

Removal of U.S. Global Change Research Program Director

White House Removed Michael Kuperberg From US Global Change Research Program

November 6, 2020: White House Removed Climate Scientist Michael Kuperberg From USGCRP Where He Was Expected To Oversee The National Climate Assessment Slated For 2023. “On November 6, the White House removed climate scientist Michael Kuperberg from his leadership post at the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), where he was expected to oversee development of the Fifth National Climate Assessment, slated for finalization in 2023. Mr. Kuperberg, who led USGCRP through the development of the Fourth National Climate Assessment, has been directed by the administration to return to his previous position as a scientist at the Energy Department. USGCRP is responsible for coordinating efforts by 13 federal agencies to produce a National Climate Assessment every four years, as mandated by Congress. [...] The administration appears to have installed David Legates, a scientist who has downplayed the harms of climate change, to oversee USGCRP. The administration has also placed a second official, Ryan Maue — who holds similarly questionable views on climate — into a USGCRP oversight role.” [Midnight Watch – NYU School of Law, Accessed [12/18/20](#)]

- **New York Times HEADLINE: “Trump Administration Removes Scientist in Charge of Assessing Climate Change”** [New York Times, [11/9/20](#)]

Kuperberg Was Removed “Abruptly” As His Agency Began Writing The Next National Climate Assessment. “The Trump administration abruptly removed a top official charting the U.S. government’s research on global warming, just as his agency began writing the next climate report card. Mike Kuperberg, a Department of Energy employee who has for years led the U.S. Global Change Research Program, was notified on Friday that his assignment atop the agency had ended, according to two people familiar with the move who asked for anonymity discussing a personnel matter. An email sent to Kuperberg’s address at the research program drew an automatic reply saying that effective Nov. 6, his detail has ended and he’s returned to the Energy Department. The shift, which was reported earlier by the Washington Post, threatens to cause tumult as the program Kuperberg headed lines up authors and the contours of the next National Climate Assessment, expected to be published in 2023.” [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]

Trump Rejected The 2018 National Climate Assessment, Stating “I Don’t Believe It.” “The National Climate Assessment is a congressionally mandated compendium of research about the state of climate change. It is released every four years by scientists and other experts from across federal agencies. The last version, released in 2018 and mostly charted by the Obama administration, concluded that the effects of global warming are accelerating and will cause widespread disruption. Trump rejected its conclusions, saying ‘I don’t believe it.’” [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]

Kuperberg Was Expected To Be Replaced With Climate Skeptic David Legates

Kuperberg Was Expected To Be Replaced As Executive Director Of USGCRP With David Legates, Who “Previously Worked Closely With Climate Change Denial Groups.” “Michael Kuperberg, executive director of the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which produces the climate assessment, was told Friday that he would no longer lead that organization, people with knowledge of the situation said. According to two people close to the administration, he is expected to be replaced by David Legates, a deputy assistant secretary at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who previously worked closely with climate change denial groups.” [New York Times, [11/9/20](#)]

- **Legates Worked With The Heartland Institute.** “Legates, a professor of climatology at the University of Delaware, has worked closely with climate change denial groups such as the Heartland Institute and argued earlier this year that ‘carbon dioxide is plant food and is not a pollutant.’” [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]

Legates Was Described As A “Climate Skeptic.” “Kuperberg is expected to be replaced by David Legates, a climate skeptic who was recently installed as a deputy assistant secretary of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, according to one of the people familiar with the matter.” [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]

Legates Claimed Carbon Dioxide “Is Plant Food And Is Not A Pollutant.” “Legates, a professor of climatology at the University of Delaware, has worked closely with climate change denial groups such as the Heartland Institute and argued earlier this year that ‘carbon dioxide is plant food and is not a pollutant.’” [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]

The Removal Was Applauded By Climate Skeptics

Climate Skeptics Such As Marc Morano Urged Further Action By The Trump Administration, Including Hiring A “Bonanza Of Skeptical Climate Scientists To Fill Positions.” “And some climate skeptics are urging Trump to do more. ‘The Trump administration should undertake a hiring bonanza of skeptical climate scientists to fill positions ,’ said Marc Morano, a former Republican staffer for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee who runs the ClimateDepot.com website. ‘I expect to see the Trump administration partake in a scientific version of affirmative action hiring practices in the government for the next 10 weeks.’” [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]

- **Marc Morano: “I Expect To See The Trump Administration Partake In A Scientific Version Of Affirmative Action Hiring Practices In The Government For The Next 10 Weeks.”** “And some climate skeptics are urging Trump to do more. ‘The Trump administration should undertake a hiring bonanza of skeptical climate scientists to fill positions ,’ said Marc Morano, a former Republican staffer for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee who runs the ClimateDepot.com website. ‘I expect to see the Trump administration partake in a scientific version of affirmative action hiring practices in the government for the next 10 weeks.’” [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]

Scientist Warn The Removal Could Profoundly Affect The Climate Report

Scientists Warned Kuperberg's Departure Could Have A "Profound" Effect On The Climate Report. "Scientists warned Monday that Kuperberg's departure alone could have a profound affect on the climate report. Deadlines to nominate assessment authors and develop the technical inputs that form the backbone of the report are just days away. And some decisions about the scope of the analysis made by the departing Trump administration could be difficult for President-elect Joe Biden to rapidly undo. 'Who is in that role is very critical,' said Brenda Ekwurzel, director of climate science for the Union of Concerned Scientists." [Bloomberg Green, [11/10/20](#)]