China quadrupled its coal power capacity in 2022 and has six times as many coal plants being constructed as the rest of the world combined, Derek H. Burney writes.

Damaging weather events inevitably lead to climate evangelists making apocalyptic claims of imminent disaster. UN Secretary-general António Guterres led the most recent chorus, talking about “global boiling” and raising alarmism to a fever pitch. Yet, last month, more than 1,600 scientists, including two Nobel physics laureates, signed a declaration stating “There is no climate emergency.” That poses a serious political problem for any government that has been arguing to the contrary.

When fires devastated the picturesque Hawaiian town of Lahaina in August, killing 97 people, the governor immediately blamed climate change. During his subsequent visit, U.S. President Joe Biden endorsed that judgment. On closer inspection, the evidence suggested a staggering degree of administrative incompetence, notably flawed public utility facilities that literally sparked the fires and constrained the supply of water needed to staunch the flames.

In contrast, Florida managed to cope competently and efficiently with the deadly force of Hurricane Idalia later that same month, with minimal deaths and few outrageous allegations about climate change.

According to a recent Lancet study, 20,000 people die in the United States and Canada from heat each year whereas 170,000 die from cold. Globally the study found 4.5 million annual cold deaths — nine times more than from global heat.

Data used to “prove” links to global warming are often cherry-picked, and proposed policy responses are arbitrary. As John Murawski noted in a recent article for Realclear-investigations, dissenters contend that “the public and government officials are getting a onesided apocalyptic account that stokes fear, politicizes science, misuses climate modelling and shuts down debate.”

Taxpayer subsidies are lavished on purchases of electric vehicles even though there is not adequate infrastructure to support their use. Customers are hedging their bets. S&P Global Mobility predicts hybrid cars will more than triple in U.S. sales over the next five years and account for up to a quarter of new cars sold by 2028.

Lofty goals set at successive Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings cannot be met without substantial action by major emitters such as China and India. Global pledges to achieve “net zero” emissions at a cost exceeding $5.6 trillion annually are pronounced with scant cost analyses of perceived benefits — a triumph of symbolism over substance.
Canada’s implementation of an escalating carbon tax generated untold cost-of-living increases for average Canadians, yet emissions grew by 2.1 per cent in 2022. Lacking are realistic analyses that should underpin decision-making. There is more confusion than clarity about Ottawa’s policies for carbon pricing, and uncertainty stifles needed investments.

Two soulmates among the global-warming activists — John Kerry of the U.S. and Canada’s Steven Guilbeault — recently paid separate visits to Beijing seeking a more constructive response from the world’s largest emitter. Both failed. A dejected Kerry pronounced that “the U.S. is not sitting around waiting for a breakthrough” with China on climate change.

While the U.S. has reduced emissions by 15 per cent over the past two decades, largely through the more efficient use of natural gas, such as for synthetic fertilizers, China’s emissions have accelerated by 216 per cent. China quadrupled coal power in 2022 and has six times as many coal plants being constructed as the rest of the world combined.

Guilbeault had an even dodgier experience. Announcing portentously that his visit was “to drive ambition and progress on a number of environmental issues,” he used his trip to disparage Canadian energy executives for not endorsing his fanciful cap on oil and gas emissions — an arbitrary 42 per cent reduction by 2030 — action that would target the oil and gas sector exclusively and cause a $45–billion drop in economic activity in 2030 alone. What will replace that economic void?

Hypocritically, coal is a major Canadian export to China. Instead, we should be exporting our much less pollutive natural gas.

By shutting down all emissions from oil and gas, Canada would reduce the global amount by .004 per cent, with virtually no effect on the climate nor any discernible health, safety or environmental benefits.

At a Republican primary presidential debate in August, candidate Vivek Ramaswamy brashly described the climate agenda as a “hoax.” While received warmly at the debate, Ramaswamy was pilloried by climate activists.

Ramaswamy is not alone questioning the climate debate. Princeton’s William Happer and MIT’S Richard Lindzen have expressed skepticism about the Environmental Protection Agency’s new rule to cut carbon emissions, saying they “will be disastrous for the country, for no scientifically justified reason,” adding: “The EPA has been constantly wrong for decades in predicting actual outcomes and grossly overstating the harm from CO2 emissions while ignoring the benefits of CO2 to life on Earth.” Many people have been “brainwashed into thinking that climate change is an existential threat to the planet.”

The problem is the debate has been hijacked by a political narrative that brooks neither dissent nor balance and yet many industry leaders and bankers supinely “go along to get along” rather than challenge what they undoubtedly know defies common sense.

Most North America energy consumption comes from fossil fuels and that will continue for several decades. Global demand for crude oil is set to hit a record high in 2023, with China accounting for more than 70 per cent of the growth. Despite tens of billions of dollars in government spending, wind and solar combined account for only five per cent of U.S. energy consumption. Renewables are simply insufficient and lack the necessary dependability to meet energy needs.
China benefits most from the global push to renewables: 68 per cent of worldwide jobs in solar energy manufacturing are in China, as are 48 per cent of jobs related to wind power. That is why Kerry and Guilbeault received polite but meaningless hearings in Beijing. The Chinese cannot believe the incredible naivety of their western competitors.

If a Republican wins the White House next year, America’s energy and climate policies should change drastically.

Instead of a dogmatic, one-dimensional approach with unattainable goals that undermine economic growth, Canada needs a more balanced position with achievable goals using multiple forms of energy and technologies to sustain growth, while also responsibly controlling emissions.