



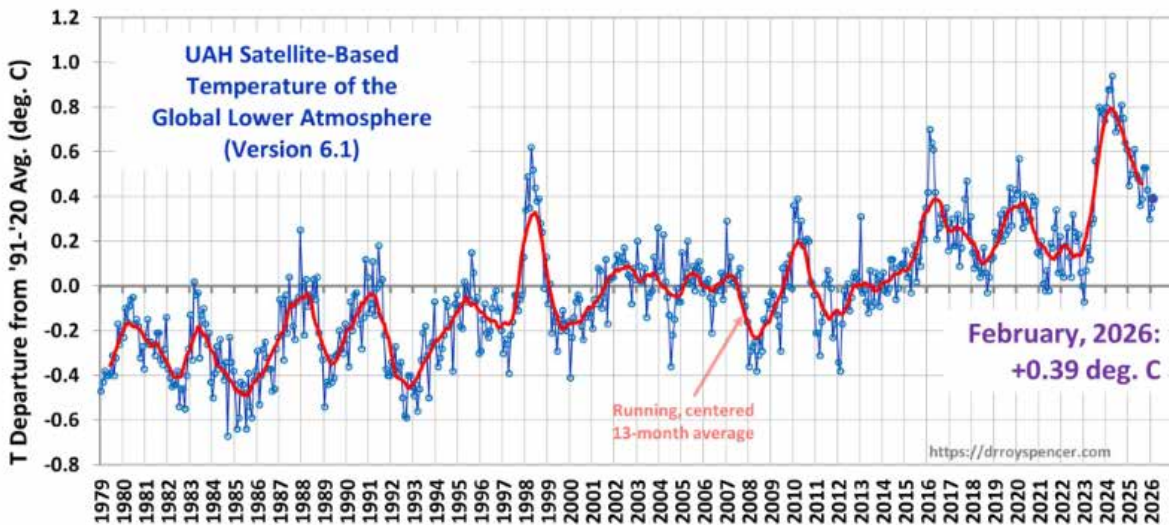
CLIMATE FACT CHECK: MARCH 2026 EDITION

Planet Isn't 'Heating Faster Than Ever' - Hailstorms or Tornadoes ARE NOT Worse - Disasters NOT Costlier - 'Climate Goals' Meaningless - Heatwaves NOT 'Virtually Impossible'

March 6th: No, TIME, the Planet Isn't 'Heating Faster Than Ever'

TIME **Claim:** *TIME Magazine* [claimed in a recent article](#) that global warming has dramatically accelerated since 2015. TIME cites research claiming that warming has nearly doubled in pace since 2015, representing a sharp acceleration and warning that the world could cross 1.5°C of warming within a few years.

Fact-Check: Time's claim rests on statistical adjustments that "filter out" natural variability such as El Niño and volcanic effects. The acceleration appears after removing natural influences from the temperature record that are clearly displayed in the raw data. Satellite data from the University of Alabama in Huntsville's (UAH) [Version 6.1 global lower troposphere dataset](#) shows a long-term warming trend of +0.16°C per decade since January 1979. That trend has remained stable for years. There is no visible post-2015 inflection point in the long-term slope. The unusually warm values in 2024 stand out in the UAH time series, but those occurred in the wake of the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption, which injected an unprecedented amount of water vapor into the stratosphere. That injection temporarily enhanced the greenhouse effect. It was a short-term perturbation, not an acceleration in the underlying greenhouse-driven trend.



March 11th: No, Climate Change Is Not Making Hailstorms or Tornadoes Worse in Illinois

Chicago Tribune

Claim: The *Chicago Tribune* recently ran [a story](#) claiming that climate change is making severe thunderstorms in Illinois “more severe,” particularly with regard to hail and tornadoes. The author of the article asserts that as warming continues to raise average global temperatures, “hailstones larger than ping-pong or golf balls will become more frequent.”

