

25 years of dud tipping point predictions

Michael Bastasch, The Daily Caller, 19 May 2015

For decades now, those concerned about global warming have been predicting the so-called “tipping point” — the point beyond which it’ll be too late to stave off catastrophic global warming.

It seems like every year the “tipping point” is close to being reached, and that the world must get rid of fossil fuels to save the planet. That is, until we’ve passed that deadline and the next such “tipping point” is predicted.

Would you believe it was eight years ago today that the United Nations predicted we only had “as little as eight years left to avoid a dangerous global average rise of 2C or more.” This failed prediction, however, has not stopped the U.N. from issuing more apocalyptic predictions since.

To celebrate more than two decades of dire predictions, The Daily Caller News Foundation presents this list of some of the “greatest” predictions made by scientists, activists and politicians — most of which we’ve now passed.

1. 2015 is the ‘last effective opportunity’ to stop catastrophic warming

World leaders meeting at the Vatican last week issued a statement saying that 2015 was the “last effective opportunity to negotiate arrangements that keep human-induced warming below 2-degrees [Celsius].”

Pope Francis wants to weigh in on global warming, and is expected to issue an encyclical saying basically the same thing. Francis will likely reiterate that 2015 is the last chance to stop massive warming.

But what he should really say is that the U.N. conference this year is the “last” chance to cut a deal to stem global warming... since last year when the U.N. said basically the same thing about 2014’s climate summit.

2. France’s foreign minister said we only have “500 days” to stop “climate chaos”

When Laurent Fabius met with Secretary of State John Kerry on May 13, 2014 to talk about world issues he said “we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos.”

Ironically at the time of Fabius’ comments, the U.N. had scheduled a climate summit to meet in Paris in December 2015 — some 565 days after his remarks. Looks like the U.N. is 65 days too late to save the world.

3. President Barack Obama is the last chance to stop global warming

When Obama made the campaign promise to “slow the rise of the oceans” some environmentalists may have taken him quite literally.

In 2012, the United Nations Foundation President Tim Wirth told Climatewire that Obama’s second term was “the last window of opportunity” to impose policies to restrict fossil fuel use.

Wirth said it's "the last chance we have to get anything approaching 2 degrees Centigrade," adding that if "we don't do it now, we are committing the world to a drastically different place."

Even before that, then-National Aeronautics and Space Administration Goddard Space Flight Center head James Hansen warned in 2009 that Obama only "has four years to save Earth." I wonder what they now think about their predictions?

4. Remember when we had "hours" to stop global warming?

In 2009, world leaders met in Copenhagen, Denmark to potentially hash out another climate treaty. That same year, the head of Canada's Green Party wrote that there was only "hours" left to stop global warming.

"We have hours to act to avert a slow-motion tsunami that could destroy civilization as we know it," Elizabeth May, leader of the Greens in Canada, wrote in 2009. "Earth has a long time. Humanity does not. We need to act urgently. We no longer have decades; we have hours. We mark that in Earth Hour on Saturday."

5. United Kingdom Prime Minister Gordon Brown said there was only 50 days left to save Earth

2009 was a bad year for global warming predictions. That year Brown warned there was only "50 days to save the world from global warming," the BBC reported. According to Brown there was "no plan B."

Brown has been booted out of office since then. I wonder what he'd say about global warming today?

6. Let's not forget Prince Charles's warning we only had 96 months to save the planet

It's only been about 70 months since Charles said in July 2009 that there would be "irretrievable climate and ecosystem collapse, and all that goes with it." So the world apparently only has 26 months left to stave off an utter catastrophe.

7. The U.N.'s top climate scientist said in 2007 we only had four years to save the world

Rajendra Pachauri, the former head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in 2007 that if "there's no action before 2012, that's too late."

"What we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment," he said.

Well, it's 2015 and no new U.N. climate treaty has been presented. The only thing that's changed since then is that Pachauri was forced to resign earlier this year amid accusations he sexually harassed multiple female coworkers.

8. Environmentalists warned in 2002 the world had a decade to go green

Environmentalist write George Monbiot wrote in the UK Guardian that within “as little as 10 years, the world will be faced with a choice: arable farming either continues to feed the world’s animals or it continues to feed the world’s people. It cannot do both.”

In 2002, about 930 million people around the world were undernourished, according to U.N. data. by 2014, that number shrank to 805 million. Sorry, Monbiot.

9. The “tipping point” warning first started in 1989

In the late 1980s the U.N. was already claiming the world had only a decade to solve global warming or face the consequences.

The San Jose Mercury News reported on June 30, 1989 that a “senior environmental official at the United Nations, Noel Brown, says entire nations could be wiped off the face of the earth by rising sea levels if global warming is not reversed by the year 2000.”

That prediction didn’t come true 15 years ago, and the U.N. is sounding the same alarm today.