

October 21, 2013 12:27 am

Claims at odds with IPCC report

From Prof Roger Pielke Jr.

Sir, Julian Hunt and Johnny Chan write, in their article “We must face up to the rising threat from coastal storms” (October 17): “We know that the frequency of heavy rain events, as well as rainfall intensity (amount of rain per unit of time), has already increased. This has led to severe flooding becoming more frequent.”

This is factually incorrect. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded in its assessment report last month: “There continues to be a lack of evidence and thus low confidence regarding the sign of trend in the magnitude and/or frequency of floods on a global scale”.

Lord Hunt and Professor Chan also cite a 2010 WMO report to claim: “The World Meteorological Organisation’s committee on the relationship between climate change and tropical cyclones expects global warming to cause the average intensity of tropical cyclones to increase up to 11 per cent by 2100.”

This claim is also at odds with that of the recent IPCC report, which says: “. . . it is likely that the global frequency of occurrence of tropical cyclones will either decrease or remain essentially unchanged, concurrent with a likely increase in both global mean tropical cyclone maximum wind speed and precipitation rates. The future influence of climate change on tropical cyclones is likely to vary by region, but the specific characteristics of the changes are not yet well quantified and there is low confidence in region-specific projections of frequency and intensity.”

While, in principle, there is no problem with scientists holding outlier views, in this case the authors have actually made errors in their representation of the current state of the science.

Roger Pielke Jr, Professor and Director, Center for Science and Technology Policy Research, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, US

You may be interested in ?

[South Korea's shipbuilders harness much-needed tailwind](#)

[Richard II, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK - review](#)

[Industry veteran with sustainability agenda stands for BHP board](#)

[The key facts on energy prices](#)

Printed from: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/6df65cc0-3753-11e3-b42e-00144feab7de.html>

Print a single copy of this article for personal use. Contact us if you wish to print more to distribute to others.

© THE FINANCIAL TIMES LTD 2013 FT and 'Financial Times' are trademarks of The Financial Times Ltd.