

# Top 10 Global Warming

The Environmental Defense Fund raises money by lying about global warming. Here's your guide to its latest fundraising letter.

# Lies



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**THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE**   
IDEAS THAT EMPOWER PEOPLE

Global warming alarmists frequently make false and deplorable assertions to get attention and raise money, but the Environmental Defense Fund's recent fund-raising mailer, "10 Global Warming Effects That May Shock You," may have set a new low. The only good thing about EDF's preposterous mailer is that it can be used to show open-minded people the difference between global warming alarmists and global warming truth-tellers.

EDF has assembled what it believes to be the 10 most powerful global warming assertions in the alarmists' playbook. Each assertion either backfires on alarmists or has been proven false. While reading how flawed EDF's assertions are, remember these are the very best arguments global warming alarmists can make! Open-minded readers should have very little difficulty dismissing the mythical global warming crisis after examining the top 10 assertions in the alarmists' playbook.



**Alarmist Assertion #1**

“Bats Drop from the Sky – In 2014, a scorching summer heat wave caused more than 100,000 bats to literally drop dead and fall from the sky in Queensland, Australia.”

**The Facts**

Global warming alarmists’ preferred electricity source – wind power – kills nearly 1 million bats every year in the United States alone.<sup>1</sup> This appalling death toll occurs every year even while wind power produces just 3 percent of U.S. electricity. Ramp-

ing up wind power to 10, 20, or 30 percent of U.S. electricity production would likely mean annual bat kills of 10 to 30 million. Killing 30 million bats every year in response to dubious claims that global warming might once in a great while kill 100,000 bats makes no sense.

Just as importantly, alarmists present no evidence that global warming caused the summer heat wave in a notoriously hot desert near the equator. To the contrary, climate change theory and objective data show our recent global warming is

occurring primarily in the winter, toward the poles, and at night.

Australia’s highest recorded temperature occurred more than half a century ago, and only two of Australia’s seven states have set their all-time temperature record during the past 40 years.<sup>2</sup> Queensland’s 2014 heat wave paled in comparison to the 1972 heat wave that occurred 42 years of global warming ago. If global warming caused the 2014 Queensland heat wave, why wasn’t it as severe as the 1972 Queensland heat wave?

Blaming every single summer heat wave or extreme weather event on global warming is a stale and discredited tactic in the alarmist playbook. Objective science proves extreme weather events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, heat waves, and

“Wind power kills nearly 1 million bats every year in the United States alone.”

droughts have become less frequent and less severe as a result of the Earth's recent modest warming.<sup>3</sup>

