# David Legates

In September 2020 David Legates was named to a senior leadership role at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Legates has been described for years as a climate change “denier” and “contrarian.” He served as Delaware’s chief climatologist for several years. Legates was asked not to call himself the Delaware State Climatologist by the governor for his differing views on climate. In 2011 Legates stepped down from the position. In Legates own words, “No state climatologist has ever advised any governor, either current or past, on climate change issues.”

Legates in a climate science contrarian who argues that increased CO2 is beneficial to the earth. He is a member of the Heartland Institute and a frequent panelist at their events. According to the Washington Post, “In the 1990s, oil companies, fossil fuel industry trade groups and their respective PR firms began positioning contrarian scientists such as Willie Soon, William Happer and David Legates as experts whose opinions on climate change should be considered equal and opposite to that of climate scientists. The Heartland Institute, which hosts an annual International Conference on Climate Change known as the leading climate skeptics conference, for example, routinely calls out media outlets (including The Washington Post) for showing ‘bias’ in covering climate change when they either decline to quote a skeptic or question a skeptic’s credibility.”

Key findings:

**A Tenured Professor At University Of Delaware, Legates Served For Years As Delaware’s Chief State Climatologist.** Legates received a BA, an MS, and a PhD from the University of Delaware. He served on the faculty of the University of Oklahoma and LSU before returning to the University of Delaware in 1999. In 2005, he became Delaware’s state climatologist. He stepped down in 2011, remaining in his position as a professor at the University of Delaware; in 2007, the Democratic governor had requested Legates stop using his title in public statements on climate change. In 2008 Legates said, “No state climatologist has ever advised any governor, either current or past, on climate change issues.”

**Legates Has Been Called A “Well-Known Global Warming Contrarian,” And A Climate Change Denier.** A 2005 article in Slate called Legates “a well-known global warming contrarian.” In 2006, when asked what it would take to convince him global warming was real, Legates responded “proof.” “There’s a lot more money to be made by saying the world is coming to an end than to say this is a bunch of hooey,” he said in 2007.“Our climate is changing because it always has changed. It is foolish to believe that the climate should remain constant or claim that energy policies will somehow achieve ‘climate stabilization…’ This is the wrong approach,” he said in 2012.

**For Decades, Legates Has Spoken Out On The Fact That Climate Change Does Not Represent The Existential Threat Many Scientists Believe.** “Carbon dioxide is plant food and more of it can be positive,” he said in 2014. “If recent global warming is largely a result of natural climate variability, policies to reduce global warming would be unnecessary, costly and ineffective,” Legates said in 2003. In 2004, he called the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s assessment on climate change “more junk science than solid evidence.” A 2006 Legates study “throws cold water on the claim global warming threatens polar bears survival,” according to a Washington Times article. “Global warming due to human greenhouse gas is still debatable,” he said in 2006. “It is simply impossible to conclude that the net effect of greenhouse gases endangers human health and welfare,” he wrote in 2007. “The biggest misconception is that climate change is going to be dramatic and that it’s going to be extreme,” he said in 2007. “In 15-20 years, we’ll look back and see what a hoax this was,” he said in 2009. In 2014, he said, “my concern is that carbon dioxide is not the main player in climate change.”

**Industry Has Been Linked To Legates’ Funding.** A 2004 American Prospect article noted that Legates has collaborated with the George C. Marshall Institute, which had received funding from ExxonMobil. In 2005, Mother Jones reported that Legates served as an adjunct scholar at the Dallas-based National Center for Policy Analysis, which received $205,000 from ExxonMobil between 2000 and 2003. In 2007, an author of a Union of Concerned Scientists report called Legates “a good example of someone who has chosen…to have much of his work sponsored indirectly by ExxonMobil.”

**Legates Co-Published An Article For The Heartland Institute That Criticized The Scientific Modeling Used For Coronavirus And Climate Models**.The authors argued that the data for climate models does not match reality, and that models for coronavirus were showing extreme scenarios. The article asserted that there are ulterior, financial motives in predicting grim consequences for not taking action on both the coronavirus and climate change. The authors also argue that measures to slow the spread of coronavirus could lead to “millions of cases of depression, stroke, heart attack, domestic violence, suicide, murder-suicide, and early death due to depression, obesity and alcoholism, due to unemployment, foreclosure and destroyed dreams.”

# Background

## Bio

**Education:**

**1988**: Ph.D. in Climatology, University of Delaware

**1985**: MS, University of Delaware

**1982**: B.A., University of Delaware

[University of Delaware, Accessed [9/14/20](https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/ceoe/departments/gss/faculty/david-legates/)]

**Professional Timeline**:

**1989 – Present**: Legates has taught at Louisiana State University, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Virginia, and the University of Delaware. [Heartland Institute, Accessed [9/14/20](https://www.heartland.org/about-us/who-we-are/david-legates)]

**1998:** Published “How Reliable Are Climate Models” for Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) [Competitive Enterprise Institute, Accessed [9/14/20](https://cei.org/news-letters-cooler-heads-digest/how-reliable-are-climate-models)]

**2005**: Legates was named as the Delaware state climatologist [University of Delaware, [9/23/05](https://web.archive.org/web/20161125044139/http:/www1.udel.edu/PR/UDaily/2005/mar/dlegates092305.html)]

**2006:** Legates published NCPA study titled “Are Polar Bears Dying” [NCPA, [5/15/06](http://www.ncpathinktank.org/commentaries/are-polar-bears-dying)]

**2007:** Gov. Ruth Ann Minner asked Legates to stop using formal title in public statements on climate policy [E&E News, [2/22/07](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/51821/search?keyword=legates+)]

**2007:** Appeared on Glenn Beck special entitled “Exposed: The Climate of Fear” [Media Matters, [5/8/07](https://www.mediamatters.org/glenn-beck/exposed-glenn-becks-climate-distortion)]

**2011:** Legates was forced to step down as Delaware state climatologist [WHYY, [7/19/11](https://whyy.org/articles/controversial-delaware-state-climatologist-steps-down/)]

**2014:** Legates testified at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, denying that global warming will impact agricultural activities [Delaware Online, [2/27/15](https://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/local/2015/02/26/university-delaware-professor-caught-climate-change-controversy/24047281/)]

**2015**: Heartland Institute presented Legates with “Courage in Defense of Science” award [Washington Post, [9/13/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/13/noaa-hires-david-legates-climate/)]

**2015-Present**: Legates regularly contributes to Heartland Institute reports and articles [Heartland Institute, Accessed [9/14/20](https://www.heartland.org/about-us/who-we-are/david-legates)]

**2017:** Legates was a signatory on letter encouraging the United States to withdraw form the Untied Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [CO2 Coalition, [3/10/17](https://co2coalition.org/2017/03/10/petition-to-withdraw-from-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change-unfccc/)]

**2018:** Legates submitted friend-of-the-court brief in California climate lawsuits [E&E News, [3/22/18](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060077053)]

**2018:** Legates Spoke at the Heartland Institute “America First Energy Conference” [America First Energy, Accessed [9/14/20](http://americafirstenergy.org/about/)]

**2019:** Testified before House Natural Resources Subcommittee Hearing: “Healthy Oceans and Healthy Economies: The State of Our Oceans In the 21st Century” [House Natural Resources Committee, [2/7/19](https://naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/healthy-oceans-and-healthy-economies-the-state-of-our-oceans-in-the-21st-century)]

**2019:** Appeared at Heartland Institute climate panel in New York City that coincided with UN Climate Summit [Heartland Institute, [9/23/19](https://www.heartland.org/events/events/climate-challenge-bright-lights-big-city--bigger-debate)]

**2019:** Legates appeared before Pennsylvania State House Committee hearing [Pennsylvania Capital-Star, [10/28/19](https://www.penncapital-star.com/energy-environment/the-stakes-are-too-high-climate-skeptics-meet-their-own-critics-at-state-house-committee-hearing/)]

**2020:** Legates appointed as deputy assistant secretary of Commerce for environmental observation and prediction at NOAA [Washington Post, [9/13/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/13/noaa-hires-david-legates-climate/)]

**Received BA in Mathematics and Geography, a MS in Geography, and a PhD in Climatology from University of Delaware.** [Congressional Documents and Publications, 6/3/14]

**Served on Faculty of University of Oklahoma and LSU before Returning to University of Delaware in 1999.** [Congressional Documents and Publications, 6/3/14]

