

Human-caused Climate Change is Real

Dear *Wakefield Daily Item*,

The *Item* published an article in the “Comments” section on January 4, 2010 titled “Climate measure catches more heat.” The article mentions the recent “Climategate” and concludes “Given growing public awareness of global warming’s lack of scientific justification and the lingering economic downturn, the Senate should reject any plans to regulate CO₂ emissions.”

Members of the Wakefield Climate Action Project (WCAP) feel compelled to respond to this disturbing conclusion. We feel the scientific evidence supporting human-caused global warming and the resulting climate change is very strong and it is imperative we take immediate action to curb heat-trapping CO₂ emissions. The website www.350.org/about/science explains the science in simple terms and lists several sources with more lengthy explanations. Also visit the Union of Concerned Scientists at www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/.

The 350.org website states that 350 parts per million (ppm) is what leading scientists say is the safe upper limit for CO₂ in our atmosphere—the maximum upper threshold to avoid disastrous and irreversible climate impacts. They note that prior to the Industrial Revolution the level was around 275 ppm. Since the Industrial Revolution, human activities such as burning fossil fuels for heat, transportation and electricity have caused CO₂ levels to rise in a continued and accelerating pace; currently about 2 ppm per year. The CO₂ level is now almost 390 ppm—already at a critical level and impacting our climate.

Rapid climate change leads to environmental destruction, health risks, and catastrophic weather. Per the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “Human-induced climate change has the potential to alter the prevalence and severity of extremes such as heat waves, cold waves [yes, even cold], storms, floods and droughts.” Add to that the serious negative economic impacts, and we would be prudent to work together to curb climate change by embracing renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. The positive side effects include a cleaner environment, energy independence and an improved economy by the creation of new “green” jobs.

Regarding “Climategate,” the accused East Anglia University Climate Research Center is hardly the only group to conclude that humans are contributing to global warming. The American Meteorological Society states “For climate change research, the body of research in the literature is very large and the dependence on any one set of research results to the comprehensive understanding of the climate system is very, very small. Even if some of the charges of improper behavior in this particular case turn out to be true — which is not yet clearly the case — the impact on the science of climate change would be very limited.”

Time magazine (time.com) states “Do the [leaked] e-mails weaken the scientific case for global warming? Put it this way: when it comes to climate-science analysis from the representative of the world’s biggest oil-producing state, it’s wise to be suspicious. In the weeks since the e-mails first became public, many climate scientists and policy experts have looked through them, and they report that the correspondence does not contradict the overwhelming scientific consensus on global warming, which has been decades in the making. ‘The content of the stolen e-mails has no impact whatsoever on our overall understanding that human activity is driving dangerous levels

of global warming,' wrote 25 leading U.S. scientists in a letter to Congress on Dec. 4. 'The body of evidence that underlies our understanding of human-caused global warming remains robust.'"

Time continues "...Even if CRU's climate data turns out to have some holes, the group is only one of four major agencies, including NASA, that contribute temperature data to major climate models — and CRU's data largely matches up with the others'."

The *Huffington Post* states "Thousands of emails from over 13 years were stolen, and edited, and have been taken out of context for those with a political agenda. As blogger Jeff Masters [Ph.D., Director of Meteorology and co-founder of Weather Underground] writes,

'Even if every bit of mud slung at these scientists were true, the body of scientific work supporting the theory of human-caused climate change—which spans hundreds of thousands of scientific papers written by tens of thousands of scientists in dozens of different scientific disciplines—is too vast to be budged by the flaws in the works of the three or four scientists being subject to the fiercest attacks.'"

It is highly likely the leaked e-mails were timed to derail progress at the (then) upcoming Copenhagen climate summit. "We're facing an effort by special interests who are trying to confuse the public," said Richard Somerville, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and a lead author of the UN IPCC Fourth Assessment Report. Dissenters see action to slow global warming as "a threat," he said.

Time reports "One of the main skeptic groups promoting the e-mail controversy, the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change, was recently revealed to have links to the energy company Exxon-Mobil, which has long funded climate-change deniers." Masters discusses the "Manufactured Doubt industry" in his blog at www.wunderground.com/blog/JeffMasters/comment.html?entrynum=1389 .

WCAP agrees wholeheartedly with Somerville's comment that "There's an urgency to this that is not politically or ideological driven." This is "objective scientific reality," he added, and we're "running out of time," to stop the problem. WCAP feels that while waiting for the slow progress of politics, there is much we can do as individuals to conserve energy and thus curb CO2 emissions, such as driving more fuel efficient cars; carpooling, walking or biking more often; minimizing car idling; getting a free energy audit and weatherizing our homes; using energy efficient appliances and lights; turning off unused electronic equipment and lights; buying locally produced food and merchandise; buying organic food and eating less meat; recycling and more.

Visit <http://www.grinningplanet.com/2006/04-04/global-warming-solutions-article.htm> for a comprehensive list of simple, easy ways to take action. Not only will you help the environment, but also save money—something we can all appreciate no matter what our opinion.

Sincerely,

Wakefield Climate Action Project Board Members Sherri Carlson, Peg Danek, Robert Darnell, Wendy Dennis, Jennifer Kallay, Joseph Spencer and Kelli Stromski; and Advisory Board Members Eric Reid and Steve Shoap; www.wakefieldcap.org