### Alarmist Assertion #2

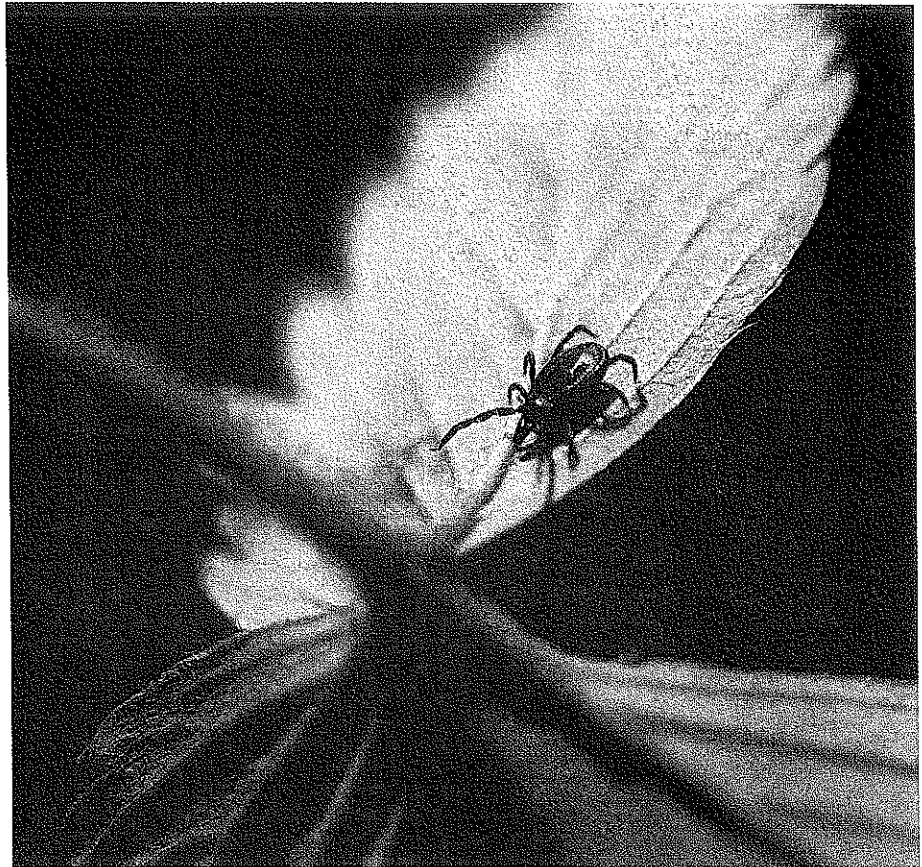
"Lyme Disease Spreads – Warmer temperatures are contributing to the range expansion and severity of tick-borne Lyme disease."

#### The Facts

Lyme disease is much more common in northern, cooler regions of the United States than in southern, warmer regions.<sup>4</sup> Asserting, without any supporting data or evidence, that a disease that prospers in cool climates will become more prevalent as a result of global warming defies objective data and common sense. Moreover, a team of scientists extensively researched Lyme disease climate and habitat and reported in the peer-reviewed science journal *EcoHealth*, "the only environmental variable consistently associated with increased [Lyme disease] risk and incidence was the presence of forests."<sup>5</sup>

Granted, alarmists can argue that forests are thriving under global warming, with the result that forest-dwelling ticks will also benefit. However, expanding forests are universally – and properly – viewed as environmentally beneficial. Alarmist attempts to frame thriving forests as harmful perfectly illustrate the alarmists' proclivity to claim anything and everything – no matter how beneficial – is severely harmful and caused by global warming.

Moreover, even if global warming expanded Lyme disease range, one must look at the totality of global warming's impact on the range of viruses and diseases. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports Lyme disease "is rare as a cause of death in the United States."<sup>6</sup> According to the CDC, Lyme disease is a contributing factor



in fewer than 25 deaths per year in the United States. During a recent five-year span examined by the CDC, "only 1 [death] record was consistent with clinical manifestations of Lyme disease."

Any attempts to claim global warming will cause a few more Lyme disease deaths must be weighed

against the 36,000 Americans who are killed by the flu each year.<sup>7</sup> The U.S. National Institutes of Health have documented how influenza is aided and abetted by cold climate.<sup>8</sup> Any attempt to connect a warmer climate to an increase in Lyme disease must be accompanied by an acknowledgment of a warmer climate's propensity to reduce influenza incidence and mortality. The net impact of a warmer climate on viruses and diseases such as Lyme disease and influenza is substantially beneficial and life-saving.

**"Lyme disease is much more common in northern, cooler regions of the United States than in southern, warmer regions."**

### Alarmist Assertion #3

"National Security Threatened – The impacts of climate change are expected to act as a 'threat multiplier' in many of the world's most unstable regions, exacerbating droughts and other natural disasters as well as leading to food, water and other resource shortages that may spur mass migrations."



## The Facts

The alarmists' asserted national security threat depends on assertions that (1) global warming is causing a reduction in food and water supplies and (2) migrations of people to places with more food and water will increase risks of military conflict. Facts refute both assertions.