**2000: Legates A Specialist In Climatology And Computational Methods; Served As Associate Professor In Department Of Geography At University Of Delaware.** “Dr. Legates is a specialist in climatology and computational methods. He is an associate professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Delaware and a research scientist at Computational Geosciences, Inc., in Norman, Oklahoma. He is the recipient of numerous awards and grants in the field of environmental computing. In addition to more than one hundred articles, professional presentations, monographs and proceedings papers, Dr. Legates has written and co-written climate modeling programs, datasets and documentation.” [US Newswire, 11/1/00]

**2005: Legates Became Delaware State Climatologist.** “That fascination, of course, is a key requirement for Legates' new job: Delaware state climatologist. Legates, a geography professor at the University of Delaware, took over the post this summer from Dan Leathers, who held the job since 1993. Leathers said he has become too busy as chairman of the UD geography department to continue the climatologist job. Legates ‘brings nearly 20 years of experience as a climatologist,’ Leathers said. ‘His knowledge of Delaware, its people and its physical makeup are really a good combination.’” [News Journal, 9/5/05]

* **2005: News Journal: “Legates…Helped Develop Delaware’s Observation System.”** “But with the new network, along with stream gauge monitors throughout the state, real-time data is available to let state officials know something is amiss so they can warn residents of possible danger, said state Climatologist David R. Legates. Legates, an associate professor in UD's geography department, helped develop Delaware's observation system. ‘People would have some warning,’ he said. The system uses weather monitoring stations throughout the state and in nearby Chester County, Pa., and Cecil County, Md., to track weather conditions from wind speed and direction to rain fall. The Delaware Geological Survey operates a network of stream flow monitors and tide gauges in the state that can also be used to track changes in conditions. Legates said the beauty of the environmental observing system network is that it can be used for disasters beyond weather events. For instance, emergency planners might need to know wind speed and direction when deciding how to handle a chemical spill or train derailment, he said.” [News Journal, 10/3/05]

**2007: Delaware’s Governor Directed Legates to Stop Using His Title in Public Statements on Climate Change.** “Gov. Ruth Ann Minner has directed Delaware's state climatologist to stop using his title in public statements on climate change, citing a clash of views on global warming and confusion over the position's ties to the administration. Minner, who made the directive in a letter, described the move as a way to ‘clarify’ the role of David R. Legates, a prominent skeptic of views that human activities are warming the planet and triggering climate shifts. Minner said she has long viewed human-caused carbon emissions as a contributor to climate change. The state also joined a multistate effort in 2005 aimed at reducing power plant greenhouse gas emissions. In the letter, sent last week, Minner said Legates had provided valuable advice to the state on weather issues. She also acknowledged that the scientist had not claimed to represent the state government's position on the need to control pollutants linked to global warming. But Minner said that reports of Legates' work with private groups and privately backed publications disputing climate change had ‘generated some confusion.’” [News Journal, 2/22/07]

**2011: Legates Stepped down as Delaware State Climatologist.** “Delaware State Climatologist David Legates, long criticized for being a skeptic of man-made climate change, has stepped down. Legates, a geography professor at the University of Delaware, had taken the position in 2005 when Dan Leathers, also a professor, stepped down to become a dean at the school. At the time, the two agreed that Legates would hand back the position when Leathers finished his time as dean. ‘On July 1, Dan resigned as Deputy Dean of our College,’ Legates wrote in an email to other state climatologists. ‘In June, he had asked me if I would honor the gentleman's agreement that we had made about seven years ago, and I said I would.’ The email came in response to reports suggesting that Legates was forced out of the position because of his views on climate change. Both former Gov. Ruth Ann Minner (D) and current Gov. Jack Markell (D) had asked Legates to not air his views on behalf of the state.” [Greenwire, 7/19/11]

**2015: Five Prominent Global Warming Skeptics Received Recognition at Tenth International Conference on Climate Change; Legates Won Courage in Defense of Science Award, Sponsored by Texas Public Policy Foundation.** “Five prominent skeptics of man-caused global warming will receive recognition at the Tenth International Conference on Climate Change, taking place June 11–12 at the Washington Court Hotel. The winners of the 2015 Climate Change Awards are: \* Sen. Jim Inhofe, who will receive the Political Leadership on Climate Change Award, sponsored by The Heritage Foundation, at the breakfast keynote at 8 a.m. Thursday, June 11. \* William Happer, Ph.D., winner of the 2015 Frederick Seitz Memorial Award, sponsored by the Science & Environmental Policy Project…\* David Legates, Ph.D., winner of the Courage in Defense of Science Award, sponsored by the Texas Public Policy Foundation…” [PRWeb Newswire, 6/9/15]

**2015: Legates a Tenured Professor at University of Delaware.** [USA Today, [2/26/15](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/02/26/uds-david-legates-caught-climate-change-controversy/24090273/)]

**November 2017: Legates Scheduled to Speak at 2017 Heartland Institute America First Conference.** “The Heartland Institute is hosting an America First Energy Conference in Houston, Texas on November 9 at the JW Marriott Galleria. Speakers include Heartland's new president, former Congressman Tim Huelskamp; University of Delaware climate scientist David Legates; Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry; and more. Registration for the event is $349.00 (including meals), visit http://americafirstenergy.org/register/ for more information.” [States News Service, 10/13/17]

**2017: Legates Participated as Heartland Institute Hosted Events to Formulate Vision for Red Team.** “Climate skeptics have been holding closed-door meetings to identify candidates for U.S. EPA's ‘red team’ exercise aimed at poking holes in mainstream science and to discuss ways to prevent agency Administrator Scott Pruitt from reneging on his promise to do it. The conservative think tank Heartland Institute has hosted climate scientists, economists and lawyers in recent months to formulate their vision of the red team, according to an email obtained by E&E News. It contains a meeting description that offers a broad look at skeptics' policy playbook under the Trump administration while exposing stark suspicions about Pruitt…Among the approximately 45 participants at the most recent Heartland meeting were climate scientists, statisticians, meteorologists, engineers, biologists, lawyers and individuals familiar with how the federal government works. Speakers included EPA transition member David Schnare; former Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-Kan.), who is now Heartland's president; David Legates, a geography professor at the University of Delaware; Harry MacDougald, an Atlanta-based attorney; and Jim Lakely, director of communications at Heartland, according to the email. The focus of the event was to inform would-be red team participants of how the debate could work in the federal government and to synthesize ideas about countering mainstream scientific arguments.” [E&E News, [10/16/17](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060063693)]

* **Legates Considered For Scott Pruitt’s EPA “Red Team.”** According to EE News, “U.S. EPA chief Scott Pruitt and his colleagues won’t have any trouble finding scientists keen on poking holes in mainstream views about climate change. Pruitt and other members of the Trump administration have proposed launching a so-called red-team effort to give scientists in the minority the chance to take shots at the prevailing views about how much human activity contributes to climate change… Burnett suggested some potential candidates for the red team, a roster he called "climate realists." They include Christy; William Happer, a Princeton University physics professor and a rumored contender to be Trump's science adviser; David Legates of the University of Delaware; and Patrick Michaels, director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute.” [EE News, [7/25/17](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060057852)]
* **Legates Part Of Secret Heartland Meetings To Identify Candidates For EPA “Red Team.”** According to EE News, “Climate skeptics have been holding closed-door meetings to identify candidates for U.S. EPA’s ‘red team’ exercise aimed at poking holes in mainstream science and to discuss ways to prevent agency Administrator Scott Pruitt from reneging on his promise to do it. The conservative think tank Heartland Institute has hosted climate scientists, economists and lawyers in recent months to formulate their vision of the red team, according to an email obtained by E&E News. It contains a meeting description that offers a broad look at skeptics’ policy playbook under the Trump administration while exposing stark suspicions about Pruitt… Speakers included EPA transition member David Schnare; former Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-Kan.), who is now Heartland's president; David Legates, a geography professor at the University of Delaware; Harry MacDougald, an Atlanta-based attorney; and Jim Lakely, director of communications at Heartland, according to the email.” [EE News, [10/16/17](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060063693)]

