

The Viscount Ridley DL
c/o The Global Warming Policy Foundation
55 Tufton Street
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19 October 2016

Dear Viscount Ridley,

I am writing to challenge a false allegation you made against Professor Ranga Myneni and his co-authors, based on a misrepresentation of their work, in your Annual Lecture for the Global Warming Policy Foundation at the Royal Society on 17 October, the text of which has been posted on the Foundation's website at: <http://www.thegwvf.org/matt-ridley-global-warming-versus-global-greening/>

According to the text, you accused Professor Myneni and his 31 co-authors of delaying publication of a paper in order to avoid it being taken into account by the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Your text states:

"Myneni's results, however, remained unpublished. I was puzzled by this. Then I realized that one of the IPCC's periodic assessment reports was in preparation, and that probably Dr Myneni and colleagues might delay the publication of their results until after that report was published, lest "the skeptics have a field day" with it.

That last phrase, by the way, is from one of the Climategate emails, the one on 22 September 1999 in which Dr Michael Mann approves the deletion of inconvenient data.

Sure enough, Myneni's results were eventually published three years later in April 2016 in a paper in Nature Climate Change, with 32 authors from 24 institutions in eight countries – when the IPCC report was safely in the public domain and the great Paris climate jamboree was over."

This is a serious allegation against Professor Ranga and his co-authors. However, you misrepresented Professor Myneni's work in order to make this claim.

The text of your lecture states that you were first alerted to Professor Myneni's work in December 2012 by someone who directed you to a video of a lecture on 19 July 2012. Professor Myneni's lecture can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHBWvX9qGu0>

Your lecture purports to reproduce two slides from Professor Myneni's July 2012 lecture, outlining his main results. You claimed that he found that 31% of the Earth's vegetated land had 'greened'

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Professor Lord Stern
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between 1982 and 2011, and that there had been an increase in gross productivity by 14%, about half of which could be attributed to carbon dioxide fertilisation.

In fact, Professor Myneni's video clearly shows that he was reporting that 20.5% of the Earth's vegetated land had 'greened', as indeed you indicated in your article for the 'Wall Street Journal' which was published online on 4 January 2013:

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323374504578217621593679506>

Furthermore, your lecture did not, as you claim, reproduce slides from Professor Myneni's July 2012 lecture, but instead used two slides from a different lecture which was delivered at a meeting on 4-5 July 2013, and which can be accessed at:

<http://probing.vegetation.be/sites/default/files/pdf/dag1/1100-Ranga%20Myneni-myneni-probing-vegetation-talk-2.pdf>

In addition, your lecture did not make clear that in his July 2013 lecture, Professor Myneni suggested that 42% of the 14% increase in annual productivity "can be attributed to relaxation of climatic constraints to plant growth", with "57% to other 'anthropogenic factors'", whereas the paper published in the journal 'Nature Climate Change' in April 2016 did not present a figure for annual productivity, instead concluding that 25% to 50% of the Earth's vegetated area had greened, with about 70% of this trend attributable to carbon dioxide fertilisation.

Crucially you also failed to mention in your lecture that Professor Myneni states clearly at about 42 minutes during his recorded 2012 lecture that "The attribution to fertilisation is somewhat speculative and not on very solid ground and we have to further refine this before this paper goes out to publication".

Hence, despite your false claims, it is clear that Professor Myneni presented only preliminary results in July 2012, and so there is no justification for your allegation that he and his co-authors delayed publication in order to avoid its inclusion in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Indeed it appears that you attempted to obscure the truth about Professor Myneni's work by showing slides from his July 2013 lecture, but claiming they were part of his earlier 2012 lecture. As I am sure you know, to be considered for the contribution by IPCC working group I to the Fifth Assessment Report, papers had to be submitted by no later than 31 July 2012, and accepted by 15 March 2013, so Professor Myneni's presentation of his preliminary results on 19 July 2012 was just 12 days before the deadline for submitting eligible papers, and his lecture in July 2013 was well after the cut-off date.

Working Group I's report, which was published in September 2013, explicitly addressed the issue of carbon fertilisation and its impact on the net primary production (NPP) of vegetation on pages 501-2 in Chapter 6, which can be accessed at: http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5_Chapter06_FINAL.pdf

The chapter explicitly cites the findings of a paper by Nemani and co-authors, published in 2003 and also referred to by Professor Myneni in his July 2012 lecture:

"Warming (and possibly the CO₂ fertilisation effect) has also been correlated with global trends in satellite greenness observations, which resulted in an estimated 6% increase of global NPP, or the accumulation of 3.4 PgC on land over the period 1982–1999 (Nemani et al., 2003)."

Yet your lecture ignores the contribution of working group I and complains about the coverage of 'greening' in the contribution of working group II. This is a mistake that you have made before,

which Professor Richard Betts, Head of Climate Impacts at the Met Office, pointed out on social media. Yet you used your lecture to attack Professor Betts and wrongly to describe his efforts as being “misleading at best and false at worst”.

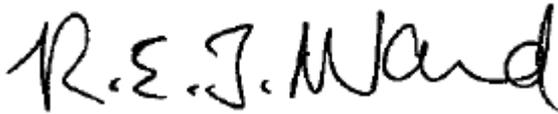
It is apparent, therefore, that the allegations you make against Professor Myneni and his co-authors, and against Professor Betts, are entirely untrue and based on misrepresentations of the facts. Professor Myneni has published a statement directly refuting your allegations against him, at: <http://sites.bu.edu/cliveg/mynenis-response-to-lord-ridleys-gwpc-talk/>

I suggest that you immediately withdraw the text of your Annual Lecture for the Global Warming Policy Foundation at the Royal Society on 17 October, and issue public apologies to Professor Myneni and his co-authors, and to Professor Betts, for making false allegations against them.

I should also point out that there are other significantly misleading and inaccurate claims in your Annual Lecture for the Foundation which I have not outlined here. I will be, however, publishing shortly details of these other errors and misrepresentations.

I am copying this letter to the Chair and Director of the Foundation, Lord Lawson of Blaby and Dr Benny Peiser, and to Sir Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, President of the Royal Society, the venue you used to make these entirely false allegations against climate scientists.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.E.J. Ward". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Ward
Policy and Communications Director

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