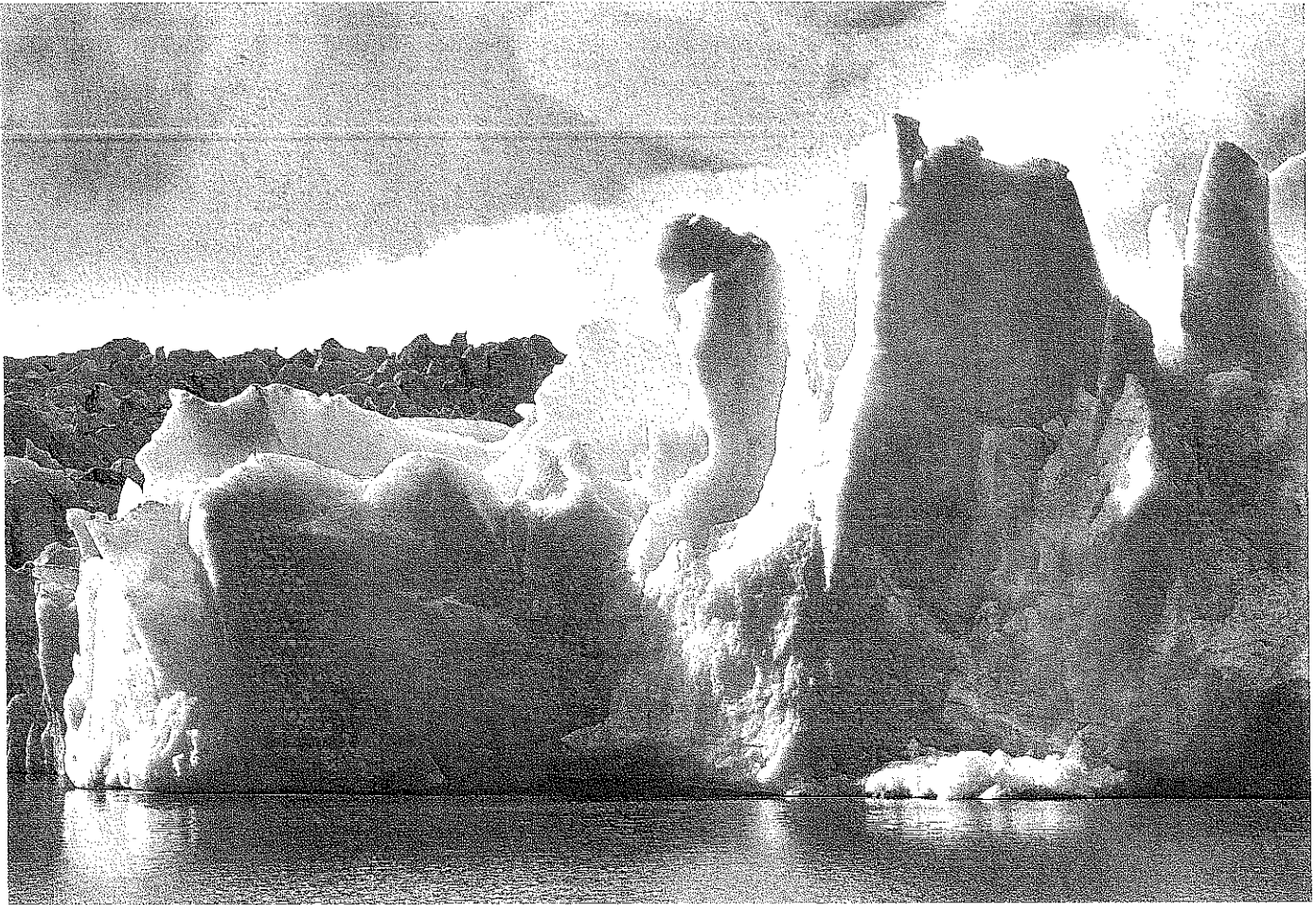
Regarding food and water supplies, global crop production has soared as the Earth gradually warms.<sup>9</sup> Atmospheric carbon dioxide is essential to plant life, and adding more of it to the atmosphere enhances plant growth and crop production. Longer growing seasons and fewer frost events also benefit plant growth and crop production. As repeatedly documented in my Forbes.com columns,<sup>10</sup> global crops

set new production records virtually every year as our planet modestly warms. If crop shortages cause national security threats and global warming increases crop production, then global warming *benefits* rather than jeopardizes national security.