## Climate Denial

**Legates Claimed CO2 Regulations Are A Government Control Program To Restrict Peoples’ Lives**. According to E&E News, “Legates has taken a dim view of the role the government plays in creating climate policy. He is a frequent guest at events sponsored by the Heartland Institute, which works to muddy public understanding of climate science. In September 2019, Legates claimed that regulating carbon dioxide was actually a government control program designed to restrict the lives of ordinary Americans. ‘Most governments want to keep control, and most governments get bigger and bigger over time,’ he said. ‘Carbon dioxide becomes that molecule by which we can take control of your lives, of your efforts, and everything that goes on.’” [E&E News, [9/14/20](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2020/09/14/stories/1063713585?utm_medium=email&utm_source=eenews%3Aclimatewire&utm_campaign=edition%2BiZ%2B%2FftFV%2B2LxUfHtN5bxJQ%3D%3D)]

**Legates Blasted Both Climate And Coronavirus Modeling In Heartland Institute Article.** According to the Washington Post, “Legates also has questioned scientists’ approach to the coronavirus pandemic, having co-written a commentary published on Heartland’s website on April 13 that compared the modeling of the virus’s spread to climate modeling, blasting both as inaccurate because of the assumptions the modelers made. ‘We can’t afford a cure that’s worse than the disease — or a prolonged and deadly national economic shutdown that could have been shortened by updated and corrected models,’ Legates wrote, along with Paul Driessen, another Heartland-affiliated scholar. ‘Now just imagine: What if we could have that same honest, science-based approach to climate models?’ they wrote. ‘Shouldn’t we demand that these models be verified against real-world evidence? Natural forces have caused climate changes and extreme weather events throughout history. What proof is there that what we see today is due to fossil fuel emissions, and not to those same natural forces? We certainly don’t want energy ‘solutions’ that don’t work and are far worse than the supposed manmade climate and weather ‘virus.’ ‘ The simplest of climate models run decades ago accurately projected global warming ‘And we have the climate data. We’ve got years of data,’ they wrote. ‘The data show the models don’t match reality,’ they wrote, despite numerous peer-reviewed studies showing otherwise.” [Washington Post, [9/13/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/13/noaa-hires-david-legates-climate/)]

**Legates “Denied That Human-Caused Climate Change Could Have Catastrophic Consequences.”** According to EE News, “David Legates, a professor of climatology at the University of Delaware: He has denied that human-caused climate change could have catastrophic consequences and has co-authored climate research claiming polar bears are not harmed by human-caused climate change that was quietly funded, at least in part, by Koch Industries Inc.” [EE News, [9/14/17](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060060647)]

**Legates Joined Sarah Palin For Capitol Hill Event Questioning Climate Change.** According to EE News, “Former Alaska Republican Gov. Sarah Palin yesterday said climate change is a myth that scientists and policymakers are peddling to advance a political agenda. At an event on Capitol Hill premiering a new film by climate doubters, Palin said global warming is being used by the government ‘to have more control over us, our homes, our businesses, our families, our lives.’… Along with Palin and Morano, climatologist David Russell Legates, who has long disputed man-made climate change, and conservative writer Brent Bozell appeared at the Hill event.” [EE News, [4/15/16](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1060035671)]

**1999: Legates Wrote Letter: “Article Overstates Climate Changes for Our State.”** “Re: the May 4 letter by LSU Professor David R. Legates (‘Article overstates climate changes for our state’)…The letter writer argued that your April 10 article on effects of global warming on Louisiana's future weather overstated the potential negative consequences and that the Legislature should take no action to avert them…Given that it is the state likely most vulnerable to effects of global warming, Louisiana should take a leading role in mitigation. We cannot afford to ‘just say no,’ as Professor Legates suggests, for that amounts to burying our collective heads in the sand and waiting for the ever-rising tide to roll in. Jerry L. Miller…Oceanographer…Slidell…” [Times-Picayune, 5/14/99]

**2002: Washington Times: “Legates Points out that the Climate System Is Extremely Complex…”** “Both reports - an NCPA analysis by David Legates, director of the University of Delaware's Center for Climatic Research, and a paper published in the Fraser Institute's Fraser Forum by Willie Soon and Sallie Baliunas, both of the Harvard/Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics - argue that general circulation models (GCMs), a k a climate models, are limited in important ways. The result is that predictions of future climate change based on their simulations are too uncertain to justify economically restrictive climate policies, such as the much-ballyhooed Kyoto Protocol. Mr. Legates points out that the climate system is extremely complex, and even the world's best scientists have an incomplete understanding of how the various atmospheric, land surface, oceanic and ice components interact with one another. But even if they had a perfect understanding of the climate system, expressing this knowledge mathematically is very difficult.” [Washington Times, 5/12/02]

**2003: Legates: “If Recent Global Warming Is Largely a Result of Natural Climate Variability, Policies to Reduce Global Warming Would Be Unnecessary, Costly, and Ineffective.”** “Yet if recent global warming is largely a result of natural climate variability, policies to reduce global warming would be unnecessary, costly and ineffective. Before we are asked to incur the pain, we should better understand whether there would be any gain. David R. Legates is an adjunct scholar with the National Center for Policy Analysis and an associate professor and director of the Center for Climatic Research at the University of Delaware. [Washington Times, 8/26/03]

**2004: Legates Called United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Assessment on Climate Change “More Junk Science than Solid Evidence.”** “A new report from the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA) exposes serious problems with the historical climate trends reconstruction published by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) -- the primary evidence used by policy makers and activists who espouse the theory that human activity is causing catastrophic global warming. ‘The IPCC claims that human activities are responsible for nearly all the earth's recorded warming during the past two centuries,’ said NCPA Adjunct Scholar David Legates, the report's author and director of the Center for Climatic Research at the University of Delaware. ‘Yet the primary assessment they use as support appears to be more junk science than solid evidence.’” [US Newswire, 7/12/04]

**2006: Washington Times: “A New Study by…Legates…Throws Cold Water on the Claim Global Warming Threatens Polar Bears Survival.”** “Fortunately, a new study by David Legates, director of the University of Delaware's Center for Climatic Research, throws cold water on the claim global warming threatens polar bears survival. Mr. Legates critiques the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment that proclaimed Arctic air temperature trends strongly indicate global warming, causing polar ice caps and glaciers to melt. However, Mr. Legates says, the Assessment ignored data that undermine these claims.” [Washington Times, 5/15/06]

**2006: Legates: “Global Warming Due to Human Greenhouse Gas Is Still Debatable.”** “David Legates, the director of the University of Delaware's Center for Climatic Research, argues that in the 1930s, arctic air was as warm as it is today, ‘yet polar bears survived.’ Of the 20 distinct polar bear populations, two are decreasing, 10 are stable and two have grown, Legates wrote in his paper, ‘Climate Science: Climate Change and Its Impacts,’ issued in May. Furthermore, he concludes: ‘Global warming due to human greenhouse gas is still debatable.’” [Chicago Sun Times, 6/1/06]

**2006: News Journal: “Legates Said He Doesn’t Believe in Human-Induced Global Warming Because He Has No Proof.”** “Legates said he doesn't believe in human-induced global warming because he has no proof. Legates said the 1 degree-increase in global temperatures over the last 100 years could be part of a natural cycle.” [News Journal, 10/22/06]

**2007: Despite Status as Delaware’s State Climatologist, Legates Co-Wrote “Friend of the Court Brief” Opposing Delaware’s Position in Multi-State US Supreme Court Case.** “Delaware's state climatologist has found himself in the middle of a political squall after taking skeptical stands on global warming and climate change -- in one case directly contradicting the state's own policy. David R. Legates, a University of Delaware geography professor, co-wrote a ‘friend of the court’ brief that opposed Delaware's position in a multi-state U.S. Supreme Court case. In the appeal, state regulators argued that carbon dioxide from new cars should be regulated because of evidence the gas was contributing to rising global temperatures, climate shifts and changes in the environment. The Bush administration and industry critics opposed the demand, saying the dire warnings are unproven. Enter Legates, a Ph.D. climatologist who received the title of state climatologist in 2005 from Daniel Leathers, now the head of the University of Delaware's geography department. Legates joined a group of scientists late last year in urging the court to reject the state claims, in a brief filed by the conservative Competitive Enterprise Institute.” [News Journal, 2/1/07]

* **Legates: “It Is Simply Impossible to Conclude that the Net Effect of Greenhouse Gases Endangers Human Health and Welfare.”** [News Journal, 2/1/07]

**National Environmental Group Branded Legates “A Favorite Scientist of the Global Warming Denial Machine.”** [News Journal, 2/1/07]

