



Letters to the Editor for August 20

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Editor, Times-Dispatch:

Hockey graph was faulty science

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Charles Battig did a great service to your readers by spreading truth about the now-collapsed climate scare (“McAuliffe sways left and right on coal”). Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli investigated Michael Mann under the Fraud Against Taxpayers Act because of statistical peculiarities evident in Mann’s “hockey stick”• graph that had purported to abolish the medieval warm period and to show – falsely-- that today’s quite normal global temperatures were unprecedented in 1,300 years.

Mann’s graph relied heavily upon the widths of tree-rings from bristlecone pines as a basis for estimating temperatures before we had thermometers. These pines are unreliable proxies because the tree-rings widen not only when the weather is warmer but also when it is wetter and when there is more CO in the air. That musses things up.

According to real scientists, the graph also gave extreme weighting to data sets that showed unusual 20 th-century warming at the expense of those that did not. The program Mann created to draw the graph would have shown the 20 th-century as unusually warm even if random red noise rather than real-world data were fed in. There were numerous other statistical curiosities. Mann’s graph is perhaps the most widely discredited object in the history of bad science.

Most learned papers based on real-world data show that the medieval warm period was real, global and warmer than the present. A spate of papers by computer modelers apparently confirming Mann's contrarian conclusion appeared with interesting suddenness after his paper was scientifically discredited. Many of the authors were linked to Mann by previous co-authorship.

Battig did not criticize Mann for his bad personality, though Mann's characteristically malevolent description of his opponents as "deniers"• and "denialists"• would be illegal in Europe as being anti-Jewish, racist hate-speech. Battig criticized Mann for his flagrantly bad science. Mann's graph was not true. It deserved criticism. It got it.

Besides, according to the satellites, notwithstanding record increases in CO concentration, there has been no global warming for 16 years and eight months -- and counting. The game is up.

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