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## South Florida climate change plan attacked

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By David Fleshler, Sun Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Jan. 21--A South Florida plan to prepare for rising sea levels and other consequences of climate change has drawn intense criticism from a small segment of the public who see a conspiracy to weaken the United States.

"Bogus science." "Socialist power grab." "A UN-based manmade global warming agenda that will tangle us all up in a nightmare."

These are among the public comments received in response to the Draft Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, produced by Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm Beach counties. The plan contains 108 recommendations, including redesigning low-lying roads and moving drinking-water wells inland.

Like similar actions elsewhere in the United States, it has run into the intensely held belief among a portion of the public that climate change is a fraud, perpetrated to destroy property rights, raise taxes and ruin the economy. Although national and international scientific panels have concluded that climate change is real and human-caused, critics disagree.

"Anyone of even modest intelligence should be able to see that it is nothing more than One-World, global, Socialist power grab to deny rights and exert control over everyone and everything on the entire planet under control of a so-called Intelligentsia or Power Elite," wrote one commenter, Jeff Vanderslice. "If you really believe this Climate Change/Global Warming BS, you're either part of the conspiracy, incredibly duped, or outright stupid."

Wrote Donald Sexauer: "The whole global warming theory is based on bogus findings that tried to hold down the beliefs of dissenting scientists."

"The Progressive Elite need taxes ... and we all know they will lie, cheat and steal to get it," wrote Doug Weber. "Forget it folks, the science is a fraud."

John Van Leer, associate professor of meteorology and physical oceanography at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School for Marine and Atmospheric Science, said the existence of climate-change deniers should not influence decision makers.

"A lot of people believe the earth is 5,600 years old," he said. "A lot of people believe the human landing on the moon was staged in a Hollywood studio. A significant number of people believe the earth is flat, but that doesn't mean we should base public policy on that."

He said their views result largely from a corporate disinformation campaign, abetted by elements of the media that use a handful of dissenters to give the false impression that the scientific community is split on the issue.

"The fact of the matter is there were two recent surveys that polled climate scientists," said Van Leer, a technical advisor to the four-county group. "One found that 97 percent thought global warming is real and that people are responsible, the other found 98 percent. You can't say there's zero dissent, but for the scientific community to have this sort of agreement is amazing."

Prominent scientific organizations have endorsed the reality of climate change, including American Meteorological Society, American Geophysical Union, National Academy of Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science and World Meteorological Organization.

Comments are being accepted through March 16. A new draft will be prepared and taken for approval to the four county commissions. Of the 25 comments received so far, most came from government agencies or non-profit groups and called for various changes to improve it. Nine from the general public saw the entire enterprise as a fraud, a number augmented by the dozens who wrote critical comments on newspaper web pages.

Gary K. Runge, of Coral Springs, submitted a comment to Broward County that the officials who produced the plan were the unwitting dupes of a United Nations attack on U.S. sovereignty called Agenda 21. The 1992 document is blueprint for sustainable development adopted a UN environmental conference.

"You are now into international politics, whether you like it or not and are no longer just a County Government entity, but a pawn in a huge insidious plan that adversely affects Florida," he wrote.

Van Leer said the science of climate change results from rigorous research that has stood up to the scrutiny of the scientific community. "It's a hard-nosed business," he said. "It's not easy to get papers published because they're going to be scrutinized, and it has to be based on proof."

[dfleshler@tribune.com](mailto:dfleshler@tribune.com) or 954-356-4535

See the plan

The Draft Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action plan may be viewed at <http://www.southeastfloridaclimatecompact.org/>.

Comments may be sent to [comments@SoutheastFloridaClimateCompact.org](mailto:comments@SoutheastFloridaClimateCompact.org).

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