

Freezing out climate change

New ploys to revive one of history's greatest charades

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The East Coast is still chiseling its way out of the aftermath of a bitter snowstorm. It was so frigid in Florida that frosted iguanas began falling from trees. The District came close to breaking the record for the longest consecutive stretch of days below freezing.

Unbreakable chunks of “snowcrete” littering streets and sidewalks ought to be enough to persuade the federal city’s die-hard Democratic majority to pray for a bit of global warming.

Weather is short-term, and climate is long-term. In both respects, nothing exceptional or “extreme” is going on. The national capital region has seen worse.

Washington’s thermometer readings go back to 1872, before anyone could get away with blaming hot and cold spells on internal combustion engines or the invention of the Model T. Sensible folk in that era understood that blizzards and heat waves were the result of natural weather patterns.

Fossil fuels didn’t cause the Arctic lows to last nine days in 1876, nor were they responsible for the 12-day streak in 1895. Climate charlatans exploit historical illiteracy to suggest swings in the mercury are becoming more excessive and dangerous, when that’s not the case.

Twenty-five years ago, U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change soothsayers insisted there would be “Higher maximum temperatures and more hot days over nearly all land areas. Higher minimum temperatures, fewer cold days and frost days over nearly all land areas.”

In saner times, scientific theories were judged by their accuracy in predicting phenomena, but the U.N. report flunks that test. That’s why liberals now gauge academic rigor by how many celebrity scientists subscribe to the “consensus.”

Even if it were otherwise, global warming is preferable to the alternative. The death toll from the ongoing polar blast has surpassed 110. In New York City, the warm embrace of socialism provided no comfort to the homeless. More than a dozen have succumbed to hypothermia thus far.

Feeling neglected with Donald Trump in the White House, Illinois lawmakers decided last year to rekindle hysteria with a “climate displacement task force.” This esteemed body is charged with assessing “the level of climate displacement that is projected to happen within the United States and its neighboring countries.”

Essentially, this combines two of the left’s favorite pastimes: celebrating illegal aliens and profiting from green-energy gifts. The panel’s first report is due in June. Expect it to be a page-turner.

State Sen. Graciela Guzman, Chicago Democrat, came up with the idea. For an encore, she introduced a bill last week to form a “climate superfund.” If it is adopted, the Land of Lincoln’s new slush fund will subsidize “disadvantaged communities facing climate change impacts.” That is, uninvited foreigners.

Money for the fund would be extracted from whomever Chicago Democrats dislike. The proposal says: “Based on decades of research, it is now possible to determine specific fossil fuel producing companies’ share of responsibility for greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere over the last 50 years or more.”

In 1976, carbon dioxide’s share of the atmosphere was 0.03%. Now, it’s slightly higher, at 0.04%. The rest of the atmosphere consists of 78% nitrogen and 21% oxygen, as it always has. Based on its surface area, Illinois would have a 0.03% share of the air above it. Despite the infinitesimal impact, gasoline companies would have to pay the state “compensation.”

That tax would be passed along to Illinois drivers at the pump. Instead of paying \$2.90 per gallon, they would fork out \$4.50 or more, as Californians do because of the Legislature’s folly.

That’s how Democrats champion affordability.