



**BOOK AND
MULTIMEDIA
REVIEW**

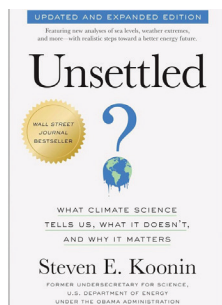
Unsettled (Updated and Expanded Edition): What Climate Science Tells Us, What it Doesn't, and Why it Matters

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AUTHOR DISCLOSURES

I had reviewed the first (2021) edition of this book very favorably (Bauer, 2021); a sentence from that review is among the 14 plaudits in the mentioned reviews at Amazon.com, where more than 5,000 readers rate it 4.7/5; at Goodreads, 3,300 ratings average 4.27/5. By December 2023, more than 200,000 copies of this book had been sold (Koonin, 2024, p. xix).

On the other hand, several reviews in mainstream journals were quite critical.

I remain firmly opinionated that Koonin has it largely right, that the general obsessive description of human-caused climate change as an existential threat is unwarranted; and this expanded and revised version of the book strengthens that case.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) appeared after Koonin's first edition had been published. The additional three years of data have confirmed Koonin in his initial judgments.

One crucial point to bear in mind is that the executive summaries in IPCC reports often make statements not supported by the technical parts of the same reports, and indeed, are in contradiction to some of the technical data. This edition illustrates that with specific examples (Koonin, 2024, pp. xiii-xvi). Many people may find this hard to believe, yet it is a not-uncommon feature with issues of public policy where mainstream authorities apparently find it necessary to try to swamp and ignore dissenting minority voices. More than a decade ago, I provided detailed accounts of how the executive summaries of reports from UNAIDS and the World Bank misreported and misinterpreted the data published by their own organizations regarding HIV and AIDS; I also cited similar critiques from as far back as 1996 regarding reports about global warming and climate change (Bauer, 2012). Official reports are not scientific publications; in particular, there is no neutral, unbiased peer review of executive summaries.

The new edition emphasizes in particular the enormous problems—ethical as well as economic—of building an energy-supply system that is reliable, affordable, and low in unwanted emissions (Koonin, 2024, p. xix); bearing in mind that global energy demand is likely to increase by approximately 50% by mid-century as more countries develop their economies and populations grow (p. xxi).

The chief detailed updates are sections at the end of chapters 5, 6, 8, and 11-13; chapter 15 is entirely new.

Chapter 5, "Hyping the Heat," states that "some part" (emphasis added) of the apparent 0.6°C satellite-measured global warming over the last 45 years "can be attributed to human-caused greenhouse gases" (Koonin, 2024, pp. 114-117). However, heat



waves during that time have been no more common than earlier in the 20th century and much less frequent than in the 1930s.

Chapter 6 cites AR6 for a lack of any observed increase or trend in extreme weather events, with uncertainty about long-term trends in the severity of hurricanes (Koonin, 2024, pp. 134-137).

Chapter 8 argues that the NOAA-predicted sea rise by 2050 ignores the observed variability of sea levels in the past. It repeats the claim that the rate of loss of Greenland ice has been no greater in recent decades than during several cycles in the 20th century. The very fact of cycles, shown in Figure 8.10, suggests “that natural cycles in the North Atlantic were playing an important, if not dominant, role” (Koonin, 2024, pp. 178-182).

Chapter 9 begins by citing an entirely misleading statement from AR6 that, with “(very high confidence)” (emphasis in original), “in all regions, increases in extreme heat events have resulted in human mortality and morbidity” (Koonin, 2024, pp. 199-200). However, actual data show that more people died from extreme cold than from extreme heat. As the globe warmed, there was “a large decrease in deaths from extreme cold that more than outweighed the smaller increase in heat-related deaths” (Koonin, 2024, citing a 2021 publication in *Lancet Planetary Health*).

A longer section (Koonin, 2024, pp. 200-204) discusses the economic impacts of climate change, noting that “the human condition improved spectacularly” since the beginning of the 20th century despite considerable global warming.

Chapter 11 describes Koonin’s disappointment with the low quality of negative reviews of his book. He identifies errors in Gary Yohe’s review in *Scientific American*, which I had independently judged misleading and unreliable. Koonin also cites ad hominem statements in a later multi-authored review, also in *Scientific American*, to which the journal refused to publish his detailed rebuttal.

Koonin has discovered what has long been known to those of us interested in unpopular topics: The mainstream simply will not engage in substantive discussion. That’s why we sorely need something like a Science Court (Bauer, 2017).

I was reminded of the classic article by Bernard Barber (1961), “Resistance by Scientists to Scientific Discovery,” which describes “a pattern in which all scientists may sometimes and perhaps often participate, now on the side of the resisters, now on that of the resisted.” Koonin finds himself attacked unfairly now, but three decades ago, he was among the physicists who dismissed and denigrated the work of electrochemists Fleischmann and Pons, whose evidence suggested nuclear reactions at

room temperature—a phenomenon that has since been observed by many researchers worldwide (LENR-CANR, n.d.).

Chapter 12, “The Path and Price for NetZero,” argues that the 2021 report from the International Energy Agency, *NetZero by 2050*, recommends actions that are doubtfully feasible technically and would actually “create a global system supplying about 8% less energy than today” (Koonin, 2024, p. 249) at a cost of about 4% of global GDP. The McKenzie International Consulting Group reached a similar conclusion (p. 250).

Chapter 13 details the problems of creating an electric grid that is affordable, reliable, and “clean.” The major difficulty is that “clean” solar and wind are completely unreliable and require massive energy storage solutions, which are costly and dependent on materials that themselves require significant energy to produce.

Chapter 15, “Easy on the Energy Transition,” argues that immediate drastic action is not needed and that the energy needs of the 80% of the world’s population currently experiencing “energy poverty” must be considered.

The book cites Sri Lanka’s banning of chemical fertilizers as an example of ill-considered virtue-signaling. The ban led to an economic crisis, starvation, riots, and a change in government (Koonin, 2024, pp. 284-285). Similarly, Denmark plans to tax farmers for livestock emissions starting in 2030 (Karas, 2024).

PROS, CONS, AND THE BOOK’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LITERATURE

I continue to believe that this is the best and most neutral source of opinions and facts about global warming and climate change.

RECOMMENDATION

Everyone should read this book.

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