**2007: Legates: “What We’re Trying to Say Is, the Science Isn’t Necessarily that Well Settled…”** “’The science brought in by the one side had given a more extremist view of climate change,’ Legates said. ‘What we're trying to say is, the science isn't necessarily that well settled, and in many cases it isn't that extreme. I'm not saying it isn't a problem.’” [News Journal, 2/1/07]

**2007: Legates: “The Biggest Misconception Is that Climate Change Is Going to Be Dramatic and that It’s Going to Be Extreme.”** [CNN, 5/2/07]

**2008: Legates To Speak At Heartland Institute Conference Designed To Explain “Other Side” Of Climate Change Debate.** “A year ago, the Delaware state climatologist's contrarian stance on global warming embroiled him in a national controversy, leading the governor to order him to stop using his state title while publicly expressing such views…David Legates will speak at a conference designed ‘to explain the often-neglected 'other side' of the climate change debate.’ The speakers' roster for the Heartland Institute's International Conference on Climate Change, to be held next week in New York City, identifies Legates first in his roles with the University of Delaware, including director of the Delaware Environmental Observing System and associate professor in the Department of Geography. The biographical material then states that he serves as Delaware state climatologist.” [News Journal, 3/1/08]

**2008: Climate Wire: “Legates Sees No ‘Smoking Gun’ Linking Made-Man Emissions to Climate Change…”** “Yet Legates, a professor in the geography department at the University of Delaware and an expert on precipitation and climate change, is not convinced that man-made emissions of carbon dioxide are a principal factor in driving global warming. David Legates sees no ‘smoking gun’ linking man-made emissions to climate change but frequently gets shot at by the Delaware press. Photo by Kathy F. Atkinson, courtesy of the University of Delaware. ‘We're asked to comment on whether floods and droughts are increasing in northern Delaware, and I think the answer is yes, they are,’ Legates said. ‘I think it has nothing to do with changes in precipitation nor does it have anything to do with changes in the atmosphere. It has everything to do with changes in the land surface.’” [ClimateWire, 3/31/08]

**2009: Legates: “In 15-20 Years, We’ll Look Back And See What A Hoax This Was.”** “Naysayers are still out there. Among them are Delaware's state climatologist, David Legates, and William Gray, the hurricane expert at Colorado State University. Legates told the Denver Post, ‘This scare will also run its course. In 15-20 years, we'll look back and see what a hoax this was.’” [Miami Herald, 3/29/09]

**2014: Legates: “My Concern Is That Carbon Dioxide Is Not The Main Player In Climate Change…”** “’My concern is that carbon dioxide is not the main player in climate change,’ Legates said. ‘It's probably only a bit [of a] player.’” [The Towerlight: Towson University, 10/27/14]

**2016: Environment and Energy Daily: “Legates…Has Long Disputed Man-Made Climate Change…”** “Former Alaska Republican Gov. Sarah Palin yesterday said climate change is a myth that scientists and policymakers are peddling to advance a political agenda. At an event on Capitol Hill premiering a new film by climate doubters, Palin said global warming is being used by the government ‘to have more control over us, our homes, our businesses, our families, our lives.’ She said doubters of climate change in various levels of government are afraid to "go rogue" and speak out for fear of being attacked by the media. ‘There is definitely a political agenda behind all of this,’ she said.…David Russell Legates, who has long disputed man-made climate change, and conservative writer Brent Bozell appeared at the Hill event.” [Environment and Energy Daily, 4/15/16]

## Philosophy

**2005: Slate: Legates “A Well-Known Global Warming Contrarian…”** “David Legates, a well-known global-warming contrarian who is a scientist at the University of Delaware. Legates argued that it is impossible to connect emissions of greenhouse gases from any specific source or group of sources to an increased risk of any particular outcome.” [Slate Magazine, 5/23/05]

**2006: News Journal: “When Asked…What It Would Take to Convince Him that Global Warming Was Real, Legates Responded: ‘Proof.’”** “Delaware's state climatologist David Legates is sometimes referred to as a global-warming contrarian. He jokes and says his favorite term is ‘global-warming deny-er.’ Legates worries the debate on climate change has become a political one rather than one based on science. When asked by Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., at a recent Senate committee hearing what it would take to convince him that global warming was real, Legates responded: ‘Proof.’ Carper was traveling with his family and was not available for comment. When Legates looks at the climate data, he sees cyclical warming and cooling rather than wholesale climate change.” [News Journal, 8/11/06]

**2007: Author of Union Concerned Scientists Report: “I…Think Legates Is a Good Example of Someone Who Has Chosen…to Have Much of His Work Sponsored Indirectly by ExxonMobil…”** “A Delaware scientist's contrarian stand on global warming and climate change has earned him national attention in a series of critical reports -- including some that lump his views in with industry-backed disinformation campaigns. The controversy surrounding Delaware State Climatologist David R. Legates and other climate change skeptics peaked last week with the publication of an updated summary report on global warming by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in Paris. Shortly before the Paris climate change report emerged, the Union of Concerned Scientists published a study listing Legates among several scientists it described as ‘familiar spokespeople from ExxonMobil-funded organizations’ that have regularly taken stands or sponsored reports questioning the science behind climate change warnings. ‘I certainly think that Legates is a good example of someone who has chosen, for whatever reason, to have much of his work sponsored indirectly by ExxonMobil,’ said Seth Shulman, primary author of the Union of Concerned Scientists report.” [News Journal, 2/6/07]

**2007: Legates: “There’s a Lot More Money to Be Made by Saying the World Is Coming to An End than to Say that this Is a Bunch of Hooey.”** “Most insulting is the insinuation that skeptics are after money, while believers are pure. Nonsense, David Legates, Delaware state climatologist, told me. Dire global warming predictions draw the big bucks in research these days: ‘There's a lot more money to be made by saying the world is coming to an end than to say that this is a bunch of hooey.’” [San Francisco Chronicle, 6/24/07]

**2012: Legates: “Our Climate Is Changing Because It Always Has Changed…It Is Foolish To Believe That The Climate Should Remain Constant Or Claim That Energy Policies Will Somehow Achieve ‘Climate Stabilization…’”** “Our climate is changing because it always has changed. It is foolish to believe that the climate should remain constant or claim that energy policies will somehow achieve ‘climate stabilization…’ This is the wrong approach. Actions to abate climate change should not be implemented until it can be demonstrated that they will actually achieve their intended results without creating new problems or exacerbating existing troubles. Imposing immediate, draconian programs like a carbon tax will have little, if any, beneficial impacts but will create numerous unintended adverse consequences… We must return to true science-based assessments of potential risk and use them to develop appropriate solutions to problems over which we have some control. Delaware cannot afford anything less.” [News Journal, 8/25/12]

**2014: Legates: “Carbon Dioxide Is Plant Food And More Of It Can Be A Positive…”** “Carbon dioxide is plant food and more of it can be a positive. If global water temperature rise for any reason, the link of the growing seas (ph) will be increased, the amount and diversity of crops will be enhanced and more areas of the planet will be farmed.” [CQ Transcriptions, 6/3/14]

**2015: Legates: “Money Has Driven the Charge to Document Global Warming, and There Is Far More Money and Fame to Be Had by Saying the Sky Is Falling.”** Legates: “There are several disturbing aspects. Money has driven the charge to document global warming, and there is far more money and fame to be had by saying the sky is falling. With that have come decidedly nasty attacks by activists and scientists alike whose goal is to destroy reputations and careers by silencing dissent.” [US Official News, 7/2/15]

**2017: Legates: “Many Activists Have Turned Toward Socialism As A Viable Way To Limit Carbon-Dioxide Emissions.”** “With growing alarmism over carbon dioxide-induced climate change, many activists have turned toward socialism as a viable way to limit carbon-dioxide emissions. The collectivist model is perfect for top-down control over the general public as, supposedly, the government can then enact legislation to defend the environment and protect against climate change. Capitalism, it is argued, is a system based on greed, and its economic bottom line trumps the need for clean air and clean water. By contrast, the socialist model should provide a much cleaner environment as pollution (including carbon dioxide by its erroneous inclusion as a pollutant by alarmists) is anathema to the collective whole.” [Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, 3/22/17]

