

Trump team's contentious climate report 'makes a mockery of science', experts say

Over 85 top climate specialists lambasted administration's review, calling it a 'shoddy mess' that downplays risks

[Oliver Milman](#) and [Dharna Noor](#) Tue 2 Sep 2025

A group of the US's leading climate scientists have compiled a withering review of a controversial [Trump administration](#) report that downplays the risks of the [climate crisis](#), finding that the document is biased, riddled with errors and fails basic scientific credibility.

More than 85 climate experts have contributed to a comprehensive 434-page report that excoriates a US Department of Energy (DOE) document written by five hand-picked fringe researchers that argues that global heating and its resulting consequences have been overstated.

The Trump administration [report](#), released in July, contains "pervasive problems with misrepresentation and selective citation of the scientific literature, cherry-picking of data, and faulty or absent statistics", states the new analysis, which is written in the style of the authoritative Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports.

"This report makes a mockery of science," said Andrew Dessler, a climate scientist at Texas A&M University.

"It relies on ideas that were rejected long ago, supported by misrepresentations of the body of scientific knowledge, omissions of important facts, arm waving, anecdotes and confirmation bias. This report makes it clear DOE has no interest in engaging with the scientific community."

Another reviewing academic, Lucas Vargas Zeppetello, an environmental scientist at the University of California, Berkeley, said he was "shocked and appalled" by the "total disgrace" of the [Donald Trump](#) report and was willing to join with other volunteer researchers from leading institutions to correct the record.

The review will be submitted as part of a [public comment period on the report](#), which closes on Tuesday.

[Scientists slam Trump administration climate report as a 'farce' full of misinformation](#)

Chris Wright, the US energy secretary, has said the report pushes back against the "cancel culture Orwellian squelching of science" and that the five authors were not ordered what to write.

However, the overwhelming majority of climate scientists have [condemned](#) the “farce” of the exercise, pointing out **it has been used to justify the administration’s rollback of climate regulations, rather than act as legitimate scientific inquiry.**

“Setting aside several weeks of time to join dozens of other scientists in an effort to correct the cherry-picked data in a US government report wasn’t on my bingo card this summer,” said Andra Garner, a climate scientist at Rowan University. “But it is clearly what the situation required.”

Reached for comment, DOE spokesperson Ben Dietderich said: “Unlike previous administrations, the [Trump administration](#) is committed to engaging in a more thoughtful and science-based conversation about climate change and energy.”

The four main critiques contained in the climate scientists’ review are:

Authors

The problems with the new DOE assessment began when the agency hand-picked five climate contrarians to author it, the analysis says.

They include John Christy, an atmospheric scientist who [has said](#) the climate crisis could be positive; Judith Curry, a climatologist who rails against climate [“alarmism”](#); Steven E Koonin, a physicist who [has called](#) climate science “unsettled”; Ross McKittrick, an economist who has said the climate crisis [is not](#) a “big issue”; and Roy Spencer, a meteorologist and climate scientist who has said top scientists [overblow](#) the impact society has on the climate.

In the DOE report, Wright says the authors were chosen “for their rigor, honesty, and willingness to elevate the debate”. **But each one is “well known for manufacturing uncertainty”, the new review states.**

By selecting these authors, the Trump administration appears to be violating a [1972 law](#) requiring balanced perspectives within executive advisory committees, the new review says.

“[T]his group appears to have been personally recruited by the Secretary of Energy to advance a particular viewpoint favored by DOE leadership,” the analysis says.

Peer review and transparency

Federal advisory committee members are subject to transparency laws aimed at promoting citizen input and accountability, the analysis notes, but the group’s convenings happened in secret, and their work was withheld from the public.

Under Office of Management and Budget [rules](#), such assessments are also meant to be subject to peer review. But no such review has yet occurred, the authors note.

[Scientists breathe new life into climate website after shutdown under Trump](#)

“When it became clear that DOE wasn’t going to organize such a review, the scientific community came together on its own, in less than a month, to provide it,” said Robert Kopp, a climate scientist at Rutgers University who has said the DOE report misrepresented his research.

The working group’s process also violated the stated aims of the Trump administration, they say. In a May executive order, the president said only [peer-reviewed science](#) that is conducted in a conflict-free and transparent manner should underpin policies.

“We should be using scientifically vetted and properly reviewed assessments to make legal decisions – not unreviewed documents that present a distorted view of our scientific knowledge,” said Abigail Swann, a professor of atmospheric sciences and ecology at the University of Washington.

Asked about these concerns, Dietderich said the DOE report was “reviewed internally by a group of DOE scientific researchers and policy experts from the Office of Science and National Labs” and is now “opened to wider peer review from the scientific community and general public via the public comment period”.

Cherry-picked evidence

The Trump administration report selectively reviews scientific literature and plucks small sections to support its arguments, rather than present a full picture of the evidence, the scientists’ review states.

For example, the Trump-appointed researchers point to the extreme heat of the 1930s Dust Bowl, while ignoring what was going on in the rest of the world and how this compares to global trends today. Other “cherry-picked” evidence is used to support claims about the role of the strength of the sun in raising Earth temperatures and the sensitivity of the climate to carbon emissions, the review finds.

Another section, in which the report looks at climate-driven extreme events, is badly mischaracterized, according to Dessler. “I mean, they just don’t understand what they’re talking about,” he said.

“Five people were hand-selected by the secretary of energy for their viewpoints, and they produced a shoddy mess of cherry-picked data and unsupported assertions,” said Pamela McElwee, associate professor of human ecology at Rutgers University.

While the DOE report was written in four months, traditional federal and international climate reports – such as the US national climate assessments and IPCC reports – are each authored by hundreds of experts, the new analysis says, “with multiple rounds of internal and external review”.

Because the DOE report “covers areas in which the authors are not experts”, their report is riddled with “errors in the report caused by a lack of familiarity with the science”, the assessment says.

About 11% of the DOE report's citations were written by its own five authors – a share nearly five times higher than the average rate at which authors' own work was cited in a [2023 IPCC report](#) that 230 experts wrote.

Predetermined outcome

The Department of Energy report was released as part of a Trump administration push to repeal the “endangerment finding” – a landmark 2009 determination that greenhouse gases harm human health.

The elimination of this finding by the Environmental Protection Agency would effectively kneecap all US policies designed to cut planet-heating pollution from cars, trucks and power plants. The DOE report is intended to provide cover for this political goal rather than act as a credible work of science, the review found.

Dietderich said the president “values the role of science” and that the administration “have not pre-judged how this report will impact EPA’s proposed Endangerment Finding rulemaking or any policy or program at the Department of Energy”.

Yet by sidelining credible climate scientists and actively promoting the report’s conclusions in draft form, the Trump administration has shown that this work is merely a tool in service of a political goal, the reviewing scientists added.

“Work contrary to the conclusions of the DOE report is dismissed or simply ignored, making it clear that the report is intended to support a specific policy decision and is not an unbiased synthesis of climate science,” said Christopher Callahan, a climate scientist at Indiana University.

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