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[Home](#) / [news](#) / [opinion](#) / [mailbag](#) /

Letters to the Editor

By Times-Dispatch Staff

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Heat waves are not new or unprecedented

Editor, Times-Dispatch:

For those bemoaning a sweltering summer, be consoled that it is neither unprecedented nor unusual. Hollywood provides historical evidence that the 1930s were a time of "heat waves." For the 1933 musical "As Thousands Cheer," Irving Berlin produced "Heat Wave," and Ethel Merman belted out the lyric, "We're having a heat wave," in the 1938 film "Alexander's Ragtime Band." Marilyn Monroe sang it in the 1954 film "There's No Business Like Show Business."

Scientific confirmation of these heat waves comes from the State Climate Extremes Committee of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. National Climatic Data Center in its latest revamp of historical, statewide weather records. Analysis of data confirms that the 1930s, the Dust Bowl years, produced an unmatched 24 maximum temperature records.

The 1950s were the first decade since the 1930s to establish new temperature records (a total of five, including a few ties with earlier years). The decades of 1970, 1980 and 1990 set few new maximum temperature records. Since the 1990s up through 2011 there were no new maximum temperature records. This year may bring some new records for Georgia and South Carolina.

This historical perspective gives no scientific credence to those wailing about man-made climate change. Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels were approximately 25 percent lower in the temperature record-setting 1930s.

Surely the devastating derecho event this past June must be unique and related to man-made global warming. No, the term dates to 1888. A similarly destructive one occurred during a period

of global cooling on July 4, 1977. The widespread misery resulting from electrical power outages did give a glimpse into the world envisioned by U.N. luminary Maurice Strong: "Current lifestyles and consumption patterns of the affluent middle class, involving . . . use of fossil fuels, appliances, air-conditioning . . . are not sustainable."

Tell that to those who sweltered awaiting the resumption of electric power.

Charles Battig,

Virginia VA- Scientists and Engineers for Energy and Environment.

Albemarle.

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