## Heartland Institute

**Heartland Institute Part Of “Sprawling Network” Of Oil Funded Groups That “Cast Doubt On Consensus Science, Confused Public Opinion And Forestalled Passage Of Laws And Regulations That Would Address The Global Environmental Crisis.”** According to Inside Climate News, “Hundreds of millions of dollars from corporations such as ExxonMobil and wealthy individuals such as the billionaires Charles and David Koch have supported the development of a sprawling network, which includes Heartland and other think tanks, advocacy groups and political operatives. They have cast doubt on consensus science, confused public opinion and forestalled passage of laws and regulations that would address the global environmental crisis. It is one of the largest, longest and most consequential misinformation efforts mounted against mainstream science by an industry.” [Inside Climate News, [12/22/17](https://insideclimatenews.org/news/22122017/big-oil-heartland-climate-science-misinformation-campaign-koch-api-trump-infographic)]

**Heartland Institute Executive Joined Trump In Rose Garden To Announce Withdrawal From Paris Climate Agreement.** According to Inside Climate News, “Five years later, on June 1, 2017, the group’s chief executive, Joseph Bast, was a guest of Donald Trump in the White House Rose Garden as the president announced the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris climate agreement. ‘We are winning in the global warming war,’ Bast declared later in an email to supporters.” [Inside Climate News, [12/22/17](https://insideclimatenews.org/news/22122017/big-oil-heartland-climate-science-misinformation-campaign-koch-api-trump-infographic)]

**Heartland Pushed For EPA To Overturn Endangerment Finding**. According to the Heartland Institute, “A new Heartland Institute Policy Brief from Senior Fellow Joseph Bast makes the case for repealing the Obama-era “Endangerment Finding,” an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulation under the Clean Air Act. The Endangerment Finding declares that the current and projected concentrations of six greenhouse gases in the atmosphere—carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF6)—threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations.” [Heartland Institute, [7/15/19](https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/research--commentary-heartland-brief-argues-that-epas-endangerment-finding-should-be-repealed)]

**Legates Was A Speaker At The Heartland Institute’s “13th International Conference On Climate Change” Held At The Trump Hotel In Washington, DC**. [Heartland Institute, accessed [9/14/20](https://www.heartland.org/events/events/13th-international-conference-on-climate-change)]

**Legates Discussed Benefits Of Climate Change At CPAC Panel Hosted By Heartland.** According to EE News, “But late yesterday afternoon, the Heartland Institute, a conservative think tank that has been a leading proponent of climate skepticism, sponsored a two-hour session on President Trump's energy agenda…Legates spoke about the benefits of global warming to agriculture and the economy. Loris predicted that Trump's energy policies will fuel economic growth — but also warned against government subsidies for all energy sources. Orr said coal will remain a critical part of the nation's energy portfolio for decades to come.” [EE News, [2/23/18](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060074577)]

**Legates Received “Courage In Defense Of Science Award” From Heartland Institute.** According to the Washington Post, “Legates is affiliated with the Heartland Institute, a free-market think tank funded in part by the fossil fuel industry that supports research arguing that human-caused climate change is not a serious threat. At the organization’s 10th International Conference on Climate Change in 2015, he was presented with the Courage in Defense of Science Award. In his acceptance speech, he said he saw it as recognizing him for surviving having been ‘beaten over the head by a bunch of thugs,’ referring to mainstream climate scientists and politicians who have criticized his work.” [Washington Post, [9/13/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/13/noaa-hires-david-legates-climate/)]

## Science Contrarian

**Legates: “Climate Science Has All But Died In This Country.”** According to the Heartland Institute, “The government agencies involved in the report are putting politics above the pursuit of truth, says University of Delaware climatology professor David Legates, Ph.D. ‘The Obama administration demanded the use of the extreme scenarios so the predicted impact on the populace would be substantial,’ Legates said. ‘This isn’t about the science. If it were, there would be discussions about the other scenarios and about the uncertainties in the climate system and in the models that drive these scenarios. ‘They have taken the worst possible scenarios and packaged them as if they were the expected norm,’ said Legates. ‘Climate science has all but died in this country.’” [Heartland Institute, [12/17/18](https://www.heartland.org/news-opinion/news/national-climate-assessment-criticized-as-badly-flawed)]

**Legates Was Lead Author Of Rebuttal To IPCC Climate Reports**. According to the Washington Post, “NOAA is a major hub for federal climate research, along with NASA, the Energy Department and the National Science Foundation, among others. Its scientists contribute to reports by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ( IPCC). The IPCC has warned of severe consequences for humanity if greenhouse gases are not reduced significantly in the next one to two decades. Legates, however, was a lead author of a Heartland-funded, non-peer-reviewed rebuttal to the IPCC, called, ‘The IPCC Reconsidered,’ which Heartland published most recently in 2018. That report extolled the virtues of fossil fuels, stating: ‘The analysis conducted here for the first time finds nearly all the impacts of fossil fuel use on human well-being are net positive (benefits minus costs), near zero (no net benefit or cost), or are simply unknown.’ Legates’s arrival at NOAA comes a year after the agency’s scientific independence took a hit when the agency criticized its own forecasters’ accurate forecast for Hurricane Dorian to satisfy White House concerns that its communications were making the president look bad for having claimed, erroneously, that the storm would threaten Alabama.” [Washington Post, [9/13/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/13/noaa-hires-david-legates-climate/)]

**Legates Stated That The Fourth National Climate Assessment ‘Isn’t About The Science, And It Never Was.’** According to World, “David Legates, a climatologist and a senior fellow at the Cornwall Alliance, told me people should take these dire predictions ‘with a grain of salt’ because the report aims to frighten the average citizen into accepting the drastic measures alarmists propose. ‘Unfortunately, climate change isn’t about the science, and it never was,’ he said, noting it’s instead about pushing a political agenda. Legates said computer models overestimate climate warming, and when scientists compare the predictions to real-life satellite and balloon data, the models suggest more than twice as much warming than the data show. ‘I have often marveled at creation and how God has put such an intricate system in place that has kept temperatures in a very small window despite changes that are considerable,’ he said. ‘Computer models, by contrast, represent our pitifully small understanding of climate science.’ Legates noted that the models always provide only extreme scenarios and cannot identify whether temperature changes are due to fossil fuel emissions or natural variability.” [World, [11/29/18](https://world.wng.org/content/expert_climate_report_stokes_unwarranted_fear)]

**Legates Dismissed The Fourth National Climate Assessment, Claimed That Previous Predictions Did Not Come True and Actions On Climate Hurt The Poor**. According to World, “Almost none of the models’ predictions have come true, noted Legates, including a world famine by 1985, more than 50,000 climate refugees per year by 2010, and a snow-free England by 2012. The world also experienced a hiatus in air temperature rise between 1999 and 2017 that the models did not foresee. But Legates said reports like National Climate Assessment have deeper problems than faulty predictions and costly policy proposals, pointing out that the drastic actions global warming alarmists propose would hurt the poor. He said inexpensive energy makes clean drinking water, disease prevention and treatment, and ample food, clothing, and shelter possible, and securing those should be the priority. ‘Then, and only then, can countries turn their attention to environmental stewardship,’ Legates said.” [World, [11/29/18](https://world.wng.org/content/expert_climate_report_stokes_unwarranted_fear)]

**Legates Criticized The Fourth National Climate Assessment And Stated That The Obama Administration Only Used ‘Extreme Scenarios.’** According to the Heartland Institute, “In a podcast I conducted and in an interview with me for a forthcoming article in Environment & Climate News, University of Delaware Climatology Professor David Legates, Ph.D. former Delaware state climatologist, said: ‘The Obama administration demanded the use of the extreme scenarios so that the impact on the populace would be substantial. This isn’t about the science ... if it were, there would be discussions about the other scenarios and about the uncertainties in the climate system and in the models that drive these scenarios. That even the IPCC report, with its global effort at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is far tamer than the NCA shows you the extent to which this report deviates from even the activist science of the IPCC. They have taken the worst possible scenarios and packaged them as if they were the expected norm. Climate science has all but died in this country.’” [Heartland Institute, [12/7/18](https://www.heartland.org/news-opinion/news/scientists-respond-to-the-hype-alarm-in-the-recent-national-climate-assessment)]

