

# CLIMATE FACT CHECK: JULY 2025 EDITION

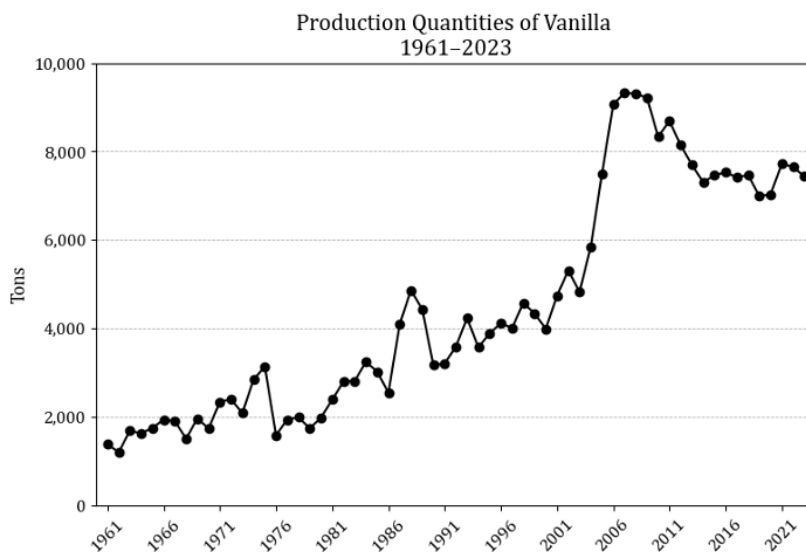
Debunking the Vanilla ice cream climate apocalypse - Countering claims of climate 'supercharging' wildfires - Texas floods are the 'new normal'?! - Reality check on claims 'fossil fuels are sabotaging' the economy

## July 4th: Vanilla ice cream is at stake because of climate change

**Claim:** [A new study](#) published in the journal *Frontiers for Plant Science*, prompted a [flurry of headlines](#) suggesting that the classic, cherished vanilla ice cream flavor could disappear by 2050 due to climate-related stresses on the habitats of wild vanilla species and their pollinators. Specifically, a 60-90% reduction in vanilla production is expected.



**Fact-Check:** While the paper models future vanilla production under the UN IPCC's mid-range emissions scenarios SSP2-4.5 and SSP3-7.0, real-world data from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reveal that production has been at [all-time record highs](#) in the last 20 years, despite global warming. Regardless, more than [99% of vanilla flavoring](#) today is from synthetic vanillin, derived from guaiacol, a petroleum product that is chemically identical to the natural vanillin molecule. So, even if wild vanilla species went extinct, the same flavor can be extracted artificially.



Data source: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),  
<https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QCL/visualize>

Chart: Chris Martz

## July 7th: Climate change is “supercharging” wildfires

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**Claim:** An [article](#) in *Grist magazine* opines that climate change is fueling increased fire risk around the globe. The author writes, “In a hotter, drier world, wildfires have become more frequent and destructive.”

**Grist**

**Fact-Check:** Satellites have improved scientists’ ability to map fires and evaluate trends in their count and burn area in recent decades. The [Global Fire Emissions Database](#) (GFED) uses NASA satellites to monitor carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from fires, which is calibrated to the area of vegetation burned. Since 2003, the [data show](#) the amount of land incinerated by fires has decreased significantly, and this is backed by [peer-reviewed research](#) from University of Melbourne scientists and by satellite measurements recorded by the [European Space Agency](#).

## July 8th: The floods in Texas were made worse by the climate crisis

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**Claim:** Following the catastrophic flooding that took the lives of 134 people in Texas over the July 4th weekend, *NPR* [claimed](#) that “Climate change is driving more extreme rain storms... which drop more water in shorter periods of time and make dangerous floods more likely.”



**Fact-Check:** While heavy rainfall has increased in Texas [since 1895](#), most of that increase occurred before 1960, when greenhouse gas forcing was minimal. Since 1960, the trend is statistically insignificant, meaning any increase due to random chance cannot be ruled out. The UN IPCC [clarifies](#) that “[H]eavier rainfall does not always lead to greater flooding” because flooding is contingent on additional factors like rainfall duration, the type of river basin and landscape. There has also been [no increase in river flooding](#) throughout the Texas Hill Country since 1965.

## July 9th: Extreme heat is the “new normal” in Boston

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**Claim:** In the CBS Boston (CBS-B) [article](#) titled “Is extreme heat the new normal in Boston? What hitting 102 degrees tells us about climate change,” Jacob Wycoff claims that Boston’s recent heat wave is a symptom of climate change and the “new normal.”



**Fact-Check:** This is misleading. Long-term temperature records do not support the notion that heat waves are becoming more intense or more frequent in Boston. According to [National Weather Service data](#), Boston hit a record high of 102° for June on June 24, 2025. Boston’s previous record June temperature of 100° was June 6, 1925, 100 years of global warming ago. The highest all-time ever recorded temperature in Boston was 104°F in July 1911, followed by 103°F in July 1926. The city also saw 102°F temperatures in 1911, 1975, and 1977.

## July 9th: If we stop burning fossil fuels, “1-in-100-” or “1-in-1,000-year” floods will go away

**Claim:** Reflecting on the Texas floods, *CNN* anchor Dana Bash brought former children’s TV science show presenter, Bill Nye “The Science Guy,” on air to inform viewers that if we “stop burning fossil fuels,” these natural disasters will go away. Bash opened up the segment with a monologue stating that 1-in-100- and 1-in-1000-year floods are “not that rare anymore.”



