

[Climate Change Censorship!](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Worstall](#) [2] | Sunday 13 April 2008



OK, OK, censorship is too strong a word. How about activists try to get the books (as with the [news earlier](#) [3]) written their way? Friends of the Earth has noted that [this book](#) [4] doesn't toe the line on climate change. They're [urging people](#) [5] to write to the publishers to get it changed, and writing to every Governor of a State to try and see that it doesn't get used in schools (at least, I assume that's their point). Why, even the Great [James Hansen](#) [6] has joined the campaign with [a letter](#) [7].

So where's the actual beef?

"It is a foolish politician who today opposes environmentalism. And that creates a problem, because not all environmental issues are equally deserving of support. Take the case of global warming."

Certainly not all environmental problems are equally worthy of support. The appalling pollution in my office is no where near as important as the lack of potable water for a billion or more of my fellow human beings. That when politicians do look at global warming we get idiocies like mandatory biofuels is of course a different point.

"The earth has become warmer, but is this mostly the result of natural climate changes, or is it heavily influenced by humans putting greenhouse gases into the air?"

This is of course a central point of the discussion: certainly we would want students to know the answer.

"On the one hand, a warmer globe will cause sea levels to rise, threatening coastal communities; on the other hand, greater warmth will make it easier and cheaper to grow crops and avoid high heating bills."

Entirely true and more importantly, our students of "American Government: Institutions and Policies" are being introduced to the concept of cost benefit analyses, a most important tool.

"But many other problems are much less clear-cut. Science doesn't know how bad the green-house effect is."

Indeed this is so. Climate sensitivity (how much warming from a doubling of atmospheric CO₂) is the most important unknown at present. The IPCC thinks somewhere from 2 degrees C to 4.5. [James Annan](#) [8] says 3. James Hansen (yes, he of the letter), in [a paper](#) [9] released only last week, says 6 degrees C. So we don't in fact know how bad it is.

So our students seem to be getting a useful introduction to the subject then: and where is that beef?

It couldn't be that FoE and fellow travellers don't in fact want people to have a useful introduction, could it? That anything less than the insistence that we're all gonna die (Aieeee!) unless we have a fundamental change in the organisation of society is an unacceptable statement, could it?

No, no, perish the thought, even I'm not that cynical. There must be a more logical reason for this complaint.

Anyone know what it is?

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Links:

- [1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/miscellaneous/climate-change-censorship>
- [2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5778>
- [3] <http://adamsmith.org/blog/misc/and-here-is-the-bbc-news:-your-way!-200804081181/>
- [4] http://www.amazon.com/American-Government-Institutions-James-Wilson/dp/0618556621/ref=pd_bbs_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1207938544&sr=8-1
- [5] http://action.foe.org/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=24133
- [6] <http://wattsupwiththat.wordpress.com/2008/04/11/hansen-pressures-textbook-publisher/>
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- [11] <http://disqus.com>