Fact-Check: This is false. There is no evidence suggesting that hailstones are becoming larger or that tornadoes are becoming more powerful, much less that either have become more common. [National Weather Service \(NWS\) data](#) for Illinois display no trend towards more hail over the last 30 years. Similarly, there has been no increase in strong-to-violent [E]F2+ tornadoes over that same time interval.

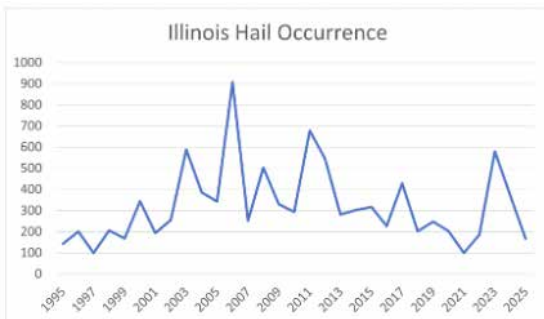


Figure 1: Illinois hail reports, from 1995 to 2025, data from NWS Storm Prediction Center.

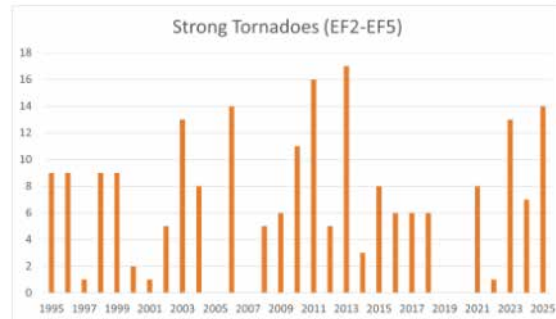


Figure 3: Strong (EF2+) tornadoes in Illinois from 1995-2025.

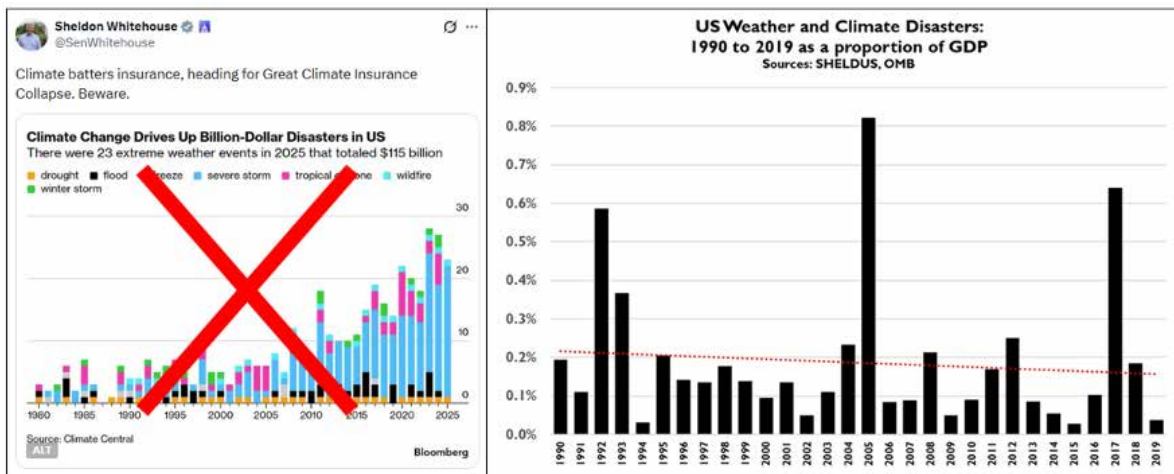
March 13th: No, Climate Change Is Not Making Disasters Costlier



Claim: U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island recently [posted a bar chart](#) of NOAA's annual "Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disaster" count on X to argue that climate

change is increasing both the number and intensity of weather-related natural disasters, which in turn is increasing their economic cost. He argues that this is the reason behind increased insurance premiums, writing, "Climate batters insurance, heading for Great Climate Insurance Collapse. Beware."

