

Open Letter to the Climate Science Community: AGU Remarks

We live in extraordinary scientific and political times.

Over the course of less than a dozen generations, humanity has transitioned from a passive bystander to an active agent of change in the climate system. We are now aware of this fundamental change in our role in the world. We can no longer plead ignorance.

As climate scientists, this is what we know with great confidence:

- We know that human activities have changed the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- We know that these changes in the composition of the atmosphere have had profound effects on Earth's climate.
- We know that the human "fingerprint" on climate will become ever more visible over the next few decades, and will impact many aspects of our lives.
- We know that we are at a crossroads in human history. The decisions our political leaders reach in Copenhagen – or fail to reach – will shape the world inherited by future generations.

Our political leadership must have access to the best-available scientific information. Without this information, they will be unable to reach wise decisions on how to respond to the problem of human-caused climate change.

The clearest, most complete assessment of the science is contained in the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in the Synthesis and Assessment Products of the U.S. Climate Change Science Program, and in the scientific assessments of the U.S. National Academy and the Science Academies of other

nations. These assessments all underscore the reality of a “discernible human influence” on global climate.

As scientists, we must be free to contribute to such assessments. We must be free to follow the science wherever it leads us, without fear of interference when we “speak truth to power”.

Sadly, climate scientists now see and feel interference from political and economic interests. This interference is pervasive. Powerful forces are using a criminal act – the theft of over a thousand emails from the U.K.’s Climatic Research Unit – to advance their own agendas.

These “forces of unreason” seek to constrain our ability to speak truth to power. They seek to skew and distort what we know about the nature and causes of climate change. Having failed to undermine climate science itself, they seek to destroy the reputations of individual climate scientists. They seek to destroy men like Phil Jones and Mike Mann, who have devoted their entire careers to the pursuit of scientific knowledge and understanding.

We must not let this stand.

We no longer have the luxury of remaining silent on these issues. We all have voices. We need to use them.

Benjamin D. Santer

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellow

San Ramon, California

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*These remarks reflect the personal opinions of B.D. Santer. They do not represent the official views of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory or the U.S. Department of Energy.