



In with the 'bad' air, out with the good air

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A new study finds the earth is greener than ever thanks to carbon dioxide, but researchers say it won't last forever.

Thirty-two authors from 24 institutions in eight countries contributed to the study published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*. According to the findings, carbon dioxide emissions from industrial society have resulted in a huge growth in trees and other plants.

The announcement is timely, given the argument from individuals, think tanks, and special interests that greenhouse gases – including carbon dioxide – contribute to "global warming" or "climate change." Not surprisingly, skeptics of catastrophic man-made global warming say this research shows CO₂ is helping the planet.

"That's good news, right? I can't think of an environmental outcome that could be more beneficial than that," says Chip Knappenberger, environmental scientist and assistant director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute.

"Everything on earth depends on vegetation for its life, with the exception of some very unusual animals – so this is a great finding," he adds.

The study's lead author, Professor Ranga Myneni from Boston University, tells BBC News the extra tree growth won't compensate for global warming, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and other things people point to or warn about at this time. But Knappenberger says the paper shows no such analysis.

"The paper itself documents a greening of the planet earth since about the early 1980s when satellites first started flying," he points out. "They were taking observations of the greenness of the earth."

Knappenberger adds that he doesn't think the author has much scientific documentation to show the CO₂ fertilization effect won't continue.