

MANKIND HAS AN INSIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE CLIMATE OF PLANET EARTH

By Jay Lehr, Ph.D.

Science Director of The Heartland Institute

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

1- Carbon Dioxide is not a pollutant. On the contrary it makes crops and forests grow faster. Mapping by satellite shows that the earth has become about 6% greener overall in the past two decades, with forests expanding into arid regions. The Amazon rain forest was the biggest gainer, with two tons of additional biomass per acre per year. Certainly climate change does not help every region equally, but careful studies predict overall benefit, fewer storms, more rain, better crop yields, longer growing seasons, milder winters and decreasing heating costs in colder climates. The news is certainly not bad and on balance may be rather good.

2- Someday the world will wake up and laugh when they finally understand that the entire pursuit of economic ruin in the name of saving the planet from increasing carbon dioxide is in fact a terrible joke. You see it is an unarguable fact that the portion of the Earth's greenhouse gas envelope contributed by man is barely one tenth of one per cent of the total. Do the numbers yourself. CO₂ is no more than 4% of the total (with water vapor being over 90% followed by methane and sulphur and nitrous oxides). Of that 4% man contributes only a little over 3%. Elementary school arithmetic says that 3% of 4% is .12% and for that we are sentencing the planet to a wealth of damaging economic impacts.

3- The effect of additional CO₂ in the atmosphere is limited because it only absorbs certain wave lengths of radiant energy. As the radiation in the particular wave length band is used up, the amount left for absorption by more of the gas is reduced. A simple analogy is to consider drawing a curtain across a window - a large part of the light will be shut out but some will still get through. Add a second curtain to the first and most of the remaining light will be excluded. A point will quickly be reached where adding more curtains has a negligible effect, because there is no light left to stop. This is the case with the absorption of energy as more carbon dioxide is added to the atmosphere.

4- If greenhouse gases were responsible for increases in global temperature of recent decades then atmospheric physics shows that higher levels of our atmosphere would show greater warming than lower levels. This was not found to be true during the 1978 to 1998 period of .3 degrees centigrade warming.

5- 900,000 years of ice core temperature records and carbon dioxide content records show that CO₂ increases follow rather than lead increases in Earth temperature which is logical because the oceans are the primary source of CO₂ and they hold more CO₂ when cool than when warm, so warming causes the oceans to release more CO₂.

6- While temperatures have fluctuated over the past 5000 years, today's earth temperature is below average for the past 5000 years.

7- A modest amount of global warming, should it occur would be beneficial to the natural world. The warmest period in recorded history was the Medieval Warm Period roughly 800 to 1200 AD when temperatures were 7 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than today allowing great prosperity for mankind, and Greenland was actually green.

8- Temperature fluctuations during the current 300 year recovery from the Little Ice Age which ended around 1700AD, following the Medieval Warming Period , correlate almost perfectly with fluctuations in solar activity. This correlation long predates human use of significant amounts of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas.

9- The National Aeronautic and Space Agency (NASA) has determined that during the time the Earth was warming so was Mars, Pluto, Jupiter and the largest moon of Neptune .

10- We know that 200 million years ago when the dinosaurs walked the Earth, average Carbon Dioxide concentration in the atmosphere was 1800 ppm, five times higher than today.

11- All four major global temperature tracking outlets (Hadley UK , NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, University of Alabama Huntsville , and Remote Sensing Systems Santa Rosa) have released updated information showing that in 2007, global cooling ranged from 0.65C to .75C. a value large enough to erase nearly all the global warming recorded over the past 100 years. All in one years time.

12- NASA satellites measuring Earth atmosphere temperature found 2008 to be the coldest year since 2000 and the 14th coldest of the past 30 years. US climate Monitoring Stations on the surface show greater warmth, but pictures of most of the 1,221 US temperature stations show 90% to be located near human sources of heat (exhaust fans, air conditioning units, hot roof tops, asphalt parking lots and so forth). the conclusion is inescapable: The US land based temperature record is unreliable.

13- While we hear much about one or another melting glacier, a recent study of 246 glaciers around the world between 1946 and 1995 indicated a balance between those that are losing ice, gaining ice and remaining in equilibrium. There is no global trend in any direction.

14- On May 1, 2007 National Geographic magazine reported that the snows on Mt. Kilimanjaro were shrinking as a result of lower precipitation rather than a warming trend.

15- Never mind that the overall polar bear population has increased from about 5000 in the 1960s to 25,000 today, and that the only two populations in decline come from areas where it has actually been getting colder over the past 50 years. Also ignore the fact that polar bears were around 100,000 years ago, long before at least one important interglacial period when it was much warmer than the present. Clearly they survived long periods of time when the climate of the Arctic was much warmer than today.

Yet they are not expected to survive this present warming without help from government regulators.

16- No computer model ever used to compute climate change has been able to calculate our recent past earth temperature though all measured data inputs were known and available.

17- The inability of current computer hardware to cope with a realistic climate model projection was put in perspective by Dr. Willie Soon of the Harvard Smithsonian Institute who calculated that to run a 40 year projection using all variables across all spatial scales would require 10 to the power 34 years of supercomputer time. This is 10 to the power 24 times longer than the age of the Universe.

