

## Email of July 30, 1996 to Lead Authors of IPCC Working Group I Report<sup>1</sup>

Date: Tue, 30 Jul 1996 01:07:56 -0700  
From: Ben Santer <bsanter@rainbow.llnl.gov>  
To: (78 undisclosed recipients)<sup>2</sup>  
Subject: World Climate Report

To all Lead Authors of the 1995 IPCC Working Group I Report, and to all Contributors to Chapter 8,

It's rather late at night over here, so please excuse any typos in this email. I plead tiredness.

I would direct your attention to the most recent issue of "*World Climate Report*" (Vol. 1, No. 21; July 22, 1996), a publication edited by Dr. Pat Michaels of the University of Virginia. "*World Climate Report*" is described as "*a research review edited by Patrick J. Michaels. Funding for this publication is provided by Western Fuels Association, Inc., with additional funding by associated companies*".

Michaels uses the most recent issue of *World Climate Report* as a forum for expressing his views regarding the recent Santer *et al.* detection paper that was published in the July 4 edition of *Nature*:

*"There can be little doubt that the timing of this report [Michaels refers to the Nature paper] – released four days before the signatories of the Rio Treaty sit down to discuss limiting greenhouse emissions – was for maximum political effect. Apparently Nature, which bills itself as "the world's most prestigious weekly journal of science" is not immune to being toyed with".*

The implication here is that some person or persons unknown placed pressure on *Nature* to publish our paper immediately prior to the Geneva COP-2 meeting. I find such allegations rather distasteful. I'm sure that the editorial staff of *Nature* will not be too happy with Michaels assertion that they were "*toyed with*". It would be interesting to ask Michaels how he thinks that the manipulation of *Nature* was stage-managed. I've had a few papers rejected by *Nature* in the past, and I'd be curious to know how someone might go about "*toying*" with *Nature's* editorial process.

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<sup>1</sup> The email has been reformatted. No words have been changed.

<sup>2</sup> Note: The email addresses of the 78 recipients have been removed.

By printing this sort of stuff, Pat Michaels is clearly distancing himself from the scientific community. He maintains that the funding he receives from special interest groups does not compromise his view of the science of climate change. That assertion would be more convincing if he stuck to criticism of the science, and did indulge in rhetoric or impute sinister motives. It would also be more convincing if he had bothered to consult any of the authors of the Santer *et al.* *Nature* paper prior to his public demolition of our article. The research reported on in our paper went through a rigorous peer-review process, involving four reviewers. Michaels' analysis of our work was subject to no such checks and balances. His analysis is riddled with serious misconceptions. The annoying thing is that these misconceptions could easily have been allayed had Michaels bothered to contact any of the authors of the paper. He chose not to do this.

It is troubling that certain individuals are now trying to drag my scientific reputation through the mud in the pages of the *"World Climate Report"* or the *Wall Street Journal*. The forum for scientific criticism is in the peer-reviewed literature, not in the pages of the *"World Climate Report"* or the *Wall Street Journal*.

In an email message sent to me on June 27th, Pat Michaels stated that he intended to rectify his earlier publication of the Global Climate Coalition's *"scientific cleansing"* allegations (in the *"World Climate Report"*, Vol. 1, No. 19, June 10th, 1996). He promised that he would print excerpts of our June 12th reply to the Seitz op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*. I quote:

*"I am going to put your reply (in part--I have space limitations) in the next WCR; the copy deadline is July 12, and it will be on the street around July 20"*.

Pat Michaels failed to honor this commitment. Our reply to Seitz did not appear in the most recent *"World Climate Report"*. Instead, the July 22nd *"World Climate Report"* contained the following statement:

*"Two weeks ago, in a series of email exchanges with Dr. Santer, he requested that we print his recent correspondence to the Wall Street Journal, and we agreed to place it in this issue. We were not informed at the time of his upcoming Nature article, which we discuss here. We simply don't have the space for Santer's letter in this issue, but we will print it in the future. It may have been more appropriate to delay anyway, as three more letters that relate to this issue [Note: Michaels refers here to the letters by Seitz, Singer and Ellsaesser] appeared in the July 11 Wall Street Journal"*.

By the time that Pat Michaels finally publishes our reply to the Seitz op-ed, its publication will be of limited usefulness – months will have passed since Seitz's editorial appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*.

These are troubling times for the science of global climate change – at least in the United States.

I will be attending an Aspen Global Change Institute on “*Communication of Uncertainties*” (a singularly appropriate topic) from July 30th to August 8th, and will return to Livermore on August 13th. If you need to contact me during this time, Anna McCravy knows how to get in touch with me.

With very best regards,

Ben