The same holds true for water supplies. Data show there has been a gradual increase in global precipitation and soil moisture as our planet warms. Warmer temperatures evapo-

rate more water from the oceans, which in turn stimulates more frequent precipitation over continental land masses. The result of this enhanced precipitation is an improvement in soil moisture at almost all sites in the Global Soil Moisture Data Bank.<sup>11</sup> If declining precipitation and declining soil moisture are military threat multipliers, then global warming is creating a safer, more peaceful world.

**"Data show there has been a gradual increase in global precipitation and soil moisture as our planet warms."**



#### Alarmist Assertion #4

“Sea Levels Rising – Warmer temperatures are causing glaciers and polar ice sheets to melt, increasing the amount of water in the world’s seas and oceans.”

#### The Facts

The pace of sea level rise remained relatively constant throughout the twentieth century, even as global temperatures gradually rose.<sup>12</sup> There has similarly been no increase in the pace of sea level rise in recent decades. Using twentieth century technologies, humans effectively adapted to global sea level rise. With twenty-first century technologies, humans will be even better equipped to adapt to global sea level rise.

“The pace of sea level rise remained relatively constant throughout the twentieth century.”

Also, the alarmist assertion that polar ice sheets are melting is simply false. Although alarmists frequently point to a modest recent shrinkage in the Arctic ice sheet, that decline has been completely offset by ice sheet expansion in the Antarctic. Cumulatively, polar ice sheets have not declined at all since NASA satellite instruments began precisely measuring them 35 years ago.<sup>13</sup>

#### Alarmist Assertion #5

“Allergies Worsen – Allergy sufferers beware: Climate change could cause pollen counts to double in the next 30 years. The warming temperatures cause advancing weed growth, a bane for allergy sufferers.”

#### The Facts

Pollen is a product and mechanism of plant reproduction and growth. As such, pollen counts will rise and fall along with plant health and vegetation intensity. Any increase in pollen will be the result of a greener biosphere with more plant growth. Similar to the alarmist argument, discussed above, that expanding forests will create more habitat for the ticks that spread Lyme disease, alarmists here are taking over-



whelmingly good news about global warming improving plant health and making it seem like this good news is actually bad news because healthier plants mean more pollen.

NASA satellite instruments have documented a spectacular greening of the Earth, with foliage gains most prevalent in previously arid, semi-desert regions.<sup>14</sup> For people experiencing an increase in vegetation in previously barren regions, this greening of the Earth is welcome and wonderful news. For global warming alarmists, however, a greener biosphere is terrible news and something to be opposed. This, in a nutshell, defines the opposing sides in the global warming debate. Global warming alarmists claim a greener biosphere with richer and more abundant plant life is horrible and justifies massive, economy-destroying energy restrictions. Global warm-

ing realists understand that a greener biosphere with richer and more abundant plant life is not a horrible thing simply because humans may have had some role in creating it.

### **Alarmist Assertion #6**

“Beetles Destroy Iconic Western Forests – Climate change has sent tree-killing beetles called mountain pine beetles into overdrive. Under normal conditions those beetles reproduce just once annually, but the warming climate has allowed them to churn out an extra generation of new bugs each year.”

### **The Facts**

Alarmists claim warmer winters are causing an increase in pine beetle populations. This assertion is thoroughly debunked by real-world data.

As an initial matter, alarmists have responded to recent bitterly cold winters by claiming global warming is causing colder winters.<sup>15</sup> One cannot claim global warming is causing colder winters and then turn around and simultaneously claim global warming is causing warmer winters. Global warming activists’ propensity for doing so shows just how little value they place on truthful debate.

