

Column mocks climate change science

Hopefully, most readers weren't fooled by Benjamin Zycher's misleading op-ed ["Trump considers the economics of climate change," Dec. 11].

Alert readers probably noticed Zycher's snarky statement mocking proponents of climate action as unable to read a profit/loss statement. Yet, CEOs of hundreds of major American corporations, people who read profit/loss statements quite competently, have urged Congress to enact emissions reducing legislation.

Rex Tillerson, Exxon's CEO and Donald Trump's nominee for Secretary of State, can read oil and gas company profit/loss statements, and Tillerson has publicly discussed his hope for a national carbon tax. Recently, Shell Oil urged Canada to implement a carbon tax. Yet Zycher's nonsensical arguments never mentioned the need for a carbon tax.

When Zycher mocked the Paris agreement and President Obama's climate actions as having almost no impact on temperature, I wondered where he got his bizarre calculation. It seems that he relied on calculations by Cato Institute employees.

As a Citizens' Climate Lobby volunteer, I immediately recalled Jerry Taylor speaking in June to the group's annual conference about his work at Cato, and why he left that organization and established the libertarian Niskanen Center. While at Cato, Taylor's job was to read climate science and policy reports and devise the best counterarguments. Taylor was clear: his job wasn't to write more correct analyses about human-caused climate change or the economics of emissions policies. His job was to devise the most doubt-raising, counterarguments to stall public understanding and congressional action.

Taylor spent so much time studying the science and economics of climate change that eventually, he felt obligated to leave Cato and help the public understand why we need climate action. Zycher's op-ed ended with amateurish theology. As a rabbi, I'm more impressed by Taylor's moral decision not to help people do evil than Zycher's double talk.

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