

Source 1:

Latest Climate Change Report Paints Dire Picture For Business (NPR)

By: Ydstie, John.

<http://www.npr.org/2014/06/24/325073881/latest-climate-change-report-paints-dire-picture-for-business>

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

It's MORNING EDITION from NPR News. I'm Steve Inskeep.

RENEE MONTAGNE, HOST:

And I'm Renee Montagne. Aside from its other effects, climate change endangers the U.S. economy. That's the conclusion of a new study. The study presents no new climate science.

INSKEEP: But it makes dire predictions about jobs, farms, energy production and more. The study says if nothing is done, crop yields will fall by more than 70 percent in the Midwest. Billions of dollars worth of property will go underwater on the East Coast. [POST-BROADCAST CORRECTION: The audio of this story incorrectly states that crop yields "will" fall by more than 70 percent in the Midwest; it should have stated that crop yields "could" fall by more than 70 percent in the Midwest.]

MONTAGNE: To be clear, that doesn't mean the mortgage is too big. It means underwater. NPR's John Ydstie reports.

JOHN YDSTIE, BYLINE: The title of this study is Risky Business, and the driving force behind it is a bipartisan group of prominent former businessman and public officials - their former entrepreneur and New York Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, hedge fund manager Thomas Stier and Henry Paulson, a former Wall Street titan and treasury secretary under George W. Bush. Paulson acknowledges many in his party are skeptical of the science of climate change and want more research. Paulson says his new study suggest that business and investment community need to take action.

HENRY PAULSON: And it's going to increasingly be difficult for anybody regardless of party to say there isn't a problem.

YDSTIE: Paulson says he hopes the study can influence the business community by applying a major business tool - the science of risk management.

PAULSON: The more we can talk about risk management, which is part and parcel of the free enterprise system in a conservative principle, I think we will make some headway.

YDSTIE: Here's an example of what the study concludes. It says there's a better than even chance that as much as \$23 billion worth of existing Florida property will be underwater by the middle of the century. But it goes on to estimate something investors call a tail risk, a low probability but extremely high cost event that pushes the losses far above that \$23 billion. For Florida property, the tail risk is that there's a one in 100 chance that by the end of the century, as much as \$681 billion worth of property will be submerged. Robert Rubin, another Wall Street veteran and former treasury under President Clinton, is also involved in the Risky Business study. He says the threats are widespread across the economy.

ROBERT RUBIN: Agricultural yields could fall by 50 percent or more in some parts of the country. You could have temperatures that prevented people from working outdoors for some part of the years in certain parts of the country. All this has massive effects and all this is a very realistic projection of what is likely to happen if we don't act.

YDSTIE: Paulson proposes a tax on carbon emissions that scientists say are causing climate change. To provide an incentive to wean the economy off carbon-based fuels.

RUBIN: A carbon tax is one way of putting a price on this pollution. One way of letting the market operate.

YDSTIE: But there's virtually no chance a carbon tax will pass Congress anytime soon. Rubin suggests an interim step that doesn't need congressional approval. It would be a requirement by the SEC and Financial Accounting Standards Board that companies disclose the risks that climate change poses to their assets and profits.

RUBIN: I think we've got to act on all possible fronts 'cause I really do think that life on earth as we know it is at stake here.

YDSTIE: That's former treasury secretary Robert Rubin. I'm John Ydstie. NPR News, Washington.

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Source 2:

Borenstein, S. (2014, September 11). Scientists say the ozone layer is recovering. *Deseret News*.

WASHINGTON — Earth's protective but fragile ozone layer is beginning to recover, largely because of the phase-out since the 1980s of certain chemicals used in refrigerants and aerosol cans, a U.N. scientific panel reported Wednesday in a rare piece of good news about the health of the planet.

Scientists said the development demonstrates that when the world comes together, it can counteract a brewing ecological crisis.

For the first time in 35 years, scientists were able to confirm a statistically significant and sustained increase in stratospheric ozone, which shields us from solar radiation that causes skin cancer, crop damage and other problems.

From 2000 to 2013, ozone levels went up 4 percent in the key mid-northern latitudes at about 30 miles high, said NASA scientist Paul A. Newman. He co-chaired the every-four-years ozone assessment by 300 scientists, released at the United Nations.

...heat-trapping greenhouse gases — considered the major cause of global warming — are also helping to rebuild the ozone layer, Newman said. The report said rising levels of carbon dioxide and other gases cool the upper stratosphere, and the cooler air increases the amount of ozone.

The ozone layer is still far from healed. The long-lasting, ozone-eating chemicals still lingering in the atmosphere create a yearly fall ozone hole above the extreme Southern Hemisphere, and the hole hasn't closed up. Also, the ozone layer is still about 6 percent thinner than in 1980, by Newman's calculations.

Ozone levels are "on the upswing, but it's not there yet," he said.

Source 3

Why are we still debating climate change? (CNN)

By: Costello, Carol.

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/24/opinion/costello-debate-climate-change/>

There is no debate. Climate change is real. And, yes, we are, in part, to blame. There is a 97% consensus among scientific experts that humans are causing global warming. Ninety-seven percent! Yet some very vocal Americans continue to debate what is surely fact. The question is, why? Trust certainly plays a part.

