

Paul Krugman has a [great column](#) about the so-called climate science hearing last week:

So the joke begins like this: An economist, a lawyer and a professor of marketing walk into a room. What’s the punch line? They were three of the five “expert witnesses” Republicans called for last week’s Congressional hearing on climate science.

Krugman continues with a discussion of one of my Berkeley colleagues:

But the joke actually ended up being on the Republicans, when one of the two actual scientists they invited to testify went off script.

Prof. Richard Muller of Berkeley, a physicist who has gotten into the climate skeptic game, has been leading the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature project, an effort partially financed by none other than the Koch foundation. And climate deniers — who claim that researchers at NASA and other groups analyzing climate trends have massaged and distorted the data — had been hoping that the Berkeley project would conclude that global warming is a myth.

Instead, however, Professor Muller reported that his group’s preliminary results find a global warming trend “very similar to that reported by the prior groups.”

The reason that I’m prepared to dismiss climate skeptics is illustrated by their response to this unwelcome data:

Just a few weeks ago Anthony Watts, who runs a prominent climate denialist Web site, praised the Berkeley project and piously declared himself “prepared to accept whatever result they produce, even if it proves my premise wrong.” But never mind: once he knew that Professor Muller was going to present those preliminary results, Mr. Watts dismissed the hearing as “post normal science political theater.” And one of the regular contributors on his site dismissed Professor Muller as “a man driven by a very serious agenda.”

“A very serious agenda” — yes, but could that agenda be the search for truth? I realize that’s a foreign concept for some people, but it’s actually what motivates most scientists.