Fact-Check: This is false. NOAA's "Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disaster" data says nothing about climate change. Even though NOAA's data is adjusted for inflation, their methodology fails to consider changes in exposure over time. The more we build up infrastructure in high-risk, disaster-prone areas, the more vulnerable society becomes to natural hazards like flooding, tornadoes, wildfires, hailstorms, and tropical cyclone-induced damage from high winds or storm surge. Even in a static, non-changing climate, it doesn't take nearly as much to get a "billion-dollar disaster" today as it did even just two decades ago. When disaster losses are [adjusted as a percentage of GDP](#), the trend becomes slightly negative. Thus, NOAA's billion-dollar disaster data cannot be used as evidence to suggest that extreme weather events have increased in frequency and/or intensity. In fact, long-term weather data shows no such increase.



March 16th: Antarctic Glacier is NOT on Track for 'Imminent Collapse'



Claim: The [Daily Mail claims](#) that large Thwaites Glacier on the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, is on track for catastrophic collapse within a matter of decades because “ice is melting faster than expected.” They base this claim on [a study](#) published by scientists from the University of Edinburgh, which predicts that the glacier could begin to shed 200 gigatonnes of ice per year by 2067, contributing to 0.55 millimeters of sea level rise (SLR) per year.

Fact-Check: The Thwaites glacier is estimated to contain roughly 600,000 gigatonnes (Gt), as such, even 200 Gt loss represents a tiny fraction of the total mass—just 0.033%—and does not equate to the imminent collapse. Antarctic ice trends are complex and vary regionally, with much of the continent experiencing net ice gain. The Thwaites glacier also sits in a region where ocean circulation patterns play a dominant role in basal melt rates. The delivery of warmer Circumpolar Deep Water (CDW) onto the continental shelf is influenced by complex wind patterns, bathymetry, and ocean dynamics. The article’s framing suggests a dramatic mid-century tipping point is imminent, but honest science does not support this claim.