Scientific data verify winters are not getting colder, countering the key prerequisite to EDF’s pine beetle claim. NOAA temperature data show winter temperatures in the United States have been getting colder for at least the past two decades.<sup>16</sup> Pine beetles cannot be taking advantage of warmer winters if winters are in fact getting colder: Moreover, recent U.S. Forest Service data show pine beetle infestations

have recently declined dramatically throughout the western United States.<sup>17</sup>

Forests and plant life are expanding globally, and particularly in the western United States.<sup>18</sup> Pine beetles are a natural part of forest ecosystems. Expanding pine forests can support more beetles. The predictable increase in pine beetles is largely a product of, rather than a foil against, expanding pine forests. One can hardly argue that pine beetles are “destroying iconic Western forests” when western forests are becoming denser and more prevalent as the planet warms.

Also, beetles have bored through North American forests for millennia, long before people built coal-fired power plants and drove SUVs. Beetles are not dependent on warm winters, as evidenced by their historic prevalence in places such as Alaska.<sup>19</sup>

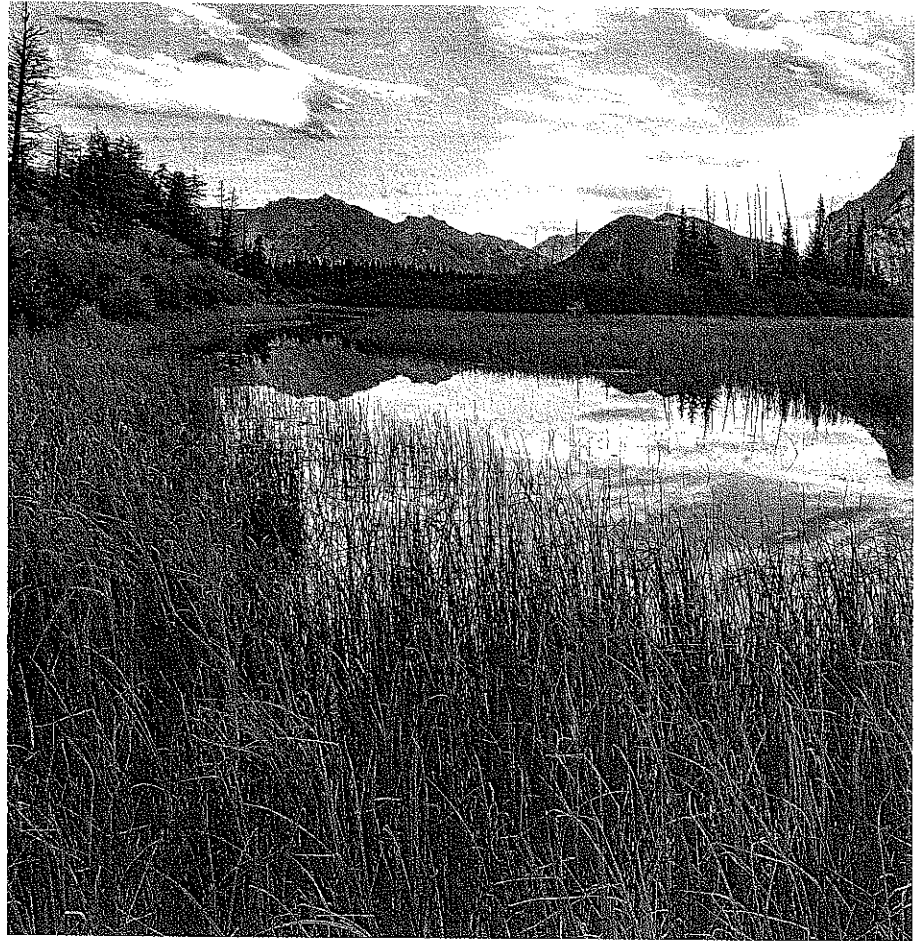
Finally, pine beetles tend to target dead, unhealthy, more vulnerable pine trees rather than healthy trees. Decades of over-aggressive fire suppression policies have caused an unnatural buildup of older, denser, more vulnerable pine forests. These conditions predictably aid pine beetles.

