

Since opponents can't seem to come up with any new arguments against climate change legislation, they seem determined to recycle the old, discredited ones. Here's today's example, straight from the GOP press release:

Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., and Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif, today urged the Environmental Protection Agency to include several relevant studies in its decision-making record for a major finding on climate policy after it was made public that a senior EPA official suppressed the scientific evidence for apparently political reasons.

"I'm sure it was very inconvenient for the EPA to consider a study that contradicted the findings it wanted to reach," said Rep. Sensenbrenner, the ranking Republican on the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming. " . . .

This is actually an old story, which has been debunked as many times as the urban myths about alligators in the sewers. (For example, take a look at this [June posting](#) in Grist. ) But apparently Sensenbrenner and Issa don't have anything better to do with their time than recycle discredited stories.

As EPA made clear months ago, the individual in question is in an economist, but his comments weren't about economics, they were about climate science — a subject on which he has as much professional expertise as my cat. His professional expertise as an economist was completely irrelevant as a matter of law - EPA isn't allowed to consider cost at all in determining whether a pollutant endangers human health. That's a scientific issue, not an economic one. The likelihood that he would contribute anything worthwhile to EPA's findings about climate science was approximately zero anyway, and he might well have been reprimanded for wasting time rather than sticking to his job.

Notwithstanding his lack of any relevant expertise, however, EPA was more than generous in providing him a forum. His comments were submitted to the EPA endangerment team; and his manager allowed his general views on the subject of climate change to be heard and considered inside and outside the EPA and presented at conferences and at an agency seminar. In short, there's just nothing here at all except EPA leaning over backwards to be tolerant toward an employee's amateur hobbyhorse. Finally, his manager had enough of him wasting time and told him to get back to his day job.

If there's a story here, it seems to be EPA's tolerance of internal dissent, even when the dissenter has little or no credibility.

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