Yesterday the Wall Street Journal published an editorial by frequent IPCC critic and Canadian photographer Donna Laframboise on the upcoming IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). Laframboise criticized the 2007 Fourth Assessment report as well as the upcoming report, suggesting that people with “activist” connections have dominated the review process. To back up this sweeping claim, she names just five scientists with “green group” ties. She fails to mention the sheer number of scientists (hundreds) and other groups involved in the IPCC process, many of which are connected to industry. She calls for openness and balance; but that balance is much more present in the IPCC than in her account. She doesn’t focus on the science of the IPCC, instead sinking to the lowest common denominator of overused attacks.

In fact this Nobel Prize winning group has confirmed the state of the science on climate, showing that humans have caused the climate to change and warning us of what is possible in the future. It represents an exhaustive consensus process, as shown by a few key facts:

- While recruiting the leading experts in their fields, the IPCC also seeks to incorporate the greatest possible diversity of voices, including fossil-fuel industry groups, geographically diverse groups, and scientists from many different backgrounds including industry.
- IPCC assessments rely on a massive number of the world’s scientists, with the AR5 being the biggest and strongest yet. The process includes 209 lead authors, 50 reviewers, and 600 contributing authors, of which Laframboise criticized only 0.58 percent.
- The most strident criticisms of the IPCC process come from “experts” like Laframboise, who have been saying the same things over and over again.

The IPCC seeks input from as broad a range of scientists as possible, including those with industry ties. Notable climate skeptics like Roger Pielke Jr. and Richard Lindzen have contributed to past reports, and Richard Tol and Hans von Storch, two prominent skeptics, participated in the current review. In addition, the IPCC has included experts from some of the largest companies in the fossil fuel industry, like ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP.

Among those scientists that have worked with environmental NGOs, the connections are tenuous. Many have contributed in a capacity strictly limited to reviewing science reports on a volunteer basis, a role completely consistent with their status as climate experts. Furthermore, many of these same scientists have worked with industry on other occasions.

The IPCC is a massive global undertaking, and the AR5 is the biggest, strongest, and most comprehensive IPCC report yet. It analyzes all of the climate science available in peer-reviewed literature. In just the first portion of the AR5
(WG1), there were 209 lead authors and 50 review editors from 39 countries, and over 600 contributing authors. They reviewed over 2 million gigabytes of data from climate model simulations, and cited more than 9,200 scientific publications. Out of all those scientists and all of that data, Laframboise called out 5 scientists for their NGO ties- that’s half of one percent of all the scientists involved.

**Critics with an axe to grind or a book to sell have attempted to dig up dirt on IPCC contributors before, but the group remains internationally respected.** Following the 2007 report, the IPCC requested and underwent a formal review to improve its process further, and reforms to governance, process and communications have been implemented in response. Repeated and unfounded attempts to taint its credibility it should be seen as what they are: a distraction from the real issue- the science.