

FORUM: Red hot irresponsibility

By AMY HOYT BENNETT -- Encinitas | Tuesday, April 21, 2009 12:12 AM PDT [∞](#)

Once again, Richard Kirk (April 7) attempts to dredge up the pro-oil, pro-Wall Street argument that the science is not yet in on the climate crisis. This view only puts you and me in danger of high oil prices, more drought, fires and worse. This false argument is a serious threat to San Diegans. Mr. Kirk's column is reckless and harmful to our health and security. It misleads us into inaction in the face of overwhelming science from the National Academy of Sciences and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Worst of all, this can be traced to a conscious political strategy: In a 2003 memo by well-known Republican consultant Frank Luntz, Mr. Luntz accepts that Republicans have "lost the environmental communications battle."

He suggests "Should the public come to believe that the scientific issues are settled, their views about global warming will change accordingly. ... Therefore, you need to continue to make the lack of scientific certainty a primary issue in the debate." In other words ---- muddy the water about this critical issue. This is not the GOP I once knew.

Attempting to use this technique, Kirk casually cites Christopher Horner who publicly claims there was consensus for global cooling in the 1970s. There was no such consensus, according to experts, including the American Meteorological Society: <http://ams.allenpress.com/archive/1520-0477/89/9/pdf/i1520-0477-89-9-1325.pdf>.

Kirk again, causally sites Vincent Gray who claims the IPCC is "fundamentally corrupt." He cites no facts to back up this outrageous claim. With the economy tied to climate issues, Kirk cites Czech President Klaus' denunciation of climate change, yet past President Havel publicly referred to Klaus's economic policies as "gangster capitalism."

Kirk's words are false, desperate, loud and repetitious claims. Sound like the rhetoric of the last eight years? They are born of a political machine working for their own interests, similar to the Wall Street clan, not in the interests of the health and security of Americans. This is an immoral, short-term and childish approach to a very big problem. To use Mr. Kirk's words, this is the propaganda of "Red Hot" irresponsibility.

This is a serious issue for seriously moral people. We need to curb fossil fuel use now to stop the dangerous buildup of carbon dioxide which causes the cycle of warming. Our children and grandchildren want a healthy life more than they want bonus packages for rich CEOs.

There is no magic bullet. No turning back to unrealistic returns on investments whose damage or mitigation has never been valued.

We are reaching a tipping point. Incentives to slow this are needed. A revenue neutral carbon tax will immediately encourage less CO2 and return tax revenues to citizens, not Wall Street or fossil fuel magnates, and will encourage sensible jobs in solar and wind power.

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<http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2009/04/21/opinion/commentary/z38b2daae9b1a61c788257592007ec2ec.txt>