According to Gordon Gauchat, an associate professor of sociology from the University of Wisconsin, just 42% of adults in the U.S. have a great deal of confidence (PDF) in the scientific community. It's easy to understand why. Most Americans can't even name a living scientist. I suspect the closest many Americans get to a living, breathing scientist is the fictional Dr. Sheldon Cooper from CBS's sitcom "The Big Bang Theory." Sheldon is brilliant, condescending and narcissistic. Whose trust would he inspire?

But trust isn't the only factor in why many Americans doubt climate change. I asked Anthony Leiserowitz, the director of the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication. His group has been studying the "why" question for more than a decade. "We've found there are six very (specific) categories that respond to this issue in different ways," he said. He calls these categories "Global Warming's Six Americas."

Opinion: Obama's efforts on climate may not be enough

The first group, "The Alarmed," is made up 16% of the public. They believe climate change is an urgent problem but have no clear idea of how to fix it. The second group (27%) is "The Concerned." They believe climate change is a problem but think it's more about polar bears and tiny islands than a problem that directly affects them. The third group, "The Cautious" (23%), are people on the fence. They haven't made up their minds whether global warming is real or if it's a man-made problem. The fourth group, "The Disengaged" (5%), doesn't know anything about climate change. The fifth group, "The Doubtful" (12%), do not think climate change is man-made. They think it's natural and poses no long-term risk. Leiserowitz says it's the sixth group, "The Dismissives," that is the most problematic, even though it comprises just 15% of the public. "They say it's a hoax, scientists are making up data, it's a U.N. conspiracy (or) Al Gore and his friends want to get rich." Leiserowitz goes on to say, "It's a really loud 15%. ... (It's a) pretty well-organized 15%."

And thanks to the media and the political stage, that vocal minority is mighty.

Former presidential candidate Rick Santorum told Glenn Beck on Fox News in 2011, "There is no such thing as global warming." Santorum went on to tell Rush Limbaugh, "It's just an excuse for more government control of your life, and I've never been for any scheme or even accepted the junk science behind the whole narrative."

And just last week, tea party favorite Sen. Ted Cruz told CNN's Dana Bash, "Climate change, as they have defined it, can never be disproved, because whether it gets hotter or whether it gets colder, whatever happens, they'll say, well, it's changing, so it proves our theory."

Meanwhile, the climate change "counter movement" has been helped along by an infusion of cash from, among others, some in the powerful fossil fuel industry. A recent study by Drexel University found that conservative foundations and others have bankrolled climate denial to the tune of \$558 million between 2003 and 2010.

"Money amplifies certain voices above others and, in effect, gives them a megaphone in the public square. Powerful funders are supporting the campaign to deny scientific findings about global warming and raise public doubts about the roots and remedies of this massive global threat," writes environmental scientist Robert J. Brulle, the study's author.

The good news is, those uninformed minority voices are being quieted by nature and by those who have powerful voices. Extreme weather is forcing people to at least think about how global warming affects them directly. And, perhaps more important, many religious leaders, including evangelicals, are now "green." They concur with the scientific community and take it a step farther. They say we have a moral obligation to save the planet. Even the enormously popular Pope Francis may soon speak out on global warming. The Vatican press office says Francis is working on draft text on ecology. That text could turn into an encyclical, or a letter to bishops around the world, instructing that the "faithful must respect the environment."

Source 4

31,000 scientists say "no convincing evidence". (— OSS Foundation)

<http://ossfoundation.us/projects/environment/global-warming/myths/31000-scientists-say-no-convincing-evidence>

31,000 scientists reject global warming and say "no convincing evidence" that humans can or will cause global warming? But polls show that of scientists working in the field of climate science, and publishing papers on the topic: 97% of the climate scientists surveyed believe "global average temperatures have increased" during the past century; and 97% think human activity is a significant contributing factor in changing mean global temperatures. What is the significance of these statistics?

Scientific Consensus on Global Warming

While polls of scientists actively working in the field of climate science indicate strong general agreement that Earth is warming and human activity is a significant factor, 31,000 scientists say there is "no convincing evidence" that humans can or will cause "catastrophic" heating of the atmosphere.

This claim originates from the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, which has an online petition (petitionproject.org) that states:

We urge the United States government to reject the global warming agreement that was written in Kyoto, Japan in December, 1997, and any other similar proposals. The proposed limits on greenhouse gases would harm the environment, hinder the advance of science and technology, and damage the health and welfare of mankind.

There is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane, or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate. Moreover, there is substantial scientific evidence that increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide produce many beneficial effects upon the natural plant and animal environments of the Earth.

To participate in the petition one only needs to mark a check box to show that one has a Ph.D., M.S., or B.S. degree, and then fill in the fields. Unfortunately, that means that anyone can sign the petition, whether they have a degree or not.

Since the results are not verifiable, there is no way to know how many signers have actually earned a degree.

Do '31,000 scientists say global warming is not real'? Maybe. But more importantly what is the significance of these signatures? The majority of signatures are engineers (10,102). 3,046 are in medicine. 2,965 are in biology, biochemistry and agriculture. 4,822 in chemistry and chemical engineering.

Without formal training in climate science the level of understanding remains unknown among those that signed the petition. A key question is not how many of those that signed the petition know climate exists, but rather how many of those that signed work directly in the field of climate science.

Only 12% of those who signed...

According to the data on the petition site, only 12% of those who signed the petition are indicated to have affiliation with atmosphere, earth, and environmental science. But there is no indication how many work in the field of climate science?