

IN THIS ISSUE DEC. 2009	KEY ERROR IN CLIMATE MODELS PAGE 1	TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EBILLING PAGE 2	SOLAR POWER STICKER SHOCK PAGE 3	AVOID IDENTITY THEFT PAGE 4
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WORLD RENOWNED CLIMATOLOGIST ACKNOWLEDGES KEY ERROR IN IPCC CLIMATE MODELS

Richard S. Lindzen, MIT Professor of Meteorology, recently published a study challenging the computer models used by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to predict global warming. Dr. Lindzen—one of the world’s foremost atmospheric scientists—is one of the lead authors of the chapter on Physical Processes in IPCC’s Third Assessment Report. He has published hundreds of scientific articles and books, and is a recipient of the American Meteorological Society’s Meisinger and Charney Awards, the American Geophysical Union’s Macelwane Medal, and the Wallin Foundation’s Leo Prize. Prior to his tenure at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Lindzen held two named chairs at Harvard University, taught at the University of Chicago, and was a research scientist

at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder.

Dr. Lindzen and co-author Yong-Sang Choi analyzed actual data and concluded that the climate’s sensitivity is only one-sixth of the estimates in the computer models used by the IPCC to predict future global warming. The report says “this is important since the inconsistency of climate feedbacks constitutes a very fundamental problem in climate prediction.” This means that rising levels of greenhouse gasses would produce much less warming than previously predicted. The study, published in the Aug. 26, 2009, issue of Geophysical Research Letters, is titled “On the determination of climate feedbacks from ERBE data.”

This is good news for many who are reconsidering their support for

(continued on page 2)

CLIMATE MODEL ERROR . . .

climate change legislation (the “cap & trade” bill currently before the Senate). This study shows that the problem, if indeed there is one, does not need to be addressed so urgently. We may have many years to determine whether other IPCC climate predictions are also faulty.

This study comes at a time when Americans’ skepticism about global warming is growing. The latest Pew Research Center poll finds the number of Americans who believe there is solid evidence of human-caused warming, or that it is a significant problem, has been declining for years. Only 36% still believe that human activities are responsible for any increase in global temperature, especially since global temperatures appear to be falling.

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SOLAR POWER STICKER SHOCK

Some utilities are experiencing “sticker shock” from the unexpected costs of solar installations. For example, in Kittitas County, WA, “the cost estimate for a proposed 75 megawatt solar power plant (\$100 million) has soared by more than 200 percent”—even though construction has not even started yet—and the final cost could be as much as \$750 million. A recent study by Tufts University economics professor Gilbert Metcalf states, “Solar power currently costs 3.5 to 4 times the price of conventional power,” but when stripped of subsidies and preferential tax treatment, “solar power is between 570 percent and 887 percent more expensive to produce than coal power.”

One of the problems with solar power is that the panels produce direct current, whereas the power flowing through the nation’s electric grid is alternating current. The required power conversion increases costs and, of course, power is lost in the process. Also, the Northwest power grid will need to be upgraded to accommodate this fluctuating power source. During those few hours per day—at least on sunny days—when the plant is operating at peak capacity, it is claimed to provide enough power for approximately 45,000 homes. The rest of the day and night, those homes will have to be supplied with power from conventional facilities.

In addition to the rising cost estimates, the land requirement for the Washington project has also doubled—a 400 acre site thought to be required is now up to 900 acres. Todd Myers, director of the Center for the Environment at the Washington Policy Center, says “it’s hypocritical of environmentalists to support a solar power project on the site of clear-cut forestland.”

Unfortunately, renewable energy sources currently available are very expensive. The cost of wind power is double that of coal or gas (when you include the true costs of duplication of facilities, additional transmission lines, etc.), and both wind and solar must be backed up with conventional sources.

As the installed capacity of wind and solar power grows, it is becoming increasingly difficult for utilities to integrate these fluctuating sources into stable, baseload electric sources like coal- or gas-fired generating facilities. Xcel Energy has even resorted to shutting down coal units—which are designed to run continuously—in order to use wind energy when it is available. This is even more problematic because wind/solar output rarely coincides with periods of peak demand. Thus, those renewable energy sources do little to reduce the need for additional conventional sources of power, while adding greatly to the cost of providing power to your homes.

HOW TO AVOID IDENTITY THEFT

Reports have come in from several states where co-op members have been called by scammers asking for personal or financial information (credit card number, account number, date of birth, etc.) over the phone. The callers may threaten the consumer with disconnection of service unless they pay an “overdue bill” immediately with a credit card. The only call an IREA member would receive regarding disconnection, is a recording only and you will not be asked for a credit card number.

Also, senior citizens are being targeted with claims that they can receive Federal stimulus dollars to pay their utility bills, or get a “bill credit”, but the consumer must first provide personal information. Please be aware that IREA representatives NEVER initiate a call and ask for such information.

Occasionally, we might call when we have discovered a billing error and may ask you to confirm some account information, but we never ask you to provide personal/financial information. The only time we may ask for personal informa-

tion is when returning your call regarding starting electric service. However, if you are uncomfortable with this, just tell the consumer representative that you will call back.

Identity thieves also steal bills or checks that you mail from your mailbox. Signing up for electronic billing will eliminate this threat.

If you get a suspicious call, please report it to us immediately. If you believe you are the victim of identity theft, please visit the Federal Trade Commission’s identity theft site: www.ftc.gov/idtheft.

Please Remember:

- **DO NOT** give personal/financial information to anyone who calls claiming to represent IREA.
- **DO NOT** give personal/financial information to anyone who offers “Federal Stimulus dollars.”
- In general, **DO NOT** give out your personal/financial information to anyone over the phone **UNLESS YOU INITIATED THE CALL.**
- Sign up for electronic billing so you don’t have to worry about someone stealing your mail.