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NEWSWEEK COVER: Global Warming Is A Hoax*



The August 13 issue of Newsweek (on newsstands Monday, August 6), "Global Warming Is A Hoax*" examines the history of denial of global warming and how well-funded naysayers who still reject the overwhelming evidence of climate change have obfuscated the science of global warming, misled the public and provided cover for policy-makers to not do anything. Plus, a look at the epidemic of suicide bombings in Iraq as well as a moving collection of photos from the Minneapolis bridge tragedy.

(PRNewsFoto/NEWSWEEK)

NEW YORK, NY UNITED STATES

Global Companies Keep Naysayers Who Still Reject Evidence of Climate Change Well-Funded
New Poll Finds Influence of the Global Warming Denial Machine Remains Strong

NEW YORK, Aug. 5 /PRNewswire/ -- Senator Barbara Boxer, chair of the Senate's environment committee, read a report last February by 600 scientists from governments, academia, green groups and businesses in 40 countries that stated, "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal," and said there is now at least a 90 percent likelihood that the release of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels is causing longer droughts, more flood-causing downpours and worse heat waves, way up from earlier studies. Those who doubt the reality of human-caused climate change have spent decades disputing that. But Boxer figured that "with the overwhelming science out there, the deniers' days were numbered."

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20070805/NYSU002>)

But then a staffer told her that a conservative think tank long funded by ExxonMobil had offered scientists \$10,000 to write articles undercutting the new report and the computer-based climate models it is based on. "I realized," Boxer tells Newsweek, "there was a movement behind this that just wasn't giving up."

As Science Writer Sharon Begley reports in the August 13 Newsweek cover, "Global Warming is A Hoax*" (on newsstands Monday, August 6), that movement is still alive.

Since the late 1980s, this well-coordinated, well-funded campaign by contrarian scientists, free-market think tanks and industry has created a paralyzing fog of doubt around climate change. Through advertisements, op-eds, lobbying and media attention, greenhouse doubters (they hate being called deniers) argued first that the world is not warming; measurements indicating otherwise are flawed, they said. Then they claimed that any warming is natural, not caused by human activities. Now they contend that the looming warming will be minuscule and harmless. "They patterned what they did after the tobacco industry," says former Sen. Tim Wirth, who spearheaded environmental issues as an undersecretary of State in the Clinton administration. "Both figured, sow enough doubt, call the science uncertain and in dispute. That's had a huge impact on both the public and

Congress."

As a result of the undermining of the science, there has been essentially no public pressure in the United States to cut greenhouse emissions, either through laws or by businesses acting on their own. Even legislation that would have required businesses to merely measure and report their greenhouse emissions died. Groups that opposed greenhouse curbs ramped up. They "settled on the 'science isn't there' argument because they didn't believe they'd be able to convince the public to do nothing if climate change were real," says David Goldston, who served as Republican chief of staff for the House of Representatives science committee until 2006.

Although there has been an increase in discussion regarding climate change, all the recent talk has done little in the way of action. At least eight bills to require reductions in greenhouse gases have been introduced in Congress, but their fate is decidedly murky. The Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives decided last week not even to bring to a vote a requirement that automakers improve vehicle mileage, an obvious step toward reducing greenhouse emissions. Nor has there been much public pressure to do so. Instead, every time the scientific case got stronger, "the American public yawned and bought bigger cars," Rep. Rush Holt, a New Jersey congressman and physicist recently wrote in the journal *Science*; politicians "shrugged, said there is too much doubt among scientists, and did nothing."

A related Newsweek Poll on global warming finds that the influence of the denial machine remains strong. Although the figure is less than in earlier polls, 39 percent of those asked say there is "a lot of disagreement among climate scientists" on the basic question of whether the planet is warming; 42 percent say there is a lot of disagreement among them that human activities are a major cause of global warming. Only 46 percent say the greenhouse effect is being felt today.

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