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Climate change

Climate change is real. We must not offer credibility to those who deny it

If 'balance' means giving voice to those who deny the reality of human-triggered climate change, we will not take part in the debate, say **Jonathon Porritt, Caroline Lucas, Clive Lewis** and 57 other writers, politicians and academics

Letters

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A dry cornfield in Ahlen, Germany, where harvests have suffered as a result of this year's extreme drought.
Photograph: Martin Meissner/AP

We are no longer willing to lend our credibility to debates over whether or not **climate change** is real. It is real. We need to act now or the consequences will be catastrophic. In the interests of “balance”, the media often feels the need to include those who outright deny the reality of human-triggered climate change.

Balance implies equal weight. But this then creates a false equivalence between an overwhelming scientific consensus and a lobby, heavily funded by vested interests, that exists simply to sow doubt to serve those interests. Yes, of course scientific consensus should be open to challenge – but with better science, not with spin and nonsense. We urgently need to move the debate on to how we address the causes and effects of dangerous climate change – because that’s where common sense demands our attention and efforts should be.

Fringe voices will protest about “free speech”. No one should prevent them from expressing their views, whether held cynically or misguidedly. However, no one is obliged to provide them with a platform, much less to appear alongside them to give the misleading impression that there is something substantive to debate. When there is an article on smoking, newspapers and broadcasters no longer include lobbyists claiming there are no links to cancer. When there’s a round-the-world yacht race we don’t hear flat-earthers given airtime: “This is madness; they’ll sail off the edge!”

There’s a workable model for covering fringe views – which is to treat them as such. They don’t need to be ridiculed, just expected to challenge the evidence with

better evidence, and otherwise ignored. As campaigners and thinkers who are led by science and the precautionary principle, and who wish to debate the real and vital issues arising from human-triggered climate change, we will not assist in creating the impression that climate denial should be taken seriously by lending credence to its proponents, by entertaining ideas that lack any basis in fact. Therefore we will no longer debate those who deny that human-caused climate change is real. There are plenty of vital debates to be had around climate chaos and what to do about it; this is simply no longer one of them. We urge broadcasters to move on, as we are doing.

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Prof Richard Murphy *Director, Tax Research UK*

Peter Tatchell

Prof Andrea Sella, *Michael Faraday prize winner*

Prof Robert Ayres *Author*

Caroline Lucas MP

Clive Lewis MP

Prof Molly Scott Cato MEP

Dr Rupert Read *Chair, Green House thinktank*

George Monbiot *Author*

Dr Doug Parr *Chief scientist, Greenpeace*

Chris Rose *Former programme director, Greenpeace*

Jeremy Leggett *Founder, Solar Century*

Mayer Hillman *Senior fellow, Policy Studies Institute*

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Ed Gillespie *Co-founder, Futerra*

Mark Lynas *Author*

Dr James Garvey *Author*

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Chris Goodall *Author*

Prof Clive Spash *Author*

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Prof Jem Bendell *Sustainability Leadership Institute, University of Cumbria*

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