

Floor Statement of Rep. Peter Defazio
Safe Climate Caucus
March 12, 2013

Mr. Speaker, today I rise as a member of the Safe Climate Caucus to talk about an important new report on climate change.

Of late, the discussion over global warming has focused on temperatures in the last 118 years -when standardized recordkeeping began. **Primarily, the best and most comprehensive research on temperatures has gone back only as far as 2,000 years.**

Climate change deniers have complained that these studies have been short-sighted. They haven't taken into account that the warming going on today could have happened naturally thousands of years ago – that climate change and its impacts today are a result of natural fluctuations, they say.

And there's some scientific basis to that claim. Variations on how the Earth is tilted and its orbit around the sun make for a pattern of planetary warming and cooling phases over thousands of years. During some phases the Earth heats up, others it cools down.

But last week scientists from Oregon State University, including two constituents of mine **Shaun Marcott and Alan Mix**, joined with their colleagues from Harvard University and published a study in the journal *Science*, peer-reviewed, **that provides new context to today's climate and rising temperatures.**

Instead of looking at temperatures for the last 118 years or over even 2,000 years, Marcott, Mix, and their colleagues examined temperatures going back a little further: **11,300 years –entire period of Holocene period.**

The findings are sobering, a wake-up call, or should be a wake-up call, to the members of this institution. We already knew that the Earth is warmer today than it was over much of the last 2,000 years – that's been confirmed by a mountain of scientific evidence. **Thanks to the work of Marcott and Mix and their colleagues we now know that it's warmer on Earth presently than over much of past 11,300 years.**

In fact, we've experienced almost the same range of temperature change over the last 100 years – coinciding with the invention and widespread use of engines and turbines powered by fossil fuel – as over the previous 11,000 years of Earth's history. **I want to repeat that for emphasis: rising temperatures over the last century have been greater than the temperature increases over the previous 100 centuries....combined.**

It shows that human activity reversed a cooling pattern of 5,000 years of 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit in 100 years. It's extraordinary. In fact, their projections for the future are also very sobering.

You know climate deniers are kind of running out of excuses. They said 118 years, not enough. 2,000 years, not enough. Well, how about 11,300 years of certified research?

They say it is biased by region. This was done in 73 sites around the entire planet.

We've heard about "solar insulation". Well according to this claim we should now be at the bottom of a long-term **cooling trend** – oops, that's not happening. That shows this solar insulation theory doesn't hold up.

In short, this confirms what those of us who **believe in science** already know: man-made climate change is real and it's progressing quickly. And we must take action.

But that's not what's happening in the House of Representatives.

During the last Congress, the House Republicans voted 53 times to block action on climate change.

Time and again, they have voted to know nothing and to do nothing.

They argue that the science isn't settled; but they voted to cut funding for climate science.

Here's a few of my favorite quotes from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

"Human induced global climate change is one of the greatest hoaxes perpetrated out of the scientific community."

Another from my colleagues. There's a media conspiracy to promote climate change by "shady scientists".

And then my favorite, "Better known, however, is the global warming movement's commitment to severely restrict the use of private automobiles. The rich will still have their limos and of course their private jets. Carbon offsets will see to that... The rest of us will not be able to travel by plane and will be stuck sitting at home or sitting next to a gang member on public transportation."

Yes, that was actually said on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to stop the nonsense and the blather and get serious about climate change. The evidence is in. The only question now is whether Congress will listen and act.