**Fact-Check:** A “[1-in-100-year flood](#)” means that a flood of some magnitude has a 1% chance of occurring at a specific location in any given year. The USGS says that the U.S. has about 250,000 rivers in [19,000 watersheds](#). Since individual rivers are not at an independent risk of flooding (as many are connected within a river basin), it can be expected that 190 of those 19,000 watersheds will observe a “100-year flood” each year. Dozens of these floods can occur across the U.S. each year, and it has no implications on climate trends.

## July 15th: Much of the U.S. grappled with a record-breaking heatwave the week of July 13-19th

**Claim:** An *Associated Press* [headline](#) said that “Much of the U.S. is grappling with a record-breaking heatwave” during the week of July 15th.



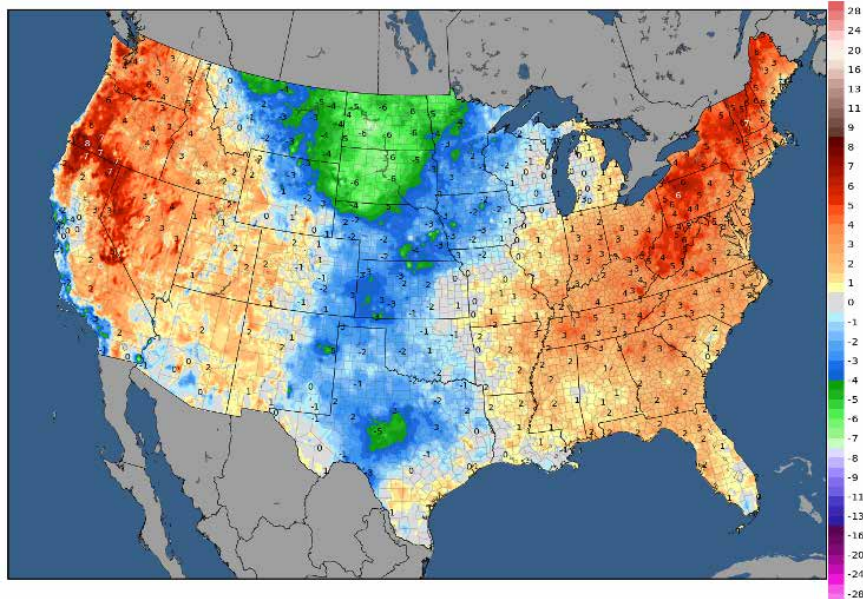
Much of the U.S. is grappling with a record-breaking heatwave. So, how do people stay cool?

6:30 PM · Jul 15, 2025 · 394.1K Views

**Fact-Check:** The mean temperature across the Conterminous United States was just half a degree Fahrenheit above average during the ten-day period ending July 21st. The anomalous warmth in New England was far from record-breaking.

PRISM TEMPERATURE ANALYSIS LAST 10-DAYS ANOMALY (°F): JUL 12, 2025 --> JUL 21, 2025  
LOWER 48 MEAN ANOMALY: 0.48°F | ACTUAL MEAN TEMPERATURE: 75.11°F

[weathermodels.com](#)



PRISM CLIMATE GROUP OREGON STATE UNIV | 1991-2020 HISTORICAL CLIMATOLOGY

## July 18th: Climate change is making hail storms more destructive

**Claim:** In the *NBC News* [video report](#) titled “How climate change could make hail storms even more destructive,” viewers are warned that stronger storm updrafts caused by climate change might supercharge hailstones, making them up to 75 percent larger.



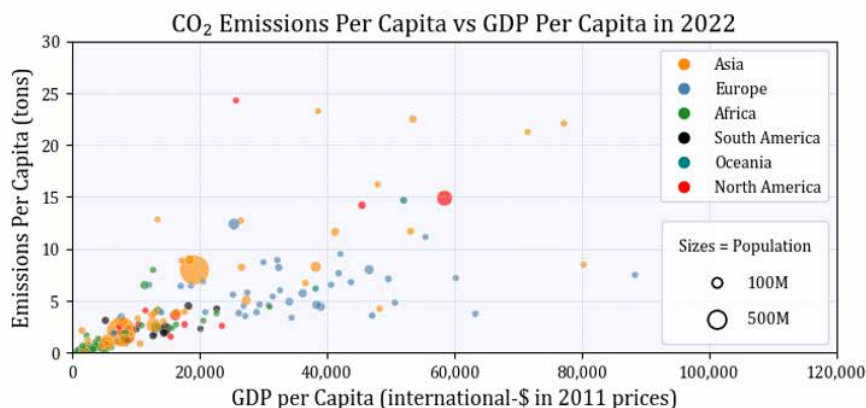
**Fact-Check:** Scientific data—including that from the IPCC's [Sixth Assessment Report](#)—show no observable increase in hail intensity due to climate change. Hail damage costs have increased over time primarily due to increased development and property values in hail-prone areas. Hail is notoriously [hard to measure consistently](#) over time. Its occurrence is often underreported in sparsely populated areas, and radar-based detection has only become reliable in recent decades.

## July 22nd: Countries that use fossil fuels are sabotaging their economies

**Claim:** UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, [stated in a speech](#) that “[F]ossil fuels still enjoy a 9 to 1 advantage in consumption subsidies globally—a clear market distortion. Add to that the unaccounted costs of climate damages on people and the planet, and the distortion is even greater. Countries that cling to fossil fuels are not protecting their economies; they are sabotaging them.”



**Fact-Check:** [Data show](#) that despite global warming, countries with the most carbon-intensive economies tend to produce the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, indicating that their economies are thriving with increased production, jobs and consumer spending. Meanwhile, the less developed a country is or the more “green” a nation’s grid is, the less GDP per capita.



Data source: Global Carbon Budget (GCB), <https://globalcarbonbudget.org/>

Bolt and van Zanden - Maddison Project Database 2023,  
<https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-project-database-2023>

Chart: Chris Martz



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