



National Climate Assessment: A False Alarm

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The government's National Climate Assessment raises false alarms about climate change, according to Chip Knappenberger, assistant director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute.

The recent climate report released by the Obama Administration seems to suggest that the U.S. will be inundated with all manner of misfortune if we do not act immediately to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions and halt our use of fossil fuels. This is not so, Knappenberger writes, detailing several of the problems with the government's latest report:

- The report conflates climate and climate change: Extreme weather events -- tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, freezes -- are not unusual and are a natural part of the climate. Yet, the National Climate Assessment suggests that these events are due to carbon dioxide emissions, despite the fact that there is little scientific understanding about the impact of human-caused climate change on weather events.
- Greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. have a minimal effect on Earth's climate: According to research, eliminating all greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. forever would only impact warming by less than two-tenths of one degree by 2100. Furthermore, the cost to the U.S. economy would be astronomical.
- More and more evidence indicates that climate change will be smaller than what has previously been predicted: Scientific evidence actually based on observation, rather than models, shows that future climate change will not be as significant as that forecasted by the National Climate Assessment or the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- The report ignores our ability to respond to future challenges: For example, the report expects more extreme heat events to occur, leading to greater amounts of heat-related illnesses and deaths. However, actual scientific evidence shows that the population is becoming less and less sensitive to extreme heat, with fewer Americans dying during heat waves, as we have developed better forecasting and warning systems and access to air conditioning has increased.

The National Climate Assessment, Knappenberger concludes, is a political document, not a scientific one.

Source: Paul C. Knappenberger, "[National Climate Assessment Report Raises False Alarm](#)," Cato Institute, May 7, 2014.