

Were Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma Caused By Climate Change?

[Hurricanes](#) are tropical storms that can cause extensive destruction and loss of life. The devastation of [recent storms](#), especially Hurricane Harvey, has predictably renewed the global focus on climate change.

[Multiple media](#) outlets have attempted to [tie](#) recent hurricanes to climate change and—to a lesser extent—the role of human activity in climate change. Climate activists often point to severe weather events as proof of their climate doomsday's alarmism. However, actual [climate science](#) does not support these exaggerated claims.

Harvey Is What Climate Change Looks Like
<https://t.co/vno8tMCMDB> via [@politicomag](#)

– Josh Fox (@joshfoxfilm) [September 3, 2017](#)

First and foremost, it is wise to note the difference between [weather and climate](#). Weather is temporary and varies by hour, day, month and season. Climate is better defined as weather conditions and trends over extended periods of time.

A hurricane is a weather event – not a long-term change in climate. It is intellectually dishonest for someone to claim a particular weather event is proof of a long-term change in climate trends. Instead, true students of science must identify changes over time. In doing so, a careful student will see that the latest climate fearmongering is largely unsupported by actual climate science.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) specifically [warns](#):

“It is premature to conclude that human activities—and particularly greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming—have already had a detectable impact on Atlantic hurricane or global tropical cyclone activity.”

Unfortunately, this warning has been largely ignored by journalists and social media activists.

Global warming has intensified the effects of Hurricane Harvey, experts say. <https://t.co/YRxqLnQxwh> [#HurricaneHarvey](#) [#climatechange](#)

– Visitor Guard (@visitorguard) [September 4, 2017](#)

NOAA says the greatest challenge in linking hurricanes to man-made climate change is a lack of data. Technological limitations in early reporting caused many hurricanes to go unrecorded. In order to account for this, weather models must estimate the number of unrecorded hurricanes.

When controlling for unrecorded Hurricanes, researchers found there has been [no statistically significant increase](#) in Atlantic hurricane activity between 1878 and 2006.

Secondly, there are many variables that affect the development of tropical storms including hurricanes. Warmer oceans temps are partly offset by higher atmospheric temperatures that increase vertical windshear; and [vertical wind shear](#) is detrimental to the development of hurricanes. This most certainly does not mean climate change is un-concerning in regards to the future impact of these storms.

There is weak evidence to support the claim that human

activity has made recent hurricanes more powerful and deadly. Climate scientists warn of the real possibility that climate change may increase the intensity of hurricanes, and some even project increases in such activity. However, it is important to note these warnings are centered on projected changes—not real-world storm observations.

Recent hurricanes are simply not the smoking gun climate alarmists want them to be. It is difficult to isolate the effects of climate change on hurricanes. The current state of climate science makes it near impossible to prove a relationship between a specific storm and human contributions to climate change.

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[Image Credit: [Youtube](#) | WJW Fox8News]