**Legates Claimed That More Scrutiny Is Needed In Climate Reports**. According to the Heartland Institute, “Extraordinary claims of climate disaster do not get the scrutiny they deserve before being published or covered by the media, Legates says. ‘There was a time when extreme claims required more scrutiny,’ said Legates. ‘To say the values heretofore calculated were 60 percent too low demands a response as to why the old values are to be discarded in favor of the new ones. ‘This event underscores the issue that claims of an increased impact of anthropogenic climate change are more readily believed, particularly if they are ‘worse than previously thought,’ and the media are quick to hype the ‘latest and greatest’ finding when it fits the disaster narrative,’ Legates said. ‘Correcting themselves and pointing out the mundane fact the findings were flawed is all too often shunned or not covered because ‘it will only be used by skeptics to discredit the science,’ but when science discredits itself, that must be part of the narrative as well.’” [Heartland Institute, [1/2/19](https://www.heartland.org/news-opinion/news/correction-issued-for-alarming-ocean-temperature-paper)]

**Legates Questioned Climate Change-CO2 Connection In Testimony To Pennsylvania State Legislature**. According to testimony by Legates to the Pennsylvania legislature, “I am familiar with the Climate Change Action Plan for the State of Delaware –a state that is less open to discussing facts on both sides of the issue than is Pennsylvania. But what underlies all attempts at climate stabilization is the belief that carbon dioxide is a magical control knob for the Earth’s climate. Thus, draconian measures are required to achieve greenhouse gas reductions to alleviate future disastrous weather events.” [Pennsylvania State Legislature, Public Hearing Testimony, [10/28/19](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/TR/Transcripts/2019_0135_0002_TSTMNY.pdf)]

**Legates Questioned Carbon’s Role In Climate Change During The Bush Administration**. According to EE News, “Several witnesses testified at Wednesday's hearing, covering familiar ground in the debate. Sherwood Rowland, a professor or chemistry and earth system science at the University of California Irvine, offered an overview of the most recent United Nations Intergovermental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment, and argued that there is sufficient scientific evidence to justify mandatory caps on CO2 emissions. David Legates, director of climatic research at the University of Delaware, to some degree challenged Rowland's testimony, arguing, among other things, that the computer climate models used in many of the studies assessed by the IPCC are inadequate.” [EE News, 3/14/02]

**2003: Legates Questioned UN IPCC Report In Front Of Senate**. According to EE News, “Willie Soon, an Inhofe witness and an astrophysicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, told the EPW panel that his review of more than 240 studies showed there was no convincing evidence of alarming weather trends over the last century. And David Legates, the Delaware professor, charged that the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2001 report makes "premature" assessments based on faulty and impossible-to-obtain historical temperature data.” [EE News, [7/30/03](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/10716)]

**Legates Stated That Climate Abatement Efforts ‘Will Do More Harm Than Good.’** According to testimony at an Environment and Natural Resources hearing, “‘Climate has always changed and weather is always variable, due to complex, powerful natural forces. No efforts to stabilize the climate can possibly be successful. […] The current emphasis on climate change abatement will do far more harm than good.’” [House Natural Resources Committee YouTube Channel, [2/7/19]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1v2f-HgFvY&feature=youtu.be&t=7203)

### Climate Science Methods

**2000: Legates: “Current Models Cannot Accurately Represent The Existing Climate Without Manipulation…”** “The U.S. National Assessment of climate change won't provide policymakers or the public with useful information because it relies on computer climate models that are incapable of making accurate regional predictions of global warming, according to a study released today by the George C. Marshall

Institute.…’Because current models cannot accurately represent the existing climate without manipulation,’ Legates noted, ‘they are unlikely to render reliable global climate scenarios or provide useful forecasts of future

climate changes in regions of the United States as small as the Midwest, West or South.’” [US Newswire, 11/1/00]

**2002: Legates: “I Fear That The Issue Has Become So Politically Charged That The Political Process Will Always Cloud The True Search For Scientific Truth…The Climate System Is Far More Complex Than We Ever Imagined…”** Legates: “Final Thoughts: The Science Is Not Yet…In 1997, I had the pleasure to chair a panel session at the Houston Forum that included seven of the most prominent climate change scientists in the country. At the close of that session, I asked each panelist the question, "In 2002, given five more years of observations, five more years of model development, and five more years of technological advances and knowledge about the climate system, will we have an answer to the question of whether our climate is changing as a result of anthropogenic increases in trace gas emissions?" The panel, which consisted of both advocates and skeptics, agreed that we would have a definitive answer probably not by 2002, but certainly by 2007. I disagreed then and I continue to disagree today. I fear that the issue has become so politically charged that the political process will always cloud the true search for scientific truth. But more than that, I feel the climate system is far more complex than we ever imagined - so much so that we still will not have a definitive answer by 2007.” [Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony, 3/13/02]

**2003: Legates: “An Assertion Of Any Decade As Being The Warmest In The Last Millennium Is Premature.”** “In closing, let me state that climate is more than simply annually-averaged global air temperature. Too much focus has been placed on divining air temperature time-series and such emphasis obscures the true issue in understanding climate change and variability. If we are truly to understand climate and its impacts and driving forces, we must push beyond the tendency to distill it to a single annual number. Proxy records, which provide our only possible link to the past, are incomplete at best. But when these records are carefully and individually examined, one reaches the conclusion that climate variability has been a natural occurrence, and especially so over the last millennium. And given the uncertainties in the proxy and instrumental records, an assertion of any decade as being the warmest in the last millennium is premature.” [Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony, 7/29/03]

## Fossil Fuel Connections and Funding

**Legates And University Refused To Disclose Who Funded His Work**. According to Inside Climate News, “The University of Delaware has declined a congressional request for documents related to the external funding of one of its professors—a known climate contrarian—saying it was an intrusion into academic freedom. Rep. Raúl Grijalva of Arizona, the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources, had requested documentation related to the funding sources of Professor David Legates and six other skeptic climate researchers. He did this after it was reported that Wei-Hock (Willie) Soon had failed to disclose funding from fossil fuel companies for his published work, studies that advanced discredited theories about the causes of climate change.” [Inside Climate News, [3/19/15](https://insideclimatenews.org/news/19032015/u-delaware-refuses-disclose-funding-sources-its-climate-contrarian)]

**Legates Denied Receiving Funding From Fossil Fuel In Court Ordered Brief**. According to EE News, “David Legates, the former state climatologist in Delaware and a geography professor at the University of Delaware, said he has not received federal funding for his research in almost two decades. He has called students ‘easy targets for the climate alarmism that pervades America today.’ He notified the court that his views have cost him federal research grants but did not mention that some of the studies he conducted with Soon received funding from fossil fuel companies, including Exxon Mobil. ‘I have been notified (unofficially) that I am on a federal ‘do-not-fund’ list simply because I have been critical of the official position on anthropogenic global warming and have written papers critical of that position,’ Legates wrote in the brief.” [EE News, [3/22/18](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060077053)]

**Legates Part Of Industry And Trade Group Strategy To Discredit Science, Cast Doubt On Reality Of Climate Change**. According to the Washington Post, “Documents uncovered by journalists and activists over the past decade lay out a clear strategy: First, target media outlets to get them to report more on the ‘uncertainties’ in climate science, and position industry-backed contrarian scientists as expert sources for media. Second, target conservatives with the message that climate change is a liberal hoax, and paint anyone who takes the issue seriously as ‘out of touch with reality.’” [Washington Post, [1/10/19](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/01/10/how-fossil-fuel-industry-got-media-think-climate-change-was-debatable/)]

* **Legates, Wille Soon, Among Scientists Positioned As “Contrarian Scientists” By “Fossil Fuel Industry Trade Groups And Their Respective PR Firms.”** According to the Washington Post, “In the 1990s, oil companies, fossil fuel industry trade groups and their respective PR firms began positioning contrarian scientists such as Willie Soon, William Happer and David Legates as experts whose opinions on climate change should be considered equal and opposite to that of climate scientists. The Heartland Institute, which hosts an annual International Conference on Climate Change known as the leading climate skeptics conference, for example, routinely calls out media outlets (including The Washington Post) for showing ‘bias’ in covering climate change when they either decline to quote a skeptic or question a skeptic’s credibility.” [Washington Post, [1/10/19](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/01/10/how-fossil-fuel-industry-got-media-think-climate-change-was-debatable/)]
* **Willie Soon’s Research Funded By Big Oil.** According to Inside Climate News, “Among the best known is Willie Soon, a proponent of the theory that solar cycles drive climate change. His notion has been discredited by mainstream science, which determined that the influence of solar fluctuations has been too small to account for the magnitude of modern warming. Yet deniers and politicians cite his papers as evidence that scientists are divided about what causes climate change. In 2015, it emerged that Soon’s research had received hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants from 2003 to 2015 from API, ExxonMobil, the Charles Koch Foundation and the Southern Company, one of the country’s largest coal-burning electric utilities. He called his papers ‘deliverables’ in return for the funding.” [Inside Climate News, [12/22/17](https://insideclimatenews.org/news/22122017/big-oil-heartland-climate-science-misinformation-campaign-koch-api-trump-infographic)]

