Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss., 15, C6973–C6975, 2015
www.atmos-chem-phys-discuss.net/15/C6973/2015/


Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics Discussions



# *Interactive comment on* "Ice melt, sea level rise and superstorms: evidence from paleoclimate data, climate modeling, and modern observations that 2 °C global warming is highly dangerous" *by* J. Hansen et al.

**F. Dentener (Editor)**

frank.dentener@jrc.ec.europa.eu

Received and published: 18 September 2015

This editor comment serves to provide some background information regarding the review process of the paper by J. Hansen et al "Ice melt, sea level rise and superstorms: evidence from paleoclimate data, climate modeling, and modern observations that 2 °C global warming is highly dangerous"

A number of issues have been raised during the public discussion of this somewhat unusual manuscript.

1) Choice of journal:

The authors wished to publish their work in an interactive open-access journal - including an open discussion. The multidisciplinary aspect of the paper made it difficult to chose the journal for this work, that covers paleo-climate, modern observations and climate modelling. Indeed ACP does not have strong roots in paleo-climate, while the sister journal 'Climate of the Past' does not address modern climate modelling. We consider the issue of 'choosing the right journal', as suggested by referee Peter Thorne, is not of significant importance, as long as the paper is judged by the best possible referees - both on disciplinary and cross-disciplinary topics. To this end we have contacted editors of some of our sister journals to seek advise on scientists who could provide comments/reviews on specific issues. Some more material may become available after closure of the public discussion phase, and will be considered in the follow-up.

2) Open discussion:

The public review process is outlined here: "http://www.atmospheric-chemistry-and-physics.net/peer_review/interactive_review_process.html" The basic principles are to use the full potential of the scientific community, while maintaining traditional peer review (but more transparent). Unfortunately, not all comments to this paper qualify as 'scientifically sound'. As it is a-priori difficult and time-consuming to avoid such comments, we have chosen not to change procedures, that are working fine for thousands of other papers. We advised the authors to give succinct replies to such comments, e.g. referring to relevant textbooks. In particular cases we have stopped threads that were not of relevance for the topic of the paper, and rather distracting. It is worth to mention the collaborative comment (C6867) by Williams and colleagues. Perhaps this is a new model to provide comprehensive comments on complex papers such as this one?

3) Press coverage:



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Neither ACP nor other Copernicus/European Geosciences Union journals actively promote publications that are still in the discussion phase. However, a press briefing by the authors, after acceptance of the paper for discussion in ACPD, has triggered significant media attention, being reported in numerous newspaper articles and discussed in blogs and social media. While this had some positive consequences (it probably attracted the attention and comments of scientists that otherwise would have missed the publication), negatively it also attracted people from outside of, or less active in, the scientific community, delivering off-track remarks. One of the reviewers felt that this attention was somewhat interfering with the review process. We hope, that the option to provide reviews anonymously remains sufficient to warrant independent reviews.

4) Next steps:

The authors are now expected to publish responses to the comments and reviews. Based on reviewer and contributed comments the authors will provide a revised manuscript and a detailed overview of how the comments were addressed. The editor will then decide to accept, or reject the paper, or ask for further revision, with the possibility to solicit further reviewer's advice. This procedure is more in-line with the traditional peer-review process.

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Interactive comment on Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss., 15, 20059, 2015.