

ATI Release: Michael Mann, Science Colleagues Make Case for Release of Emails

ATI

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On September 2, lawyers for Dr. Michael Mann filed [requests](#) to allow them to intervene in American Tradition Institute's Freedom of Information Act [lawsuit](#) against University of Virginia, citing Dr. Mann's alleged personal interest in the disclosure of the records that he created or received as part of his employment there. Among the legal filings are a letter from Dr. Mann to UVA, as well as letters from four of his scientist colleagues to UVA president Teresa Sullivan, which [urge the university not to provide the records](#) sought by ATI.

Despite talking points designed to distract, ATI seeks no "personal" records or records that discuss private information such as students' statuses, grades, etc.

Nevertheless, Dr. Mann and his fellow scientists — as part of his lawyers' filing with the court — attempt to make the case that their research discussions should be withheld from the taxpaying public who funded them because their correspondence is "personal." But in their letters to UVA, the scientists make statements that inarguably illustrate how the nature of their messages are of public interest.

The four scientists who wrote to Dr. Sullivan are: Rosanne D'Arrigo, senior research scientist at The Earth Institute at Columbia University; Dr. Benjamin Santer, climate scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; Kevin Trenberth, climate scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research; and Raymond Bradley, director of the Climate System Research Center at the University of Massachusetts.

Following are comments made by each scientist to Dr. Sullivan which highlight the public nature of their scientific work, implicated in discussions with then-Professor Mann:

D'Arrigo: "My research over the past three decades includes the use of tree-ring reconstructions for the past millenium to infer past temperature trends and the magnitude of recent anthropogenic impacts on climate."

Santer: "Professor Mann's only 'transgression' is that he has performed cutting-edge research in the public and national interest. His research has given scientists and policymakers an invaluable long-term context for the late 20th-century changes in Earth's surface temperature."

Trenberth: "The moral is that even innocent emails can be taken out of context and distorted. This has also happened with Dr. Mann in an even more pronounced way—not because he did anything wrong but simply because he did high profile and important research, that has implications for political actions."

Bradley: "This is part of a larger campaign to confuse the public about the important issues of climate change, and intimidate climate scientists who have been at the cutting edge of this research."

Finally, Dr. Mann's own letter to UVA shows why his work and correspondence while employed there are of national public interest, writing, "Allowing the indiscriminate release of these materials will cause damage to reputations and harm principles of academic freedom." But Dr. Mann is not challenging "indiscriminate release" of the records, but release under seal of [a Protective Order](#) — one agreed to by University of Virginia more than three months ago, to no legal response by Mann until the records were due for production.

Considering how Dr. Mann's colleagues clearly identify how their collaborative work fed into "cutting edge research in the public and national interest," which "has implications for political actions," it is vitally important that the public see and understand how the scientists collectively arrived at their conclusions — and as Dr. Mann curiously hints, why the revelation of those public records would "damage" their reputations.

"How far out on — or perhaps off — the 'edge' was Dr. Mann's research?" wondered ATI executive director Paul Chesser. "That's what we want to find out."

For more information and perspective, read ATI executive director Paul Chesser's [column](#) in today's American Spectator.

See case documents, press releases, media coverage, commentary, broadcast interviews, etc. pertaining to ATI v. University of Virginia by clicking [here](#).

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