**University Of Delaware Refused To Disclose Funding Sources For Legates.** According to Inside Climate News, “The University of Delaware has declined a congressional request for documents related to the external funding of one of its professors—a known climate contrarian—saying it was an intrusion into academic freedom. Rep. Raúl Grijalva of Arizona, the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources, had requested documentation related to the funding sources of Professor David Legates and six other skeptic climate researchers. He did this after it was reported that Wei-Hock (Willie) Soon had failed to disclose funding from fossil fuel companies for his published work, studies that advanced discredited theories about the causes of climate change. Legates is a professor of Climatology at the University of Delaware, and has co-authored several academic studies with Soon, including four of the papers for which Soon accepted funding from major utility company Southern Company. Soon reported the papers as ‘deliverables’ without having disclosed his funding source.” [Inside Climate News, [3/19/15](https://insideclimatenews.org/news/19032015/u-delaware-refuses-disclose-funding-sources-its-climate-contrarian)]

**Legates Had Collaborated with George C. Marshall Institute, which Had Received Funding from Exxon Mobil.** “Harvard astrophysicist Willie Soon, one of the paper's authors, then spoke, claiming his work showed that 20th-century temperatures were not, in fact, anomalous. He didn't note, however, that his research had been partly funded by the American Petroleum Institute. Soon -- who did not respond to written questions submitted for this article -- was backed by David Legates of the University of Delaware, another contrarian and co-author of a later version of the paper. Both scientists have collaborated in the past with the George C. Marshall Institute, an organization skeptical of much climate-change science that received $ 90,000 from ExxonMobil in 2002, the last year for which records are currently available. Until recently, Soon was a senior scientist with the institute and received a small stipend for his work, according to President William O'Keefe, and Legates has written a paper and book chapter for the group.” [American Prospect, 5/04]

**2005: Mother Jones Reported Legates Served As Adjunct Scholar At Dallas-Based National Center For Policy Analysis, Which Received $205,000 From ExxonMobil Between 2000 And 2003.** “In 2003, Soon and Baliunas published an article, partly funded by the American Petroleum Institute, in a small journal called Climate Research. Presenting a review of existing literature rather than new research, the two concluded "the 20th century is probably not the warmest nor a uniquely extreme climatic period of the last millennium." They had, in effect, challenged both Mann and the IPCC, and in so doing presented global warming skeptics with a cause to rally around. Another version of the paper was quickly published with three additional authors: David Legates of the University of Delaware, and longtime skeptics Craig and Sherwood Idso of the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change in Tempe, Arizona. All have ExxonMobil connections: the Idsos received $40,000 from ExxonMobil for their center in the year the study was published, while Legates is an adjunct scholar at the Dallas-based National Center for Policy Analysis (which got $205,000 between 2000 and 2003).” [Mother Jones 5/05]

## State Climatologist

**Legates Forced Out Of Position As State Climatologist For His Controversial Views**. According to the Washington Post, “Legates, a University of Delaware professor who was forced out of his role as that state’s climatologist because of his controversial views, has taken a senior leadership role at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).” [Washington Post, [9/13/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/13/noaa-hires-david-legates-climate/)]

**2011: Legates Stepped Down As Delaware State Climatologist**. According to EE News, “Delaware State Climatologist David Legates, long criticized for being a skeptic of man-made climate change, has stepped down. Legates, a geography professor at the University of Delaware, had taken the position in 2005 when Dan Leathers, also a professor, stepped down to become a dean at the school. At the time, the two agreed that Legates would hand back the position when Leathers finished his time as dean. ‘On July 1, Dan resigned as Deputy Dean of our College,’ Legates wrote in an email to other state climatologists. ‘In June, he had asked me if I would honor the gentleman’s agreement that we had made about seven years ago, and I said I would.’” [EE News, [7/19/11](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1059951747)]

**Delaware Governor Asked Legates To Not Refer To Himself As “State Climatologist**.” According to EE News, “Delaware climatologist David Legates must stop using his title in any public statements on climate change, Gov. Ruth Ann Minner (D) said last week. Legate’s title was accepted by the American Association of State Climatologists and the National Climate Data Center and acknowledged in 2005 by Minner and the University of Delaware provost. Legates is also a geography professor at the university.” [EE News, [2/22/07](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/51821/)]

* **State Climatologist Position Did Not Carry Any Official State Authority**. “His position as climatologist does not carry any official state authority.” [EE News, [2/22/07](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/51821/)]
* **Delaware Governor: “I Am Directing You To Offer Any Future Statements On This Or Other Public Policy Matters Only On Behalf Of Yourself Or The University Of Delaware, And Not As State Climatologist.”** According to EE News, “‘Your views on climate change, as I understand them, are not aligned with those of my administration,’ Minner wrote. ‘In light of my position and due to the confusion surrounding your role with the state, I am directing you to offer any future statements on this or other public policy matters only on behalf of yourself or the University of Delaware, and not as state climatologist’” [EE News, [2/22/07](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/51821/)]

**David Legates: “No State Climatologist Has Ever Advised Any Governor, Either Current Or Past, On Climate Change Issues.”** According to EE News, “‘No state climatologist has ever advised any governor, either current or past, on climate change issues,’ he added. But despite being shunned by the very government that relies on his scientific data, Legates said he does not feel personally slighted in any way.” [EE News, [3/31/08](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/62698)]

## Believes CO2 Is Good

**At The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) 2018, Legates Claimed That Increased Carbon Dioxide Is Positive And Beneficial For Plants.** According to Jezebel, “The panel’s first speaker was David Legates, a professor of geography at the University of Delaware. Legates, who has a wide face and the cropped, roundish hair of a 13th century friar, gave a talk on ‘The Overstatement of CO2 as a Pollutant.’ ‘Carbon dioxide is the building block of plants, so the idea is the more carbon dioxide, the better plants grow,’ Legates began. Of course, while rising CO2 levels *have* been shown to help plant growth, scientists believe that the side effects of rising temperatures, change in rainfall levels and extreme weather events are likely to negate that impact; there’s also some research showing that higher CO2 levels can decrease the nutritional value of crops. And as climate scientist Gavin Schmidt previously told Jezebel, only a fraction of CO2 emissions are going to vegetation, with the rest pouring into the atmosphere and the ocean, increasing global warming and ocean acidification, respectively.” [Jezebel, [2/23/18](https://theslot.jezebel.com/things-are-fine-and-the-crabs-will-get-huge-according-t-1823254448)]

**At The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) 2018, Legates Downplayed Ocean Acidification By Citing Large Crabs Exposed To CO2.** According to Jezebel, “During one particularly striking scientific cherry-pick, Legates attempted to rebut research demonstrating the deteriorating effects of ocean acidification on snail shells by pulling up photographs of crawfish and crabs that had grown after being exposed to higher CO2 levels. Several audience members gasped; one let out a barking, victorious laugh. ‘Now, that one’s a keeper,’ Legates said. ‘Those are the kind of crabs we want to find.’ It is true that increased CO2 has been shown to bulk up crustaceans like lobsters, crabs, and shrimp; it’s weird, though, to imply that crabs getting huge means everything is fine. For most other sea creatures vulnerable to acidification (and even the super-crabs, who scientists believe may be feeling “loopy”), everything is not. Legates also assured his audience that they ought not believe the “hype” about the recent death of large sections of the Great Barrier Reef. This bigger-is-better mentality isn’t actually all that surprising in the context of what was ultimately a robust defense of bounty. Take what you need, the panelists urged—enjoy your “economic freedom,” your jumbo crabs. No need to commit “economic suicide” like the suckers who stayed in the Paris Accord. The planet will work itself out.” [Jezebel, [2/23/18](https://theslot.jezebel.com/things-are-fine-and-the-crabs-will-get-huge-according-t-1823254448)]

