of the resolution, called the wording "pretty inflammatory" and counter to the Legislature's standards of civility.

But Noel defended the "conspiracy" wording, pointing to an out-of-print textbook, *Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment*, written in the 1970s by biologist Paul Ehrlich, Ehrlich's wife, Anne, and physicist John Holdren about the potential hazards of unchecked population.

The Kanab Republican, referring to Holdren as the Obama administration's "energy czar," read from passages of the 1,000-plus-page tome about population-control alternatives that included abortion and forced sterilization. He did not share the authors' conclusion: that voluntary population-limiting methods are "a far better choice."

"Now, if you can't see a connection [of a conspiracy] to that," the legislator said, "you're absolutely blind to what is going on. This is absolutely -- in my mind, this is in fact a conspiracy to limit population not only in this country but across the globe."

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Fact check of HJR12 points:

1. Proposed congressional legislation would cause "significantly higher energy costs."

Fact check » President Barack Obama has previously acknowledged that energy costs would

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"skyrocket," although by how much ranges from an EPA estimate of \$140 per family per year, to \$1,500 a year, according to the conservative Heritage Foundation.

2. EPA action would create "significant regulatory and financial burdens ... at a time when the nation's unemployment rate exceeds 10 percent."

Fact check » EPA is waiting for Congress to pass a bill, rather than taking unilateral action. Meanwhile, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that up to 2.3 million jobs will be lost over 20 years under current proposals, while different jobs would also be lost if no legislation is passed.

3. Temperatures have been "level and declining" over the last 12 years.

Fact check » The World Meteorological Organization notes that temperatures can be explained "partially" by the strength of El Niño and La Niña. The BYU scientists also note that the recent, short-term trend is meaningless because climate change analysis -- as opposed to weather -- strictly concerns time periods 30 years or longer.

4. There is a "more direct correlation" between CFCs and temperature changes than there is for CO₂, and that CFC regulations from the 1970s could explain the temperature decline listed above.

Fact check » According to the BYU scientists, this conclusion relies on a single paper published last year that contradicts thousands of scientific publications, which is "as illogical as it is irresponsible."

5. The emails hacked from various scientists, known as "Climategate," show that there is "a well organized and ongoing effort to manipulate" temperature data.

Fact Check » The nonpartisan Factcheck.org said that the emails taken from the Climate Research Unit had been "misrepresented," noting, for instance, that no group had relied only on the CRU, but also looked at statistics from groups like NASA. They also note that the infamous "tricks" the emails said scientists used were references to the now-discredited use of tree rings in analyzing temperature change, and not "sneaky manipulations."

6. Climate change "alarmists" have been involved in "a concerted effort" to prevent scientists who disagree with them from publishing their findings.

Fact check » The BYU scientists noted that sometimes the authors of rejected papers blame it on bias rather than "carefully consider[ing] the potential flaws pointed out by the reviewers."

7. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change does no independent research, instead relying on other, global climate researchers.

Fact check » The IPCC relies on a variety of scientists from around the world, including those at NASA. It could be noted that the Legislature does the same thing, relying on the work of outside scientists and not performing their own climate tests.

8. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, a "little ice age" occurred, reducing global temperatures. Increased temperatures today could be a normalization of temperatures after the extended period of low temperatures

Fact check » Some scientists maintain the Little Ice Age supports the belief that humans affect the

climate, and that the decimated human population from the Black Plague and the Columbian Exchange led to the global cooling.

9. Scientists, relying on government grants, may be producing results to secure more money

Fact check » Assertion lacks citation of evidence in support.

10. The Copenhagen conference on climate was ineffective and would require the United States giving billions to developing countries.

Fact check » The conference did not result in any agreement that would make the United States compensate other countries.

11. "Current legislation" would damage America's "food security and rural communities."

Fact check » The U.S. Department of Agriculture (the organization cited in the resolution) supported climate change legislation in its most recent analysis of it last summer.

12. "Global governance" would "lock billions of human beings into long-term poverty."

Fact check » The resolution tries to tie poverty statistics from the World Health Organization to the dangers of global initiatives to combat climate change. This is misleading, because even though the statistics are accurate, the WHO never suggests the statistics are either caused by current climate change rules or that they would be made worse by international attempts to fight climate change. WHO is actually supportive of efforts to fight climate change, and suggests that climate change, if left unaddressed, could create more poverty and food shortages.

Sources:

1 - <http://www.factcheck.org/2009/05/cap-and-trade-cost-inflation/>

2 - <http://epa.gov/climatechange/>

<http://www.factcheck.org/2009/10/cap-and-trade-green-jobs-or-job-killer/>

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/105xx/doc10573/09-17-Greenhouse-Gas.pdf>

3 - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/20/AR2009032003191.htm>

4 -

<http://www.epa.gov/ozone/title6/phaseout/hcfc.html>

5 - <http://www.factcheck.org/2009/12/climategate/>

6 -- (not addressed yet)

7 -- (Common sense)

8 - [http://ams.allenpress.com/perlserv/?](http://ams.allenpress.com/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1175%2FE1157.1&ct=1)

[request=get-](http://ams.allenpress.com/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1175%2FE1157.1&ct=1)

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9 -- (not addressed yet)

10 -- True

11 -

http://www.usda.gov/oce/climate_change/index.htm

12 - <http://www.who.int/topics/climate/en/>

-- Christian Vanderhooft and Judy Fahys

Climate change resolution

Visit sltrib.com for a fact check of HJR12's list of assertions on climate change and the impact of proposed regulation.

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