Last week, three countries that are anxious to avoid restrictions on fossil fuels sabotaged funding for the teams of experts who produce definitive UN reports on climate science. The three countries – Russia, Saudi Arabia, and India – all have big stakes in the continued use of fossil fuels (coal for India, oil and gas for the other two). There's method to their madness: If you suppress information about a problem, you weaken the justification for addressing it. Ignorance is bliss, if the ignorance in question is that of victims and potential regulators. If want to maintain use of fossil fuels regardless of their effect on the planet, silencing climate science is a good game plan.

I posted about a related effort to defang the IPCC last month. Briefly, in a purported effort to promote global equity, a coalition of carbon producers and high emitters was trying to delay the IPCC's next report. The report on the physical science of climate change is due in 2028, but China, India, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, and Russia wanted to stall into 2029. The reason is that the next global stock taking — the assessment of how well nations are doing in the effort to reach the Paris Agreement's targets — will be held in 2028. The science has been trending toward increased urgency in controlling emissions, and the worst offenders want to prevent the stocktaking from using the latest science.

Donald Trump, of course, is a world champion in suppressing science. In his last term, he once maintained that we wouldn't have a COVID epidemic if we did less testing. No really, the exact quote is, "If we stopped testing right now, we'd have very few cases, if any."

In his current term, he's applying the same philosophy to climate change. His Administration is shutting down the National Center for Atmospheric Research, a major hub for weather and climate research. The Administration cancelled millions of dollars in research grants relating to climate change, fired scientists, and shut down websites featuring climate information. The result is that localities will have less reliable information about severe weather such as hurricane paths, and states will have more difficulty planning infrastructure such as sea walls and levees to cope with future change.

To further hinder regulation of fossil fuels, the Administration has abandoned any effort to estimate the harm caused by climate change (the social cost of carbon) and is no longer even trying to determine the health impacts of increased air pollution. When reams of data and sophisticated analysis stand in the way of your preferred policies, ignorance is truly bliss – for you, if not for the people who will

suffer as a result.

Policy analysts say that you can only regulate what you can measure. Opponents of regulation have turned around the saying that you can only regulate that saying: If you want to stop regulation, block the information. No information, no problem.