

Does Sierra snow study buck fears of warming?

By Mark Robison, Reno Gazette-Journal

John Christy says his new study of Sierra Nevada snowfall shows global warming is not the dire threat many make it out to be.

"In general, it depends on what religion you have," Christy said when asked about the reaction to his paper. "If you believe Man is doing horrible things to the planet, then you can't believe this report. If you believe the other way, then this is a chapter in your bible."

Climate change skeptics have seized on the report published by the peer-reviewed Journal of Hydrometeorology.

James Taylor – who is not a scientist and is affiliated with the Heartland Institute, which challenges global warming – penned a blog for Forbes.com that said, "Alarmists were asserting with near unity that global warming was responsible for winters with below average snowfall. Christy's study shows that as far as the Sierra Nevada mountains are concerned, the alarmists are wrong on both counts – there is no trend one way or the other."

Christy's climatology colleagues say not so fast.

David Pierce said Christy is going beyond the data in his study, which shows steady snowfall since 1878 in the Sierra, and is making conclusions he hasn't proven.

Global warming models predict snowfall will decrease as temperatures rise toward the end of this century, not now, said Pierce, a researcher at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, where he studies the effects of

climate change on ocean temperatures and water resources – including snow – in the Western United States.

Pierce takes exception to Christy making such claims in the media instead of in his study, adding this “is unfortunate because peer-review is the process that filters out unsupported personal opinion from what is backed by evidence.”

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