

Penn State climate scientist files defamation suit

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Penn State University scientist Michael Mann, whose work showed that Earth's temperatures have risen along with increased fossil fuel use, announced Tuesday he had filed a lawsuit against the conservative National Review and the Competitive Enterprise Institute for defamation, complaining that they falsely accused him of academic fraud and compared him to convicted child molester Jerry Sandusky.

Organizations denying that [climate change](#) is a serious problem have condemned Mann for years.

Mann was one of the scientists whose emails were hacked from a climate research center at Britain's University of East Anglia in 2009. Climate skeptics quoted portions of the emails in an attempt to discredit the scientists in what the critics dubbed "Climategate." But government and university investigations found no misconduct.

The lawsuit, filed Monday in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, argued that the two conservative outlets and two writers named in the suit, Rand Simberg and Mark Steyn, "maliciously accused (Mann) of academic fraud, the most fundamental defamation that can be levied against a scientist and a professor."

Simberg, in a Competitive Enterprise Institute blog post in July, wrote that "Mann could be said to be the Jerry Sandusky of [climate science](#), except for instead of molesting children, he molested and tortured data."

Competitive Enterprise Institute general counsel Sam Kazman said the institute withdrew the offending sentence within days when Mann's attorney complained. He said it was "an episode of rhetorical hyperbole." The institute didn't apologize, Kazman said.

"I do not believe he did anything wrong," he said of Simberg, an adjunct at the institute. Simberg said in an email his attorney advised him not to comment, "but I do stand by what I wrote."

In a blog post in National Review Online, Steyn quoted the Competitive Enterprise Institute blog's Sandusky comment in full.

"Not sure I'd have extended that metaphor all the way into the locker-room showers with quite the zeal Mr Simberg does, but he has a point. Michael Mann was the man behind the fraudulent climate-change 'hockey-stick' graph," Steyn wrote, referring to Mann's graph showing steady temperatures over centuries and a sudden rise in the 20th century. " ... And when the East Anglia emails came out, Penn State felt obliged to 'investigate' Professor Mann. ... And, as with Sandusky and (football Coach Joe) Paterno, the college declined to find one of its star names guilty of any wrongdoing."

David Rivkin, an attorney for National Review, said, "The lawsuit is utterly lacking in merit and we are comfortable predicting that we'll prevail."

Mann is the director of the Earth System Science Center at Penn State and shared with other climate scientists in the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

"There is a larger context for this latest development, namely the onslaught of dishonest and libelous attacks that climate scientists have endured for years by dishonest front groups seeking to discredit the case for concern over climate change," Mann said in an email. "It's why I

wrote my book 'The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars' about my experiences as a public figure in the climate change debate, and it's why I filed this suit."

His book, published this year, was about being at the center of attacks on [climate](#) science.

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