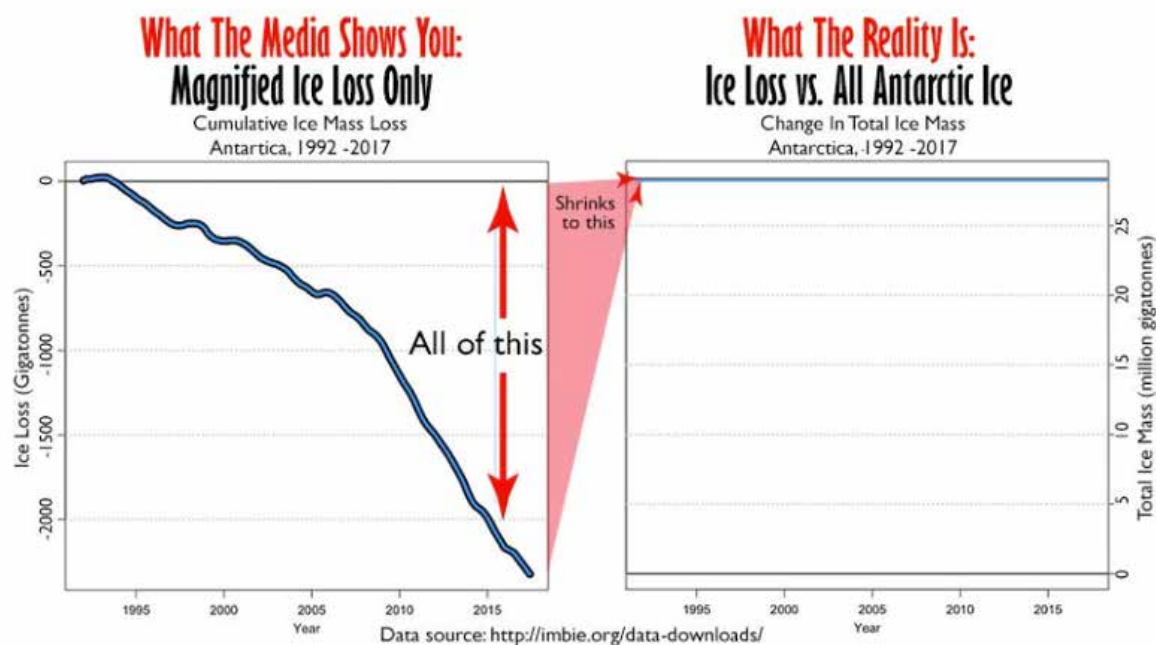


Figure 1: (click to enlarge) Comparison of satellite data for Antarctic ice mass loss. Cumulative ice mass loss on the left and that same data compared to the total mass of ice on the right. Data source: <http://imbie.org>. Graphs originally by Willis Eshenbach, adapted and annotated by Anthony Watts.

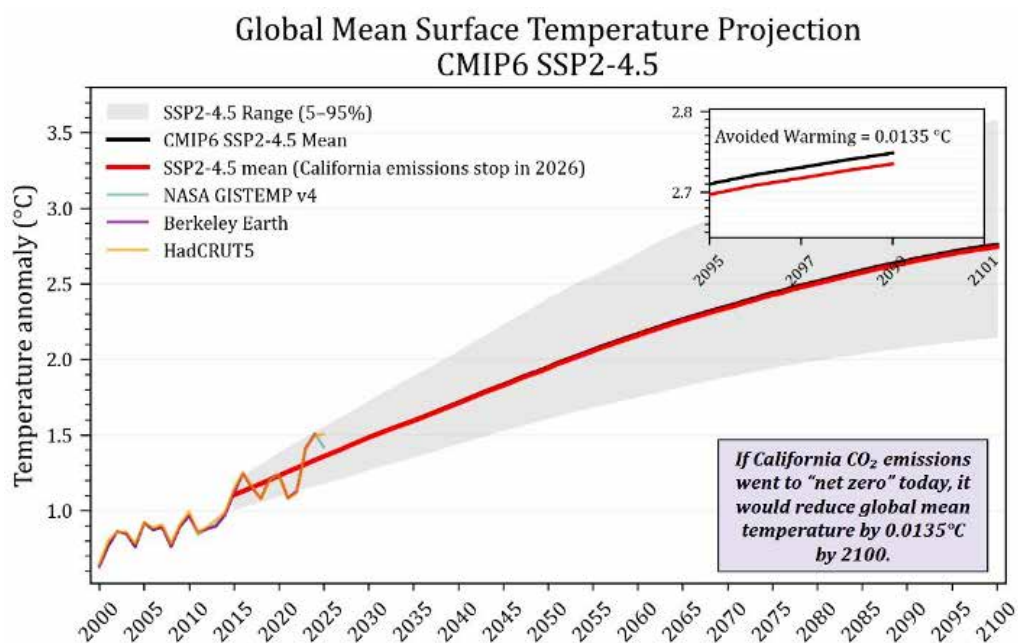
March 19th: California's Climate Goals Will Make Little Difference



Claim: On March 19, Governor Gavin Newsom [posted on X](#) that California is achieving their climate goals “ahead of schedule.” Specifically, he noted that

two-thirds of the state’s electrical grid is powered by “clean” energy; that over 2.5 million electric vehicles are on the road with 201,000 public chargers; and that there is currently 17,000 megawatts of battery backup storage, second only to China.

Fact-Check: While these figures are correct, these decarbonization efforts and “climate goals” have had no measurable impact on climate change. Newsom stated [last November at COP30](#) that wildfires and drought in California are getting worse (both false claims), and global average surface temperatures continue to rise. The icing on the cake, however, is that assuming climate models have the correct physics, if California disappeared off the map today, it would only reduce the projected global mean temperature by [one hundredth of a degree Celsius](#) by 2100.



