

American Tradition Institute, Va. Taxpayers Request Records from University of Virginia on Climate Scientist Michael Mann

ATI

Today three Virginia taxpayers including one state lawmaker, in conjunction with the American Tradition Institute Environmental Law Center, are asking the University of Virginia to produce important 'global warming' records under the Commonwealth's Freedom of Information Act.  

These emails and other documents relate to claims made by Dr. Michael Mann to obtain, and claim payment under, certain taxpayer-funded grants. Mann, currently at Pennsylvania State University, worked at the UVA's Department of Environmental Sciences when he produced what was hailed at the time as the 'smoking gun' affirming the theory of catastrophic man-made global warming. Despite that lofty honorific, persistent controversy led promoters of this notorious 'Hockey Stick' graph (principally, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change or 'IPCC') to stop advancing it as serious work. 

In response to a previous FOIA request, UVA had denied these records existed. But during the course of Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli's pre-investigation under the Virginia Fraud Against Taxpayers Act ("FATA"), a 2007 law passed unanimously by Virginia's legislature that clearly covers the work of taxpayer-funded academics, UVA dropped this stance. Court records reveal that counsel for the University has indicated instead that the Mann-related records do in fact exist, on a backup server. To avoid University delay or claims for huge search fees, today's request specifically directs the school to search that server.

While the school has spent upwards of half a million dollars to date fighting Cuccinelli's pursuit, now before the Virginia Supreme Court, under FOIA it has one week to produce the documents, with no exemption for UVA's arguments used to block Cuccinelli. These records address one of the highest-profile claims used to advance massive economic interventions policies in the name of 'global warming.'

The Environmental Law Center hopes for prompt University compliance with FOIA, although we are prepared to fully protect our appellate rights. We can then, finally, determine what it is that so many have gone to such great lengths to keep the public from knowing about that which the public has paid for.

See ATI's Virginia Freedom of Information Act request for Michael Mann's records at University of Virginia ([PDF](#))

See ATI's Virginia Freedom of Information Act request for donor records of University of Virginia for response to Attorney General Kenneth Cuccinelli's investigation ([PDF](#))

For an interview with Christopher Horner, senior director of litigation for the American Tradition Institute Environmental Law Center, contact him at chris.horner@atinstitute.org.