

## APS Responds to Member's Resignation over Climate Change

In early October, a long-time member of APS, Hal Lewis, publicly resigned from the Society over issues having to do with climate change. Lewis, who is an emeritus professor at UC Santa Barbara, addressed his letter of resignation to APS President Curtis Callan, simultaneously circulating it on the Internet. In response to some of the points in Lewis's letter, APS issued a statement that can be found on the press-release page of the APS website. Callan also sent a personal reply to Lewis in which he expressed his regret at Lewis's decision, along with his strong disagreement with the substance of Lewis's complaints against the APS.

Lewis's specific complaints focus on the recent decisions of the APS Council concerning the 2007 Statement on Climate Change and the ongoing process of formation of a topical group on the physics of climate. Characterizing recent APS decisions, Lewis contends that "It is of course, the global warming scam, with the (literally) trillions of dollars driving it, that has corrupted so many scientists, and has carried APS before it like a rogue wave. It is the greatest and most successful pseudoscientific fraud I have seen in my long life as a physicist." Concerning the topical group, Lewis claimed that the petition for creating such a group which he had signed had been arbitrarily rejected by "APS HQ".

The APS press release rejected Lewis's characterization of the state of the science, stating:

"On the matter of global climate change, APS notes that virtually all reputable scientists agree with the following observations: carbon dioxide is increasing in the atmosphere due to human activity; carbon dioxide is an excellent infrared absorber, and therefore, its increasing presence in the atmosphere contributes to global warming; ... On these matters, APS judges the science to be quite clear. ... In light of the significant settled aspects of the science, APS totally rejects Dr. Lewis's claim that global warming is a 'scam' and a 'pseudoscientific fraud'."

In his letter, Lewis speculated that Council's policy positions on climate change must be driven by financial interest, adding that Callan's own physics department "would lose millions a year if the global warming bubble burst". The APS press release categorically rejected the notion that APS as an organization is benefitting financially from climate change funding and further pointed out that the vast majority of the Society's members do not work on climate and derive no personal benefit from such research support.

Callan, in his reply, criticized Lewis's speculation about the role of financial interest in determining the attitude of physicists to climate change as unacceptably disrespectful of the intellectual integrity of his scientific colleagues. He also noted that Lewis's statement about the reliance of Callan's department on climate science funding was wrong, as the actual level of such funding was precisely zero.

In his letter to Lewis, Callan also addressed the issue of the formation of the new topical group, explaining that, far from being rejected, the proposal for a topical group focusing on the physics of climate had met with enthusiastic acceptance and was being implemented (see [October APS News](#)). Callan closed his letter by saying that, while he respected Lewis's decision to resign, it was a pity that, by doing so, he was cutting himself off from participating in the very APS initiative he had called for.

### Fox Fails at Fact-Checking 101

The October 12 segment of *Fox News's* "Fox and Friends" featured an erroneous report that mis-identified APS President Curtis Callan as a member who had resigned. (For the non-erroneous version, see the accompanying story.) APS has requested a retraction, and to date *Fox News* has refused.

Correspondent Laura Ingraham said, "Basically what Curtis Callan is saying is that this American physics society, it's called physical society, has turned into an organization affected by the money flow in science. In other words trillions of dollars he argues is invested in this idea of global warming, and that has clouded what the group itself, what the leadership of the group has concluded about the science, which he says is faulty, flawed and frankly needs to be discarded. So he said it's become corrupting."

The reports of Callan's resignation are greatly exaggerated.

Curtis Callan, the current president of APS, has not resigned his membership, or his position, nor has he written any letters refuting the science of global warming. Ingraham incorrectly attributed a letter written by Hal Lewis of UCSB and sent to Callan as being written by Callan himself. The letter was clearly addressed to Callan (it begins, "Dear Curt") and was signed by Lewis at the end. It is unclear how Ingraham, with an accompanying graphic, confused the two.

*Fox News* got it wrong.

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