### Alarmist Assertion #7

“Canada: The New America – ‘Lusher’ vegetation growth typically associated with the United States is now becoming more common in Canada, scientists reported in a 2012 Nature Climate Change study.”

### The Facts

Only global warming alarmists would claim that lush vegetation and more abundant plant life are a bad thing. Playing on a general tendency of people to fear change, EDF and



global warming alarmists argue that changes in the biosphere that make it richer, lush, and more conducive to life are changes to be feared and opposed. If barren ecosystems constitute an ideal planet, then the alarmist fears of more plant life make sense. But global warming realists understand a climate more conducive to richer, more abundant plant life is beneficial rather than harmful.

### Alarmist Assertion #8

“Economic Consequences – The costs associated with climate change rise along with the temperatures. Severe storms and floods combined with agricultural losses cause billions of dollars in damages, and money is needed to treat and control the spread of disease”

### The Facts

Severe storms, floods, and agricultural losses may cost a great deal of money, but such extreme weather events – and their resulting costs – are dramatically declining as the Earth modestly warms.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, EDF’s asserted economic costs are actually economic benefits.

“... a climate more conducive to richer, more abundant plant life is beneficial rather than harmful ...”

As documented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and at Forbes.com, severe storms are becoming less frequent and severe as the Earth modestly warms. This is especially evident regarding hurricane and tornado activity, which are both at historic lows. Similarly, scientific measurements and peer-reviewed studies report no increase in flooding events regarding natural-flowing rivers and streams.<sup>21</sup> Any increase in flooding activity is due to human alterations of river and stream flow rather than precipitation changes.<sup>22</sup>

Also, the modest recent warming is producing U.S. and global crop production records virtually every year, creating billions of dollars in new economic and human welfare benefits each and every year. This creates a net economic benefit completely ignored by EDF.

Regarding “the spread of disease,” as documented in “Alarmist Assertion #2,” evidence shows global warming will thwart deadly outbreaks of influenza and other cold-dependent viruses.

Additionally, the alarmists’ desired means of reducing carbon dioxide emissions – more expensive energy sources – make economic conditions even worse. Forcing the American economy to operate on expensive and unreliable wind and solar power will have tremendous negative economic consequences. President Barack Obama acknowledged this fact when he promised that under his global warming plan, “electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.” The economic consequences of Obama’s global warming policies can already be seen in electricity prices, which are currently the highest in U.S. history. Remarkably, Obama’s global warming policies are increasing electricity prices even while new natural gas discov-



eries, revolutionary advances in natural gas production technologies, and a dramatic resultant decline in natural gas prices would otherwise spur a dramatic decline in electricity prices.

**“The economic consequences of Obama’s global warming policies can already be seen in electricity prices ...”**

**Alarmist Assertion #9**

“Infectious Diseases Thrive – The World Health Organization reports that outbreaks of new or resurgent diseases are on the rise and in more disparate countries than ever before, including tropical illnesses in once cold climates.”

**The Facts**

Outbreaks of “new or resurgent diseases” are occurring precisely because governments have caved in to environmental activist groups like EDF and implemented their anti-science agendas. For example, DDT had all but eliminated malaria in the United States and on the global stage during the mid-twentieth century. However, environmental activists championed false environmental ac-



cusations against DDT and dramatically reduced use of the life-saving mosquito killer throughout much of the world. As a result, malaria has re-emerged with a vengeance and millions of people die every year as a result.<sup>23</sup>

Also, as documented above in “Alarmist Assertion #2,” global warming will reduce the impact and death toll of cold-related viruses such as influenza. In the United States alone, influenza kills 36,000 people every year, which dwarfs all heat-dependent viruses and diseases combined. Few people other than global warming alarmists would argue that it is better to have 36,000 people die each year from influenza than have a few people die each year from Lyme disease (which, as documented above, isn’t even related to global warming).

