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Weather Modification Funding

Cotton and Pielke (1995) noted that the funding in weather modification research in the United States peaked in the early 1970's at about \$19 million per year. By the 1990's that funding level had decreased to less than \$5 million a year, with a major part of that funding being a Department of Commerce state/federal cooperative program which we labeled a ``pork barrel" program. We discussed a number of factors that could have contributed to such a collapse in weather modification funding which I shall not repeat here. Suffice it to say that there are a number of lessons to be learned from what happened, especially in the global climate program.

In 1997, the Department of Commerce State/Federal program is zero budgeted and the identifiable research funding in the U.S. is about \$0.5 million. Likewise, the government of Israel decided to terminate funding of weather modification research after 36 years of continuous funding. So funding in weather modification research has continued to slide.

Note that this does not mean that weather modification activities have stopped. Operational weather modification programs exist in something like 22 countries worldwide and in the United States alone there may be as many as 40 operational seeding projects going on in any one year. What has happened, is that we have entered the ``dark ages" of weather modification where operational cloud seeding projects are if anything proliferating without a sound scientific research program supporting them.

