

## **The Truth about Global Warming: Humans are Responsible**

There have been countless scholarly articles focusing on global warming. The debates have been numerous with regards to the causes of this environmental phenomenon. However, it seems to be clear that global warming is not the result of natural causes; humans are responsible for the destruction of our environment.

The atmosphere is warmed by a greenhouse gas known as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions have been unprecedented in the last 650,000 years (Wang and Chameides, 2007). It has also been independently confirmed, as advised by Wang and Chameides (2007) that increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is a result of the burning of fossil fuels and forests.

The significance of global warming can be seen in the projected findings of scientists. It is believed that temperatures worldwide will rise by up to 11.5 degrees Fahrenheit and sea levels will increase by as much as 23 inches by the end of the current century. It is also expected that extreme temperatures, heat waves and heavy rainfall will increase in frequency.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states categorically that global warming is caused by humans (Roach, 2007). They provide evidence that links the activity of humans to increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, greater intensities of natural disasters, such as hurricanes, as well as many other environmental calamities. Achim Steiner, the United Nations Environment Programme's Executive Director, advises that "fossil fuel use, agriculture, and land-use change are fundamentally affecting the systems on our planet". (Roach, 2007)

Hundreds of scientists from around the globe unanimously agree that all the evidence points to increased levels of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions being 90% likely the cause of the increase in average global temperatures since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These greenhouse gas concentrations are caused by human activities. Their opinion on the significance of the human contribution could not be more explicit.

Although natural processes and animals emit large quantities of carbon dioxide, scientists have confirmed that the majority of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere are caused by the burning of fossil fuels (Wang and Chameides, 2007). The carbon dioxide emissions from natural processes are also removed by these same processes at rates that are almost identical.

Natural processes simply cannot explain the current warming of the Earth. There are some that argue that the earlier climate change during the Medieval Warming Period (MWP) was as a result of natural causes and so this current period must be as a result of similar causes. However, scientific evidence provides a link between human-caused greenhouse gases and the current warming of the Earth.

Over time, scientists have gone from believing that it is possible for global warming to be caused by humans, to being reasonable sure and finally to now being almost 100% certain. These progressive findings are understandable and do not discredit current arguments. Scientific studies on global

warming have increased in aptitude and intensity over time and it is just in recent years that scientists have been able to provide conclusive evidence of human-caused global warming.

Now that scientists have confirmed that humans are the cause of global warming, it is up to governments to make policy changes to address this growing concern. The humans who have caused this environmental malady need to put policies in place to mitigate the effects and think of creative solutions for the future. The lives of future generations rest in their hands.

### **Bibliography**

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