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POLITICO

Climate alarmism: Using our fear of hurricanes

By: [Steve Goreham](#)
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Hurricane Sandy has come and gone, leaving a path of destruction. [More than a 100 people have been killed](#) and 8.5 million lost power. Nineteen states from Maine to Tennessee were impacted, with deaths reported in 10 states. Widespread flooding and fires caused extensive damage in New Jersey and New York. More than two feet of snow fell in western Maryland, West Virginia, and parts of Tennessee. The power of nature in action is frightening to behold.

But some believe that mankind is now causing hurricanes, or making them worse. Former Vice President Al Gore [warns](#), "Hurricane Sandy is a disturbing sign of things to come. We must heed this warning and act quickly to solve the climate crisis. Dirty energy makes dirty weather." Activist Bill McKibben [declares](#), "...what it means that we're now seeing storms of this unprecedented magnitude. If there was ever a wake-up call, this is it."

These comments are an outgrowth of Climatism, the belief that man-made greenhouse gases are destroying Earth's climate. The theory of man-made global warming claims that an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide is causing stronger hurricanes and storms, droughts and floods, the melting of Earth's ice caps, and dangerous sea-level rise. Gore now paints the Halloween image of "dirty weather."

Yet, carbon dioxide is only a trace gas in our atmosphere. Only four of every 10,000 air molecules are carbon dioxide. Mankind's contribution in all of human history is only a fraction of one of those 10,000 molecules. Nevertheless, proponents of the theory of man-made climate change now claim that this one molecule was responsible for Sandy, a hurricane with a 1,000-mile diameter.

But hurricanes are the result of larger forces. Sunlight falls directly on Earth's Tropics, where much energy is absorbed, and indirectly on Polar Regions, where little energy is absorbed. All weather on Earth, including hurricanes, tropical storms, tornadoes, storm fronts, and the jet stream, along with ocean currents, acts to redistribute heat from the Tropics to the Poles. Hurricanes are born in the Tropics, where water evaporates from warm oceans, forming powerful rotating storms. Earth's rotation then bends the path of hurricanes as they move north from the Tropics.

A large hurricane [releases](#) heat energy at the rate of one exploding 10-megaton nuclear bomb every 20 minutes. Climatists claim that CO₂, a trace gas, controls the weather, a system of huge forces with thousands of times more energy. This is more like the flea wagging the dog than the tail wagging the dog. Even more incredible, some claim that we can control the weather by controlling this trace gas. "Man-made warming has consequences. The time to act is now," [according](#) to environmentalist Joseph Romm.

But, wasn't hurricane Sandy unique in history? Well, not quite. The 1821 Norfolk and Long Island hurricane [battered](#) the New Jersey coast with winds estimated at 135 mph (Category

3), much stronger than those of Sandy (Category 1). Manhattan Island was flooded to Canal Street and this occurred at low tide. In 1954, Hurricane Hazel **struck** the Carolinas with 140 mph winds (Category 4). Hazel continued north along the U.S. Atlantic coast, through New York State and into Canada. Deaths from Hazel totaled 95 in the U.S. and 81 in Canada. More than 80 tropical or subtropical cyclones have hit the state of New York since the 1600s.

Climatism plays on human fear of nature to promote policy. Subsidize wind and solar power, stop using fossil fuels, switch to electric cars, change your light bulbs, green your business, become a vegetarian, have fewer kids, we are told. If you do all these things and more, then man will be able to control hurricanes, stop the rise of the seas, and save the polar bears.

Climate alarmists excel at gathering government funding to “fight” climate change. Today, the U.S. government is spending almost \$9 billion each year in grants to study man-made climate change. Tens of billions more are spent for green energy subsidies, grants and loans. The world is **spending** over \$250 billion each year to try to “decarbonize” national economies. Yet, mounting evidence shows that climate change is natural and man-made influences are very small. Suppose we shift efforts away from misguided efforts to control climate and toward solving the real problems of our nation and the world?

*Steve Goreham is Executive Director of the [Climate Science Coalition of America](#) and author of the new book **The Mad, Mad, Mad World of Climatism: Mankind and Climate Change Mania**.*

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