ECONOMICS

1- The Nature conservancy predicts that by 2030 "eco-friendly" wind solar and biofuel projects will require extra land equivalent to Minnesota , to produce the energy we now get from oil, gas and coal. Interior Secretary Salazar's proposal to have offshore wind turbines replace gas, coal and nuclear electricity generators would mean 336,000, 3.25 MegaWatt behemoths off our coasts - if they operate 24/7/365. Far more if they don't. Where exactly will we site those turbines - and get billions of tons of concrete, steel, copper and fiberglass it will take to build and install the expensive, unreliable, subsidized monsters?

2- The idea that you can run America on "solar, wind and biodiesel" is laughable. Since 70% of the electricity generated in the US involves the burning of coal, natural gas or oil and another 20% from nuclear, a real viable alternative energy is decades away. A single 555 Mega-Watt gas fired power plant in California generates more electricity per year than do all 13,000 of the state's wind turbines. The gas-fired plant occupies just 15 acres. The 300 foot tall wind turbines impact 106,000 acres, destroy scenic vistas and kill tens of thousands of birds and bats every year - to provide expensive, tax-subsidized, intermittent, insufficient electricity.

3- The federal government has been investing in renewable power research and technology for decades, with virtually nothing to show for it. Billions of federal dollars are diverted to the renewable power industry every year, yet the industry still cannot come close to producing power anywhere near as economically as conventional fuel sources such as coal and gasoline.

4- The automotive, coal and oil industries will be hit the hardest by expensive new penalties and mandates regarding carbon dioxide production, increasing the cost of transportation and electrical power to the consumer.

5- A typical 1000 Mega Watt power station could burn about 3 million tons of coal per year requiring 300 trains per year to supply the coal. If Carbon, Capture and Burial is required, the extra power needed will call for another 150 trains of coal. And if trains were used to haul the captured CO₂, the mass of material moved would require another 1150 trains per year, each train carrying 10,000 tons.

6- According to the United States Energy Information Administration economic models, last year's proposed Lieberman-Warner bill to reduce CO2 emissions, if passed, would have cost the average US household between \$4000 and \$7000 per year, would have increased unemployment by at least 2.5 percent, and would have reduced our Gross Domestic Product by 2.6 percent each and every year.

7- One side effect of Obama's cap-and-trade plan is the elimination of about 83,000 mining related jobs, 60,000 coal-energy power plant jobs, 31,000 coal transportation jobs and the tens of thousands of indirect jobs that produce products used by the coal sector.

8- California and Spain have proved that the war on carbon dioxide will kill real jobs faster than fake green jobs can be created. At the time, the silly claims that alternate energy can provide continuous, economical and reliable power will encourage neglect of US key reliable low cost electricity source- coal power. When the lights go out industry migrates to Asia and our power bills will soar and it will be too late to prevent great harm to our national economy, our jobs and our lifestyle.

9- The potential federal revenue stream from cap and trade boggles the mind. White House sources estimate at least \$72 billion per year in new funding for government coffers. They concede it could be much more, depending on auction prices. Who will foot the bill? Energy consumers of course, but those living in coal dependent regions will pay the most.

10- In the 15 mid-west states stretching from the Appalachians to the Rockies residential power bills will increase between \$20 and \$26 per month if the CO2 permit auction price is as low as \$20 per metric ton, but the price will likely be higher. Ohio will be hit the 6th hardest as a result of its energy sources.

POLITICAL POSITIONS

1- Historically Michael Crichton said the claim of consensus in science has been the first refuge of scoundrels. It has been a way to avoid debate by claiming a matter to be settled. Whenever you hear that a consensus of scientists agree on something or other reach for your wallet because you are being scammed.

2- Since credible scientific evidence established that CO2 from mankind has little impact on temperature and none on public health, the net result of CO2 limitations will be a transfer of wealth and the ceding of more authority to the United Nations as a global government.

3- Once we accept the principle that carbon should be monitored, controlled and taxed, we open the door to the most invasive kind of bureaucratic meddling, and to all the carbon cops who want to stick their noses into every aspect of the way we live, whether it is the kind of car we drive, our holiday destination, our pleasure boat or even the food miles accrued in our choice of food.

4- Computer models of climate are now predicting that there will be no change in global temperature over the next ten years. In some cases, these predictions say no significant warming until 2030. Take your pick. If these models are so great, how did they miss the time-out we are experiencing from global warming?

5- Surely you have heard that nine of the ten warmest years recorded in the US lower 48 states since 1880 have occurred since 1995, with the hottest being 1998. Well, that also has been shown to be wrong. Less than a decade ago, the US government changed the way it recorded temperatures. No one thought to correlate the new temperatures with the old ones, until Canadian researcher Steve McIntyre did so correcting the record to show that 1934 was in fact the hottest year, with 1998 second and 1921 third. Four of the 10 hottest years were in the 1930s and only 3 in the past decade. Eight of the 15 hottest years in the past century occurred before carbon dioxide began its recent rise.