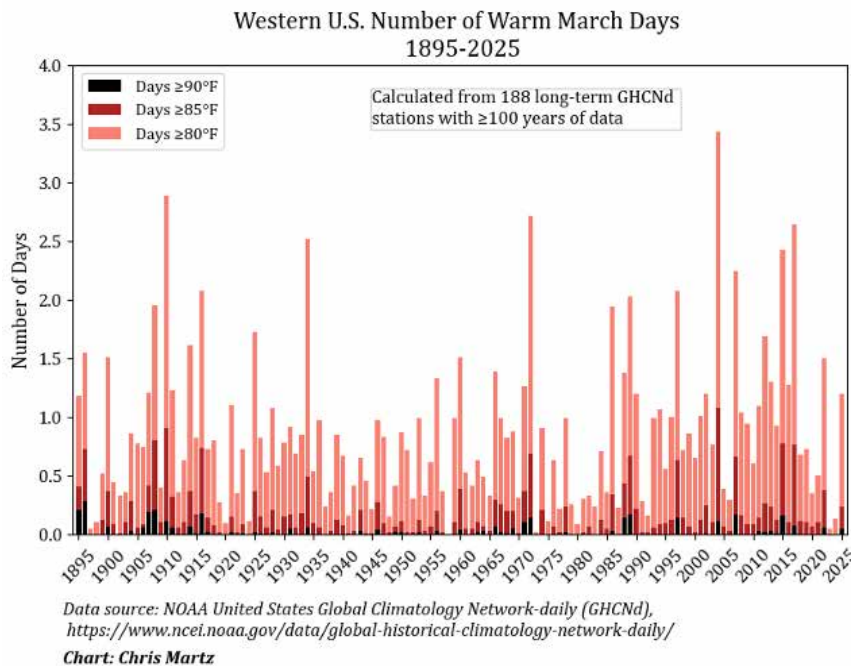
Model data: CMIP6 SSP2-4.5, https://data.ceda.ac.uk/badc/ar6_wg1/data/spm/spm_08/v20210809/panel_a

Chart: Chris Martz

March 20th: No, Associated Press, the Southwest March Heatwave Was Not 'Virtually Impossible' Without Climate Change

AP **Claim:** An Associated Press (AP) [story](#) claimed that the recent heatwave in the southwestern United States is the latest proof that climate change is driving "ultra extremes." The AP's report relies heavily on a single non-peer-reviewed [attribution study](#) from the World Weather Attribution (WWA), which asserts that the event was "virtually impossible without human-induced climate change."

Fact-Check: This is misleading, at best. Both the AP story and the "study" cited in it rely on speculative modeling and reanalysis data as opposed to direct observations. Long-term [NOAA station data](#) reveal that there has been no statistically significant change in the frequency of unusually warm March afternoons in the western U.S. since 1895. Even if this March ends up at a record high, it doesn't buck the trend. Second, [NOAA's NCEI fort data](#) indicate that a similar heatwave likely occurred in March 1879. Both San Diego's and Los Angeles' all-time March record high temperature of 99°F was set on March 27, 1879. Fort McDowell (Phoenix), Arizona, hit 100°F on March 2, 1879 (a would-be record earliest 100° day if it were included in "official" modern records), then 112°F on March 30th in the midst of a seven-day stretch of 100° days.



Fort McDowell, Arizona: March 1879

DATE	TMAX
1879-03-01	92
1879-03-02	100
1879-03-03	94
1879-03-04	95
1879-03-05	93
1879-03-06	98
1879-03-07	97
1879-03-08	82
1879-03-09	79
1879-03-10	84
1879-03-11	91
1879-03-12	95
1879-03-13	99
1879-03-14	97
1879-03-15	99
1879-03-16	98
1879-03-17	98
1879-03-18	98
1879-03-19	89
1879-03-20	84
1879-03-21	82
1879-03-22	91
1879-03-23	93
1879-03-24	96
1879-03-25	103
1879-03-26	106
1879-03-27	105
1879-03-28	96
1879-03-29	106
1879-03-30	112
1879-03-31	105

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