

# Opinion: Rogue tactics undermine climate crusade

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As big industries ramp up their campaign to discredit the science of global climate change, researchers who've helped document the threats posed by rising greenhouse gases have paid a steep price.

Some have had their emails stolen. Others have come under attack from industry-funded groups. Still others have been summoned to appear before hostile congressional committees.

Amid this organized campaign of intimidation and dishonesty, it is understandable that some might want to fight back with similar tactics.

Understandable, but not acceptable. If climate scientists and their advocates use deceit in the cause of truth, they will only set back their cause. Sadly, one already has.

Peter Gleick, president of the Pacific Institute, an Oakland-based think tank, has admitted using a false name to obtain internal documents from a pro-industry group in Chicago, the Heartland Institute. Gleick then fed the documents – which reveal individual donors to Heartland and the group's plan to use public schools in a campaign to discredit climate science – to bloggers and Internet sites. Heartland has also accused Gleick of forging one of the Heartland documents, which Gleick has denied.

Gleick, recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius award" and a prolific blogger and writer (including op-eds on water issues for The Bee in 2009 and 2011), apologized three days ago on the Huffington Post for his actions.

“My judgment was blinded by my frustration with the ongoing efforts – often anonymous, well-funded and coordinated – to attack climate science and scientists ...” he wrote in his post.

Sorry, Mr. Gleick, but frustration isn't justification for acts that are dishonest and potentially illegal. Moreover, by misrepresenting himself, Gleick has handed red meat to the attack dogs who so frustrate him. He has also taken himself out of an ongoing political debate that so badly needs strong, credible voices.

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