

# THE DIAMONDBACK

## Climate change is real

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If you don't believe in climate change, then you will be on the wrong side of human history. The science and evidence for rising sea levels, arctic ice melting and man-made fossil fuels releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere is so unequivocal that it's baffling a presidential candidate has invalidated the phenomenon. Even though theories on global warming have been around for more than a century, it didn't become a political issue until recently.

Today, in the scientific community, about 97 percent of climate scientists believe there has been anthropogenic climate change. Yet much of the public has been led astray by many media outlets that still claim climate change is a hoax or that we are in a period of global cooling. A major reason behind this is that the fossil fuel industry holds a heavy influence over political and media agendas, which is done in large part by Koch Industries, one of the wealthiest companies in the United States. Charles and David Koch, the brothers who own the firm, have funded many organizations such as Americans For Prosperity, the Cato Institute and the Manhattan Institute, which lobby heavily against efforts to fight climate change. In one instance, AFP and the Koch brothers helped influence Congress vote against climate change legislation that would have taxed companies that emit greenhouse gases. Their incentive is to maintain their gas and drilling empire that brings in an annual income of \$115 billion. Moreover, according to the Huffington Post, the Koch Brothers are heavily intertwined with the right-wing media, as hosts of many Fox News shows will help promote AFP events.

Another reason why climate change is not on a lot of people's radars is because the process is slow, and this long-term problem seems far too abstract. What is not opaque is the unremitting evidence supporting it. According to NASA, the 10 warmest years ever recorded have been in the past 12 years. Additionally, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are at their highest in 650,000 years, while arctic ice has shrunk to new lows and the global sea level has risen nearly seven inches in the last century. The combination of all these problems, while not visible overnight, will nonetheless be the last straw on the camel's back.

While the problem is deeply rooted in shortsightedness, there is some reason for optimism. President Obama has made it his last mission in office to help combat climate change by instituting the Clean Power Plan, which aims to reduce carbon dioxide levels by 32 percent from their 2005 levels by 2030. What can you do to help? Instead of taking everything the media

shows at face value, go educate yourself. Actor Leonardo DiCaprio recently released a documentary on the crisis called Before the Flood, which elucidates many of the problems our society faces. Let's be more conscientious and leave this beautiful world intact for many future generations to come.