### Alarmist Assertion #10

“Shrinking Glaciers – In 2013, an iceberg larger than the city of Chicago broke off the Pine Island Glacier, the most important glacier of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet. And at Montana’s Glacier National Park glaciers have gone from 150 to just 35 over the past century.”

### The Facts

Calling attention to anecdotal incidents of icebergs breaking off the Antarctic ice sheet, while deliberately ignoring the overall growth of the Antarctic ice sheet, is a misleading and favorite tactic of global warming alarmists. Icebergs break off the Antarctic ice sheet every year, with or without global warming, particularly in the Antarctic summer. However, a particular iceberg – no matter how large – breaking off the Antarctic ice sheet does not necessarily result in “Shrinking Glaciers” as EDF alleges.



To the contrary, the Antarctic ice sheet has been growing at a steady and substantial pace ever since NASA satellites first began measuring the ice sheet in 1979. During the same year EDF claims “an iceberg larger than the city of Chicago” broke off the Antarctic ice sheet and caused “Shrinking Glaciers,” the Antarctic ice sheet repeatedly set new records for its largest extent in recorded history.<sup>24</sup> Those 2013 records were repeatedly broken again in 2014. The Antarctic ice sheet in 2013 and 2014 was more extensive than at any time in recorded history, yet EDF pushes the lie that the Antarctic ice sheet is shrinking.

EDF’s assertion about Glacier National Park is also misleading. Alpine glaciers at Glacier National Park and elsewhere have been receding for more than 300 years, since the Earth’s temperature

bottomed out during the depths of the Little Ice Age ([http://www.housemajority.org/coms/cli/Kramm\\_UAF\\_Akasofu.pdf](http://www.housemajority.org/coms/cli/Kramm_UAF_Akasofu.pdf)).<sup>25</sup> The warming of the past 300 years and the resulting recession of alpine glaciers predated humans building coal-fired power plants and driving SUVs. Moreover, opening up more of the Earth’s surface to vegetation and plant and animal life would normally be considered a beneficial change, if global warming alarmists had not so thoroughly politicized the global warming discussion.

There you have it. These are the 10 best arguments global warming activists like EDF can make, along with the objective scientific facts that prove them wrong.

No wonder global warming alarmists are so terrified of people having access to both sides of the debate.

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## About The Heartland Institute

The Heartland Institute is an independent national nonprofit research organization founded in Chicago in 1984. It is a tax-exempt charity under Section 501(c)(3).

The mission of The Heartland Institute is to discover, develop, and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. We produce four monthly public policy newspapers – *Budget & Tax News*, *Environment & Climate News*, *Health Care News*, and *School Reform News* – which present free-market ideas as news rather than research or opinion.

Heartland is rigorously nonpartisan, working closely with Democrats and Republicans alike to solve public policy problems. Approximately 230 academics and professional economists participate in our peer-review process, and more than 170 elected officials serve on our Legislative Forum. We are supported by the voluntary contributions of approximately 5,500 supporters. We do not accept government funding.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.heartland.org](http://www.heartland.org) or call 312/377-4000.

## More Information from The Heartland Institute

Much of the national media has been “in the tank” with environmental advocates and global warming alarmists for a long time. They keep running stories with scary headlines and “documentaries” that claim to show the effects of global warming, even though most scientists now believe most global warming and cooling is natural and the computer models that predict future global warming are wrong.

The Heartland Institute recommends the following sources for reliable information on global warming. Check them out yourself and recommend them to your friends:

Climate Depot <http://www.climatedepot.com/>

Watts Up With That? <http://wattsupwiththat.com/>

Dr. Roy Spencer <http://www.drroyspencer.com/>

ICECAP <http://icecap.us/>

Climate Etc. <http://judithcurry.com/>

Climate Change Reconsidered <http://climatechangereconsidered.org/>

Real Science <https://stevengoddard.wordpress.com/>

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