

Decades of Failed Eco-Pocalypse Predictions

Study captures more than 50 years of false claims from environmentalists

[Charles Fain Lehman](#) - SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 12:10 PM



The apocalyptic claims of environmentalists have failed repeatedly for decades, but that has not stopped top Democrats from panicking, according to a new study.

The [report](#), issued by the pro-free market Competitive Enterprise Institute, documents more than 50 years of what it calls "notably wild predictions from notable people in government and science."

On Wednesday, a joint congressional committee [heard testimony](#) from a number of "[youth climate leaders](#)," including 16-year-old Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg.

Thunberg, whose trip to the United States has included high-profile media [appearances](#) and [meetings with political figures](#), [declined](#) to offer prepared remarks during her congressional hearing. Instead, she submitted a copy of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's [2018 report](#) on the effects of global warming.

"I am submitting this report as my testimony because I don't want you to listen to me. I want you to listen to the scientists. And I want you to unite behind the science," Thunberg said.

The IPCC report "paints a far more dire picture of the immediate consequences of climate change than previously thought," [according to](#) the *New York Times*. It has also served as the partial basis of dire predictions from leading liberal politicians. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D., N.Y.) [has predicted that](#) the world will end in 12 years, and that Miami [will no longer exist](#) if her Green New Deal is not passed. Presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg has [even suggested](#) people who eat hamburgers and use plastic straws are "part of the problem."

Such dire predictions, the new CEI report said, are nothing new. There is a long history of prominent politicians and scientists predicting imminent crises that never quite come to pass.

"Modern doomsayers have been predicting climate and environmental disaster since the 1960s," the report notes. "They continue to do so today. None of the apocalyptic predictions with due dates as of today have come true."

The report's evidence stretches back to infamous Stanford biologist Paul Ehrlich's prediction that, as of 1967, it was "already too late for the world to avoid a long period of famine," which he expected to come by 1975. Ehrlich would gain notoriety for similarly dire predictions in his 1968 book [*The Population Bomb*](#), and for subsequently [losing a bet](#) on global scarcity to economist Julian Simon.

Air pollution has been another popular topic of alarm. A number of scientists, including a NASA expert and a whole panel convened at Brown University, predicted that "air pollution may obliterate the sun and cause a new ice age in the first third of the next century," in the words of a 1970 *Boston Globe* report. Air pollution [has declined](#) steadily for decades.

Several scientists and policymakers also raised concerns about what one climatologist labeled "the cooling"—a 30-year period of global temperature decline in the northern hemisphere. Northern hemisphere temperatures have risen slightly since 1979. In the 1980s, scientists projected both epic floods, with the Maldives under water by the 2010s, and epic droughts, with regions going parched starting in the 1990s. None of these predictions came to pass.

More recent scientists are not immune. The CEI report cites Dr. David Viner, a climate researcher at the [University of East Anglia](#), who in 2000 predicted snowfall would soon become "a very rare and exciting event. ... Children just aren't going to know what snow is." In 2008, one NASA scientist told Congress to expect all arctic ice to melt by 2018; that same year, Al Gore predicted it would vanish by 2013. As recently as 2014, the French foreign minister [claimed](#) the planet had just "500 days" before climate catastrophe.

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