

Nature, not humankind, controls climate

It is a myth that our planet's climate was essentially constant until we started burning fossil fuels. Jay Lehr and Tom Harris say former UN bureaucrat Christiana Figueres should take a climate course

In *“Davos, this is outrageous,”* Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish student and climate activist, assert in Wednesday’s *Washington Post* that the *“existential threat”* of climate change *“should be the number one priority”* at this year’s World Economic Forum. Figueres and Thunberg proclaim that climate change *“should sit at the center of every conversation in Davos,”* because, so they say, *“Climate change action has never been so urgent, as we are quickly approaching tipping points of no return.”*

Figueres and Thunberg seem unaware that the only constant about climate is change—it changes all the time, entirely independent of humankind’s actions. According to the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, the Earth has warmed about 2 degrees Fahrenheit since 1880. But natural variations in our planet’s ‘average temperature’ have ranged over a span of 60 degrees Fahrenheit over the past 4.6 billion years. It is thus a myth that our planet’s climate was essentially constant until we started burning fossil fuels.

Figueres and Thunberg write, *“in nearly every continent, students have joined the [school strike for climate](#), declaring that they want a different future, that they are unstoppable and that another world is possible... Transformational change is coming.”* This gives the impression that humankind has access to a global thermostat that allows us to simply dial up a more desirable climate.

When would they suggest was ideal? Was it the Medieval Warm Period which was warmer than today, when grapes were a grown in the British Isles? Or maybe the Roman or the Minoan warm periods, both of which were warmer than now? Perhaps they want the climate returned to the warmest period since the last glacial, the Holocene Optimum. After all, it was 8,000 years ago, during the Holocene Optimum, when the planet was 2 - 3 degrees Celsius warmer than today that large quantities of ice were melting, sea-level was rising about ten times faster than today, and coastal settlements had to move quickly or be ruined.

Or do Figueres and Thunberg prefer colder times? If so, then perhaps they long for the climate of the Wisconsin glaciation period (75,000 to 11,000 years ago) when virtually all of Canada as well as the northern parts of the United States were buried under a glacier.

All this is silly, of course. Unless they have discovered how to stop the solar system from moving through the Galaxy, the Sun from changing its brightness, the Earth from changing its rotational and orbital parameters, and the continents from moving, it is not just a *"transformation change"* that is needed for humans to significantly alter climate change: it would have to be magic.

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Most of the periodic temperature increases and decreases observed in human history are consistent with variations in the average amount of energy that we receive from the Sun. The mild heating and cooling periods since 1900 (each less than 2 degrees Fahrenheit) reflect changes in solar activity rather than the exponential increase in fossil fuel emissions. The Earth's temperature increased from 1880 to 1935 as the Little Ice Age ended. It decreased from 1935 to 1980 and increased from 1980 to 1990, and has since leveled off. Temperature changes do not mirror emission changes.

Solar-driven temperature changes operate on time scales of ten to a thousand years and have resulted in temperature shifts spanning a total range of about 7 degrees Fahrenheit. These shifts arise from the fact that the Sun's output is not constant, but changes according to both long-term and short-term cycles. These solar cycles, and their connection with the Earth's climate, have been documented using the recorded history of sunspot cycles, aurora observations, radio-carbon dating techniques, and changes in solar radiance.

Periodic changes in the eccentricity of the Earth's orbit around the Sun, and variations in the tilt of the Earth's axis of rotation and the direction of its axis, influence how the energy received from the Sun is distributed. These are called Milankovitch cycles after the Serbian scientist who discovered them a century ago. Taken together, these cycles have resulted in our current era of recurring Ice Ages. We are now experiencing the high temperature end of the latest Ice Age cycle.

Continental positions also determine the distribution and circulation of heat on the Earth and have had a major impact on our planet's climate over periods of 20 million – 100 million years, the time frames associated with plate tectonics or continental drift. Current continental positions are promoting a relatively cold era of recurring Ice Ages.

Finally, our position in the Milky Way Galaxy may be the longest period driver of climate change. As we pass in and out of the galaxy's spiral arms, we are exposed to varying amounts of cloud-causing galactic cosmic rays, which may have very significant effects on the Earth's temperatures.

Climate activists want us to believe that, through our use of fossil fuels, humankind has become the master controller of Earth's climate, overwhelming all-natural drivers and leading to environmental catastrophe. This rewriting of climate history is surely the most pervasive and damaging example of scientific fraud ever. ■

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Portions of this article were excerpted with permission from the author and publisher of the 2018 book [The Mythology of Global Warming](#) by Bruce Bunker published by Moonshine Cove. The book is strongly recommended by the authors for additional information on this topic.