Climate Gaffes Undermine Confidence in Science

Written by Administrator Friday, 30 November 2012 03:41 -

Climate gaffes undermine confidence in science, according to an article in the *Telegraph* 7 Mar 2010. The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) and the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) have issued statements saying the recent revelations from the e-mail and data leak from Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia could undermine the reputation of science as a whole. They are especially critical of Phil Jones and his colleagues for failing to respond to legally binding requests for release of the data used in their climate models. The RSC stated: "The apparent resistance of researchers from the CRU at the University of East Anglia to disclose research data has been widely portrayed as an indication of a lack of integrity in scientific research. The true nature of science dictates that research is transparent and robust enough to survive scrutiny. A lack of willingness to disseminate scientific information may infer that the scientific results or methods used are not robust enough to face scrutiny, even if this conjecture is not well-founded. This has far-reaching consequences for the reputation of science as a whole, with the ability to undermine the public's confidence in science. The RSC firmly believes that the benefits of scientific data being made available and thus open to scrutiny outweigh the perceived risks."

Both societies suggested that climate data be released into the public domain and kept in an independent repository where it can be accessed for analysis and experiment. The resistance of the CRU scientists releasing their data for others to analyse led Dr Don Keiller, deputy head of life sciences at Anglia Ruskin University, to comment: "What these emails reveal is a detailed and systematic conspiracy to prevent other scientists gaining access to CRU data sets. Such obstruction strikes at the very heart of the scientific method, which is the scrutiny and verification of data and results by one's peers." Professor Darrel Ince from the department of computer science at the Open University, commented: "A number of climate scientists have refused to publish their computer programs; what I want to suggest is that this is both unscientific behaviour and, equally importantly ignores a major problem: that scientific software has got a poor reputation for error."

Editorial Comment: Creation Research has already warned about this problem. In 2009 we wrote: "Environmental scientists should be careful what they teach people. If they have been found to be teaching false claims people will lose their respect for all scientists. In the end this could be worse for the environment because people will ignore scientists over other issues they can, and should, do something about, e.g. good water, soil and vegetation management, farming practices that are good for animals and humans, etc." It is good to see scholarly societies catching up with us, but it is not good that people lose confidence in real science. Good science is part of our God given mandate to rule over the earth. We can only do this wisely if we conduct science with the same honesty that should be applied to any other human activity. (Ref. politics, academic, peer review)

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