6- The world's largest coal supplies are situated in the US , China and Russia which are all increasing their production. Electricity generated from coal in 2008 was a record with China increasing production by 200 million tons. Unilateral efforts to cut CO2 emissions in the face of this fact are therefore useless.

7- Representative Waxman and Markey's 648 page discussion draft of the climate bill with its descriptions of permitted light bulbs is so complex, confusing and impossible to understand, let alone implement without breaking some regulation, that it will make the old central planning of the soviet union seem like a back of the envelope outline by comparison.

8- The Precautionary Principle often claimed as reason to curtail CO2 emissions cuts both ways. If we make it harder or more expensive for people in Africa to use their coal it means they keep inhaling smoke from wood fires, babies get lung disease; forests are raised for fuel. Meanwhile electric trucks cost more to run and that makes fresh food more expensive, refrigerated meat is not available and malnutrition increases and money for medical research shrinks.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1- There is no consensus of scientists in favor of human caused global warming. While opinion polls do not determine truth in science, more than 31,000 American Scientists signed a petition drafted by the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine which stated: There is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane or other green house gases is causing or will in the foreseeable future cause catastrophic heating of the Earth Atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate.

2- While global warming is not currently happening perhaps we should wish it were. Far more premature deaths result from cold than from heat, longer growing seasons yield larger crops, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases increase in cold weather, increased precipitation in warm weather adds to water supply in water scarce areas. US heating bills will decline substantially.

3- Paradoxically, the world environment is likely to be damaged far more by misguided attempts to reduce carbon emissions than would be caused by man-made global warming even if it were real and continued unchecked. If third world countries were prevented from exploiting their natural resources to provide a better standard of living for their citizens, not only would their peoples continue to suffer poverty, disease, and low life expectancy, but they would not have the ability to protect their natural environments - only wealthy countries can afford to do so.

4- Nobody believes a weather prediction 7 days ahead but now we are asked to reorder our economy based on climate predictions 100 years hence which are no longer supported by current evidence.

5- Carbon offsetting and trading schemes have the potential to make large profits for those who run them. You can not actually offset carbon emissions by planting trees as they merely store some of it for a while before releasing it once they rot or burn, and the storage will not even offset the emission for many, many years after planting. Plus, the earth would have to be covered entirely by trees to even theoretically counter the impact of man-made emissions.

6- Subsidies given to develop renewable energy sources such as wind power are a license to print money for their operators at the expense of the rest of us. Companies promote green products that may be little more than gimmicks, but can be very profitable.

7- Although the court of public opinion already weighs climate change as a very low economic priority, the media continues to uncritically accept and vigorously promote shrill global warming alarmism.

8- The United States government budgets \$6 billion a year for climate research supporting a growing industry of scientists and university labs that specialize in the subject. It all adds up to a significant institutionalization of the impulse to treat carbon as a problem.

9- More than six decades of painstaking conservation efforts that have brought the majestic whooping crane back from the brink of extinction may come undone because of the proliferation of wind farms in the United States .

10- Although the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reports the global polar bear population is now between 20 and 25 thousand up from 8 to 10 thousand in 1960, the polar bear has been listed as a species threatened by global warming.

11- Climate change is not a scientific problem that found political support; this is about eco-activists and politicians who found a scientific issue they feel can leverage them into power and control. The environment is a great way to advance a political agenda that favors central planning and an intrusive government. What better way to control someone's property than to subordinate one's private property rights to environmental concerns.

CONCLUSIONS

1- While the most extreme environmental zealots may be relatively few in number, they have managed to gain undue influence by exploiting the gullibility of many ordinary and scientifically illiterate people, who are only too willing to believe that the planet needs saving from man's excesses. Perhaps it is a psychological throwback to those earlier civilizations that offered human sacrifices to the gods, to assuage their sins and spare them from punishment in the form of drought, flood, famine or disease. There are certainly many parallels between modern environmentalism and religion.

2- By focusing our priorities on future generations we focus less on improving the lives of people who are alive today. These future generations bear no closer relationship to us than those now living in developing countries whose lives we disdain to save. Why are we not feeding people in the world who are hungry? Why are we not giving clean water to the almost one billion people who don't have clean water? The greatest source of environmental degradation is poverty. Why aren't we helping eliminate poverty? One answer is that perhaps it is a lot easier worrying about future generations than trying to fix present day problems.

3- Global warming is a major industry today. Between 1992 and 2008 the US Government spent \$30 billion on climate change research and now contributes \$6 billion a year. This finances jobs, grants, conferences, international travel and academic journals. It not only keeps a huge army of people in comfortable employment, but also fills them with self righteousness and moral superiority regardless of the fact that real science did not support it.

It is clear that with the deep roots of the global warming scare it is not about to go away. It has the added advantage of not being able to be proven false in our life time. In the mean time the sanest course for us would be to gain what limited perspective we can (remembering the global cooling alarm of a generation ago) and proceed cautiously. We are going through a scare with many causes, and we need to step back from it, take a long second look at the scientific evidence, and not do anything rash.