**At The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) 2018, Legates Showed Graph Displaying CO2’s ‘Positive Externalities.’** According to Desmog Blog, “University of Delaware’s David Legates — whose past research arguing against the human influence on climate change has failed to disclose its fossil fuel funders — pushed the well-debunked denier claim that carbon dioxide (CO2) not only isn’t a pollutant, but it’s good for the environment, especially plants. In a slide show presentation that provided nearly no references for the images or what the methods were behind the experiment, Legates threw aside the vast majority of research on the variable effects of CO2 on life. One of the only graphs with any sort of reference was one that showed the ‘positive externalities’ of carbon dioxide. The graph came from a study done by Heartland’s own Craig D. Idso.” [Desmog Blog, [2/27/18](https://www.desmogblog.com/2018/02/27/heartland-institute-trump-al-gore-attacks-tired-climate-denier-myths-cpac)]

**Legates Spoke At ‘America First Energy Conference’ And Argued That Carbon Emissions Will Lead To A ‘Greener Planet.’** According to The Hill, “Balash spoke about the Trump administration’s deregulation push during his keynote, Reuters said. Also at the conference, a professor of climatology at the University of Delaware, David Legates, argued that an increase in carbon dioxide emissions helped to make the planet ‘greener’ by allowing plant life to more efficiently consume water. ‘So, you would expect, therefore, that this will be a greener planet,’ Legates said. Reuters did not report that Trump officials attended his panel.” [The Hill, [8/9/18](https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/401109-trump-officials-attended-america-first-energy-conference-where)]

**Legates: “As Far As I’m Concerned, Carbon Dioxide Is Not The Most Important Compound On The Planet, As Far As Climate Is Concerned.”** According to a speech at The Heritage Foundation, “‘As far as I’m concerned, carbon dioxide is not the most important compound on the planet, as far as climate is concerned. It is of course, as Pat alluded, water.’ ‘When you look at water vapor and water in the atmosphere […] it’s everywhere, in all three forms. […] You can see, even atmospheric concentration, which is where carbon dioxide is king, it’s apparently only queen because water vapor has even the bigger impact on atmospheric concentration than carbon dioxide does.’ ‘I could have been a modeler. Maybe in another world, I am. I don’t know.’ There’s 40 different kinds of vegetation around the plant. Now, this shows you just how complex these models are. But what I want to point out is how ridiculous this gets […] we’ve got an unbelievable number of variables to try to keep track of, and then we hit it with a little teeny mallet to see what happens and we bet the farm and all the policy of the future on what that model does with that little, teeny nudge, given the fact it’s got all of these fundamental problems associated with them.’ ‘Models have too much sensitivity to climate change, particular with relation to the greenhouse effect, because there’s just too much water in the atmosphere.’” [The Heritage Foundation YouTube Channel, [12/9/16](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Asj-3efMVB8)]

**Legates Claimed CO2 Regulations Are A Government Control Program To Restrict Peoples’ Lives**. According to E&E News, “Legates has taken a dim view of the role the government plays in creating climate policy. He is a frequent guest at events sponsored by the Heartland Institute, which works to muddy public understanding of climate science. In September 2019, Legates claimed that regulating carbon dioxide was actually a government control program designed to restrict the lives of ordinary Americans. ‘Most governments want to keep control, and most governments get bigger and bigger over time,’ he said. ‘Carbon dioxide becomes that molecule by which we can take control of your lives, of your efforts, and everything that goes on.’” [E&E News, [9/14/20](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2020/09/14/stories/1063713585?utm_medium=email&utm_source=eenews%3Aclimatewire&utm_campaign=edition%2BiZ%2B%2FftFV%2B2LxUfHtN5bxJQ%3D%3D)]

## Criticism of Environmental Left

**Legates Compared Soviet Union Leaders To Today’s Left At The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) 2018.** According to Desmog Blog, “Legates’ presentation ended with a reference to the Soviet Union. Displaying a black and white photo of Trofim Lysenko — who was a favorite of Stalin and suppressed research that went against his own — Legates said, ‘The people doing the silencing are the people you would expect, the left as it was back in 1930.’” [Desmog Blog, [2/27/18](https://www.desmogblog.com/2018/02/27/heartland-institute-trump-al-gore-attacks-tired-climate-denier-myths-cpac)]

**Legates Claimed Students Are ‘Easy Targets For The Climate Alarmism That Pervades America.’** According to E&E News, “David Legates, the former state climatologist in Delaware and a geography professor at the University of Delaware, said he has not received federal funding for his research in almost two decades. He has called students ‘easy targets for the climate alarmism that pervades America today.’ He notified the court that his views have cost him federal research grants but did not mention that some of the studies he conducted with Soon received funding from fossil fuel companies, including Exxon Mobil. ‘I have been notified (unofficially) that I am on a federal ‘do-not-fund’ list simply because I have been critical of the official position on anthropogenic global warming and have written papers critical of that position,’ Legates wrote in the brief. The skeptics said they were submitting their briefs because the case could set a precedent for climate science in the courtroom.” [E&E News, [3/22/18](https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060077053/search?keyword=legates+)]

## Position on Coronavirus and Climate

**Legates Blasted Both Climate And Coronavirus Modeling In Heartland Institute Article.** According to the Washington Post, “Legates also has questioned scientists’ approach to the coronavirus pandemic, having co-written a commentary published on Heartland’s website on April 13 that compared the modeling of the virus’s spread to climate modeling, blasting both as inaccurate because of the assumptions the modelers made. ‘We can’t afford a cure that’s worse than the disease — or a prolonged and deadly national economic shutdown that could have been shortened by updated and corrected models,’ Legates wrote, along with Paul Driessen, another Heartland-affiliated scholar. ‘Now just imagine: What if we could have that same honest, science-based approach to climate models?’ they wrote. ‘Shouldn’t we demand that these models be verified against real-world evidence? Natural forces have caused climate changes and extreme weather events throughout history. What proof is there that what we see today is due to fossil fuel emissions, and not to those same natural forces? We certainly don’t want energy ‘solutions’ that don’t work and are far worse than the supposed manmade climate and weather ‘virus.’ ‘ The simplest of climate models run decades ago accurately projected global warming ‘And we have the climate data. We’ve got years of data,’ they wrote. ‘The data show the models don’t match reality,’ they wrote, despite numerous peer-reviewed studies showing otherwise.” [Washington Post, [9/13/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/09/13/noaa-hires-david-legates-climate/)]

* **Legates Urged Questioning Of Coronavirus Models, And Applying The Same Skepticism To Climate Models.** According to David Legates and Paul Driessen in the Heartland Institute, “It is vital that they recheck the models and assumptions – and distinguish between COVID-19 deaths actually due to the virus... and not just associated with or compounded by it, but primarily due to age, obesity, pneumonia or other issues. We can’t afford a cure that’s worse than the disease – or a prolonged and deadly national economic shutdown that could have been shortened by updated and corrected models. Now just imagine: What if we could have that same honest, science-based approach to climate models? What if the White House, EPA, Congress, UN, EU and IPCC acknowledged that climate models are only as good and as accurate as the assumptions built into them? What if – as the months and years went by and we got more real-world temperature, sea level and extreme weather data – we used that information to honestly refine the models? Would the assumptions and therefore the forecasts change dramatically?” [Heartland Institute, [4/13/20](https://www.heartland.org/news-opinion/news/fauci-birx-climate-models)]

* **Legates Claimed That Scientists Use Extreme Coronavirus And Climate Modeling Because “Disaster Scenarios Sell.”** According to David Legates and Paul Driessen in the Heartland Institute, “Climate models have always overstated the warming. But even though modelers have admitted that their models are ‘tuned’ – revised after the fact to make it look like they predicted temperatures accurately – the modelers have made no attempt to change the climate sensitivity to match reality. Why not? They know disaster scenarios sell. Disaster forecasts keep them employed, swimming in research money – and empowered to tell legislators and regulators that humanity must we take immediate, draconian action to eliminate all fossil fuel use – the economic, human and environmental consequences be damned. And they probably will never admit their mistakes or duplicity, much less be held accountable. ‘Wash your hands! You could save millions of lives!’ has far more impact than ‘You could save your own life, your kids’ lives, dozens of lives.’ When it comes to climate change, you’re saving the planet. […] The Fauci-Birx team is trying to do science-based modeling for the ChiCom-WHO coronavirus – feeding updated data into their models. Forecasts for infections and deaths are down significantly. Thankfully.” [Heartland Institute, [4/13/20](https://www.heartland.org/news-opinion/news/fauci-birx-climate-models)]