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Climate assessors miss global warming benefits

By Rex W. Huppke

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The so-called government of the United States has released a massive new study on climate change that predicts that rising global temperatures will cause everything from a dangerous surge in sea levels to crop-destroying heat waves and disease-ravaged mollusks.

Personally, I've never cared for mollusks. They're my least favorite of all invertebrates and I'm happy to see them suffer.

But the rest of that stuff sounds pretty cataclysmic. Or at least it would sound cataclysmic if I believed climate change was more than a bunch of liberal hooey cooked up by juice-cleanse enthusiasts envious of my Hummer-powered backyard air conditioner/Xerox machine.

The new report — the [U.S. National Climate Assessment](#) — was put together by more than 300 scientists and other experts over a three year-period, was overseen by a 60-member advisory committee and was reviewed by the public and scientific groups, including a special panel from the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences.

But a bunch of scowling, older men on TV and Ann Coulter have told me that global warming is a hoax, and I believe them. They may not have the same brain-clout as respected academics who have actually read books and looked at thermometers and stuff, but what they say sounds right and doesn't make me feel guilty about throwing Styrofoam containers in the ocean.

The report is more than 800 pages, and, like most Americans, my attention span is roughly half-a-tweet, so I didn't attempt to read the whole document. I did, however, print out 100 copies and used them to build a wall around my cubicle to ward off a hippie invasion.

Based on extensive glancing at the report, here are a few of the lowlights:

- The annual mean temperature in the United States has increased by 1.3 to 1.9 degrees since the late 19th century, with most of that jump happening since 1970. (It could be related to disco music, we just don't know.)

- If we take no additional action, U.S. temperatures will rise 5 to 10 degrees by the end of the century.

- The global sea level has risen by about 8 inches since 1880 and is expected to rise by as much as 4 feet by 2100.

- Heavy downpours have increased nationally in the past three to five decades, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast. The frequency and intensity of precipitation is projected to increase in all parts of the country.

So, to summarize this in the style of my fellow global-warming deniers: "It might get a bit warmer and a little wetter, but nothing some fans and a couple towels can't handle. Let's not worry about pollution."

As Marlo Lewis, a senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute (partially funded by the anti-environmental-regulation Koch brothers), put it in a piece on Fox News' website: "The new report is an alarmist document designed to scare people and build political support for unpopular policies such as carbon taxes, cap-and-trade, and EPA regulatory mandates."

As far as dealing with rising temperatures, Lewis says humans just learn to adapt: "Cities with the most frequent hot weather such as Tampa, Florida and Phoenix, Arizona have practically zero heat-related mortality. That is the most probable future for most U.S. cities if global warming continues!"

You see? The worst-case scenario is that once-chilly cities like Chicago and Buffalo become warm-weather vacation paradises. And I'm sure if things get even hotter, our bodies will naturally develop an outer layer of asbestos to save us from incineration.

As it says in a response to the climate assessment on the website of the Cato Institute (a think tank founded by one of the anti-environmental-regulation Koch brothers): "Adaptation is a beautiful thing!"

Lewis also points out that even if America shut down all of its "carbon dioxide-emitting vehicles, power plants, and factories" it would decrease global warming "by only a hypothetical and undetectable two-tenths of a degree Celsius by 2100."

His citation for that figure is a "free-market energy blog" in which Chip Knappenberger of the Cato Institute (did I mention it was founded by one of the anti-environmental-regulation Koch brothers?) uses data from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to perform what he calls an "IPCC-like analysis." Call it a guesstimate, but Knappenberger and Lewis hypothetically concur that if the United States curbs emissions and nobody else does, it won't make that much of a difference, so why bother?

That's the same reasoning I used when I decided to not stop smoking until everyone else in the world does.

This gloom-and-doom government study completely misses another one of the huge advantages of global warming. (Please note that global warming only exists if I want to use it to point out the huge advantages of global warming.)

Rising sea levels might help us finally get rid of Florida and will decrease the distance between the East and West coasts.

It now takes nearly six hours to fly from New York to Los Angeles. If we can shorten coast-to-coast travel, it would significantly reduce jet engine emissions.

And I hear those contribute to global warming. Which, of course, does not exist.