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Petroleum Essay

5 December 2009

RECEIVED JAN 14 2010

Climate Change, The Two Sided Story

There are many arguments about whether human caused (anthropogenic) carbon dioxide is a major contributor to CO₂ in the atmosphere or not. The controversy is so heated it has polarized the scientific community. With many movies on global warming it is hard to believe anything other than humans are the main contributors. However as time evolves, more and more people start speaking out against those theories and the controversy continues today.

There is much evidence concluding that anthropogenic CO₂ is a major contributor to the total amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere. In 2007, 2,700 scientists from 130 countries all agreed that humans cause most, if not all planetary warming (“Global Warming Facts.”). This report was called “The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change”, or the IPCC. The report stated that factors like deforestation, industrialization, and pollution caused an excess of water vapor, CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide to be emitted into the atmosphere. All the gasses are trapped near the earth’s surface and contribute to the “green house” effect. It also stated that humans place more CO₂ in the air than plants could possibly absorb, and that even if humans stopped all CO₂ output, the CO₂ would still be in the air for many years.

The average temperature has climbed 1.4 degrees Celsius since the 1800’s. The last eleven of twelve years have been some of the warmest since 1850. (“Global

Warming Facts”). The IPCC showed projections of the sea level rising anywhere from seven to twenty-three inches by this century’s end. If the sea level rises only a mere four inches, it would flood much of South East Asia and most of the South Sea Islands. More than a million species could face extinction in the future from changing ecosystems and shortages of food (“Global Warming Facts”).

On the other side of the spectrum, many scientists still believe that anthropogenic CO₂ is not a major contributor to the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere. According to the United States Department of Energy, only about 14.8 percent of CO₂ in the atmosphere was caused by humans since 1900. This is about 11.88 parts per million, (ppm). The 68.5 ppm not caused by humans, results primarily from forest fires and volcanoes. Contradictory to earlier beliefs, it is now believed that if all CO₂ distribution stopped, the CO₂ levels in the atmosphere would almost instantly drop, causing any temperature change to go back to normal (Nelson). The Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC) recently wrote an 880 page report that mainly refutes the 2007 Fourth Assessment Report of the UN’s IPCC report. It reveals the flaws in the statement that harmful global warming is “very likely” to be the caused by humans emitting CO₂ into the atmosphere. A collection of information called Climate Change Reconsidered, written by Dr. S. Fred Singer and Dr. Craig Idso, challenges the “very likely” statement of the IPCC. The book contains nine chapters, thousands of peer reviewed papers and many articles. Dr. Singer, an atmospheric physicist and professor emeritus of science at the University of Virginia, was quoted saying,

“The NIPCC report is the only document that responds comprehensively to the flawed claims of the UN’s document. We demonstrate the evidence

that nature is the main cause of climate change- - not human activities.

Consequently, any efforts to control emissions of greenhouse gases are not only hugely expensive and ineffective, but completely pointless. Carbon dioxide is not an atmospheric pollutant” (Miller).

Dr Idso is a meteorologist and founder and chairmen of the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change. He states that the UN claims to have used the best available science, but they contradict real world models and only work in theoretical situations. The NIPCC appendix lists 31,478 American scientists, 9,029 with Ph.D.s, who have signed a petition, (Miller) which states:

“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 the disruption of the Earth’s climate”.

It is my personal opinion that anthropogenic CO₂ is not a major contributor to the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Even though the IPCC report was accepted in the scientific community in 2007, new information has recently become available. When 31,478 scientists concur on the NIPCC report, it is hard to give much credibility to the IPCC report with only 2,700 scientists agreeing. The IPCC’s report analyzed data from the early 1800’s to the present. It is known that a “little ice age” occurred between 1300 and 1850 (Fagan 1), so naturally the climate would start warming when the “little ice age” ended. It is also very short minded to think that the earth is a constant force. The earth has been changing for thousands of years from hot to cold climates. It is a very rash statement to say that humans could possibly have such a dramatic effect on our climate,

short of a nuclear winter. This does not mean we should not be conscientious of our actions and our responsibility towards a healthy environment, it is just implying humans do not have near the impact as we once believed.

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