

Politicized Science: the Case of Dr. James Enstrom v. Powerful Environmental Activists

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Dr. James Enstrom, a respected epidemiologist and research professor at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Fielding School of Public Health, has a stellar international reputation. He has made major contributions to our understanding of the health effects of ambient air pollution and its implications for environmental regulation.

He has been a UCLA faculty member since 1976, a Fellow of the American College of Epidemiology since 1981, and president of the Scientific Integrity Institute since 2005. His research addresses human health risk assessment. Specifically, it disproves the studies used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to justify their economically disastrous small-particle air pollution regulations.

In 2003 (with Dr. Geoffrey Kabat), Dr. Enstrom published the world's first major, long-term study of the effects of second-hand smoke (SHS).¹ It appeared in the *British Medical Journal*. The study found that SHS does not cause heart disease, lung cancer, or premature death—a politically incorrect finding.

In 2005, in *Inhalation Toxicology*, Enstrom published a detailed analysis of the relationship between fine-particulate air pollution and mortality during 1973-2002 in the California Cancer Prevention Study (CA CPS I) cohort.² It was the most comprehensive peer-reviewed study ever undertaken of Californians exposed to fine-particulate (PM2.5) diesel matter. The study found no increased mortality from exposure to small-particle air pollution that includes diesel engine fuel emissions—another politically incorrect finding.

Ideologically Motivated Air Pollution Regulation

The EPA, through its National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), regulates ambient levels of PM2.5 fine-particulate air pollution, which originates from diesel engines, forest fires, other sources of combustion, and dust. The standards were established in 1997 and were revised in 2006. They relied primarily on the American Cancer Society's 1982 Cancer Prevention Study that examined PM2.5-related deaths during the 1980s and 1990s.³ It found a very small positive association between PM2.5 and total mortality. This association does not prove causation because population studies can only suggest causation.

CARB, part of the California EPA, has been regulating air pollution for 4 decades in California. In 2008, the agency approved expensive new rules to reduce the diesel particulate matter portion of fine-particle air pollution (PM2.5).⁴ Cost of the rules has been estimated at more than \$10 billion.⁵ The Agency cited a 2008 CARB-sponsored report that claimed that 18,000 "premature deaths" per year in California were caused by breathing PM2.5, with 3,500 of these due to diesel particulate matter.⁶

But both the studies used by CARB and the integrity of its procedures are suspect. During the period CARB has been issuing these regulations, CARB research staff and CARB-funded scientists have withheld key findings that conflicted with their preconceived conclusions about PM2.5 health effects.⁵ In particular, CARB repeatedly has ignored Dr. Enstrom's excellent 2005 *Inhalation Toxicology* study, which contradicted the findings relied on by CARB. In addition, the lead author of the 2008 CARB report was exposed as having obtained a fraudulent Ph.D. degree.⁷ In addition, several activist members of CARB's Scientific Review Panel on Toxic Air Contaminants had exceeded the legislatively mandated three-year term limits by decades. As a result, in 2010, five of the nine members of CARB's Scientific Review Panel were replaced, and CARB was forced to modify its 2008 diesel regulations.⁸

A voluminous record exists of detailed objections to CARB's claims by reputable scientists. The EPA's massive 2002 report on diesel engine exhaust did not conclude that diesel exhaust causes premature deaths.⁹ Nearly 150 pages of detailed critical comments were submitted to CARB in July 2008.⁵ And several detailed critical comments were presented by prominent scientists at CARB's Feb 26, 2010 Symposium on PM2.5 and Deaths.¹⁰ The latest example is a negative October 2011 CARB-funded report that cost taxpayers \$750,000.¹¹ Headed by University of California at Berkeley professor Dr. Michael Jerrett, the study found that PM2.5 was not related to total mortality during 1982-2000 of around 75,000 California adults.

Retaliation for Disagreement with Environmental Ideology

According to an article posted by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) in June 2012, Dr. Enstrom's research findings and revelations about CARB have conflicted with the ideology of powerful environmental activists at UCLA's School of Public Health, and at CARB.¹² Especially pertinent is that UCLA's Southern California Particle Center has received tens of millions of dollars in research grants over the years to study the diesel pollution issue. Six senior members of Dr. Enstrom's department have been involved in this research.¹³

In February 2010, without warning, Dr. Enstrom was informed by the UCLA Department of Environmental Health Sciences that he would not be re-appointed as research professor. In June 2010 his faculty colleagues voted in secret not to rehire him, allegedly because his "research is not aligned with the academic mission of the Department."¹² He was told that he would be "indefinitely laid off" effective Jun 30, 2010. Shortly thereafter, in August 2010, UCLA issued a notice of termination, denied him any further compensation for his work, and

confiscated his research fund accounts.¹⁴ He was forced to work the following year without pay, and has had to spend the past two years defending himself. In addition, he has not been allowed to present his findings on air pollution and misconduct of the CARB and its sponsored researchers on air pollution human health effects to his peers at UCLA.¹³

Since August 2010, FIRE has assisted him in his efforts to retain his position.¹² FIRE works to defend and sustain individual rights at America's colleges and universities, specifically: freedom of speech and expression, religious liberty and freedom of association, freedom of conscience, and due process and legal equality on campus.

Then in June of this year Dr. Enstrom's final termination was announced. As a result, on Jun 13, with the help of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), Dr. Enstrom filed suit in federal court against the University of California Regents and several top UCLA officials for violating his civil rights, contending that his right to free speech on matters of public concern, and his due process rights, had been violated.¹³

As David French, senior counsel of the ACLJ, noted, "UCLA terminated a professor after 35 years of service simply because he exposed the truth about an activist scientific agenda that was not only based in fraud but violated California law, for the sake of imposing expensive new environmental regulations on California businesses. UCLA's actions were so extreme that its own Academic Freedom Committee unanimously expressed its concern about the case."¹³

It can reasonably be concluded that there are no significant adverse health effects from existing air pollution levels in California.¹⁵ CARB's expensive but ineffective emissions control regulations, which adversely impact California's already depressed economy, are not scientifically or economically defensible and will have no beneficial effects on health or mortality in California.¹⁶

Dr. Enstrom, as an internationally recognized epidemiologist, can be considered a national treasure. He blew the whistle on the scientific misconduct of powerful University of California professors and other CARB-supported scientists, and exposed the political misconduct of CARB bureaucrats. His moral integrity and determination in the face of great personal risk and suffering serve as a stellar example for others who face similar intimidation because of their politically incorrect views at colleges and universities all over the country.

This problem is not uncommon. Many careers have been destroyed when faculty members challenge established orthodoxy, while many other faculty members have been intimidated from speaking freely. For example, in May of this year Ohio State University chemistry professor Nicholas Drapela was unexpectedly fired.¹⁷ A critic of man-made global warming, he had worked for the University for 10 years. And during just the two months prior to Dr. Enstrom's firing, two other lawsuits were filed against the University of California by other UCLA faculty members, Dr. Christian Head and Dr. Robert Pedowitz, who claim retaliation, discrimination, and defamation.¹⁸

Dr. Enstrom has carefully documented his problems and posted all relevant documents at: www.scientificintegrityinstitute.com. We all should strongly support him in his

heroic battle against unethical ideological scientific and political misconduct.

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