



Lorrie Goldstein, Toronto Sun, 17-9-2019

GOLDSTEIN: Feds scrapped 100 years of data on climate change

Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna speaks during an announcement in Ottawa, August 26, 2019. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld

Canadians already suspicious of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's carbon tax are likely to be even more suspicious given a report by Ottawa-based Blacklock's Reporter that Environment Canada omitted a century's worth of observed weather data in developing its computer models on the impacts of climate change.

The scrapping of all observed weather data from 1850 to 1949 was necessary, a spokesman for Environment Canada told Blacklock's Reporter, after researchers concluded that historically, there weren't enough weather stations to create a reliable data set for that 100-year period.

"The historical data is not observed historical data," the spokesman said. "It is modelled historical data ... 24 models from historical simulations spanning 1950 to 2005 were used."

These computer simulations are part of the federal government's [ClimateData.ca](https://climate.data.ca) website launched by Environment Minister Catherine McKenna on Aug. 15.

She described it as “an important next step in giving our decision-makers even greater access to important climate data for long-term planning. The more each of us uses this type of information, the more it will help.”

Blacklock’s Reporter, which describes itself as “the only reporter-owned and operated newsroom in Ottawa” focusing on intensive reporting of government documents, notes that in many cases the observed temperatures scrapped by Environment Canada in creating its computer models, were higher in the past than today.

For example, Vancouver had a higher record temperature in 1910 (30.6C) than in 2017 (29.5C).

Toronto had a warmer summer in 1852 (32.2C) than in 2017 (31.7C).

The highest temperature in Moncton in 2017 was four degrees cooler than in 1906.

Brandon, Man., had 49 days where the average daily temperature was above 20C in 1936, compared to only 16 in 2017, with a high temperature of 43.3C that year compared to 34.3C in 2017.

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Blacklock’s Reporter also said that in an earlier report on forest fires,

Environment Canada blamed climate change for “record-shattering” forest fires in British Columbia that destroyed 3.3 million acres in 2018, omitting the Chinchaga Firestorm that destroyed five million acres in B.C. and Alberta in 1950.

To be fair, the fact that it omitted observed weather data from 1850 to 1949 in developing its computer models is not evidence in and of itself of an attempt by Environment Canada to mislead the public.

Omitting observed historical weather data from computer models is common in climate science because of differences in the quality of the reporting of weather data today, compared to 1850 when historical records started being kept.

Also, weather is not climate.

Computer climate models don’t claim to predict what the weather will be like on any given day, month or year.

They predict long-term weather and climate patterns.

Climate scientists test their validity by assessing whether their models predicting future climate patterns can explain climate change patterns in the past, which is based on more data than that provided solely by historical records.

Finally, the fact that in some cases regional temperatures were warmer in the past than today, does not disprove the theory of human-induced climate change.

Having said that, McKenna and other politicians give the public

inaccurate information about climate change all the time.

McKenna, during a recent visit to Toronto, blamed flooding at the south end of the Don Valley Parkway on man-made climate change.

Except that area has been flooding since the glaciers retreated 12,000 years ago, long before industrial greenhouse gas emissions existed.