



Action needed now on global warming

By **Andrew M. Koenigsberg**
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WESTBOROUGH — Question – What do the National Academy of Sciences, the American Geophysical Union, the Geological Society of America, NASA, NOAA and almost every other major scientific organization in the world have in common?

Answer – They have all stated that the evidence for global warming is convincing. It is a real phenomenon, which is almost certainly caused by human activity and that something needs to be done about it.

Question – Why is global warming still controversial?

Answer – Follow the money. For the last 15 years a PR campaign funded by the oil, gas and coal industries and their lobbyists has been using the same tactics as the tobacco industry to cast uncertainty about the evidence supporting human-caused climate change.

Unfortunately, scientists are lousy at public relations, which is why “think tanks” such as the Heartland Institute, the American Enterprise Institute and Cato Institute can get away with calling global warming a “hoax” or “unproven”, a mantra which has been repeated by commentators on cable TV and radio and even in our local newspaper. The latter is the reason I felt compelled to write this article.

I would also note that these same commentators have been strangely silent about this summer’s repeated heat waves.

I am a geologist by training. I am not a climate scientist, although I keep up with the technical literature on this issue. I have also created and reviewed mathematical models in my career – not of the atmosphere, but of aquifers – the principals are the same however. I can tell you that mathematical models cannot predict exactly what will happen on a given day at a given location but are very good at predicting trends over time on a regional basis. The physical principals underlying climate models are well understood and have been so for over a century.

Climate model predictions for New England include increased rainfall, increased flooding and increased temperatures, which is exactly what has been happening. Don’t believe me? Well, you too can download raw temperature, precipitation and flooding records for the area from NOAA and the USGS which show that over the last century, rainfall has increased 10 percent in Massachusetts, the frequency of major flooding has increased by a factor of three and average temperatures in Boston has gone up by 1 degree Fahrenheit. Being able to make accurate predictions is a hallmark of good scientific theory. By that measure alone (and there are many others) – climate science is good science.

The geologic record also speaks clearly to the link between greenhouse gases and temperature. There are examples of extinction events that are clearly linked to climate change caused by relatively rapid changes in atmospheric chemistry.

Humanity is collectively pumping carbon into the atmosphere in a matter of decades, which accumulated underground for hundreds of millions of years as coal and oil.

Why anyone would think such wholesale changes in atmospheric chemistry in such a short period of time (from a geologic perspective) would not have a pronounced affect on climate is beyond me.

No one weather event can be blamed on climate change, but the repeated heat waves this year, the unusually wet summer (and floods) we had last year, the massive heat waves, fires and crop losses in Russia happening now, and the loss of 50 percent of the summer arctic ice pack over the last 25 years should all be cause for concern.

Last, I would like to leave you with the following: a recent paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science predicts that there is a 1:20 chance that by 2100, summer heat and humidity over much of the US will be so high that unprotected people will simply not be able to survive outdoors – they will die of heat stress in a matter of hours. To put that in perspective, you have a 1:88 chance of dying in a car accident and a 1:40,000 chance of dying in a plane crash. Of course, the damage to agriculture and the environment would be unimaginable as well.

That is the kind of world we may be leaving to our grandchildren if we continue business as usual.

The opponents of doing anything about climate change argue that such actions will lead to loss of jobs. I would argue that loss of jobs will be the least of our problems if we do not address this issue head on.

Andrew M. Koenigsberg is a registered professional geologist, secretary of the New England Section of the Association of Engineering and Environmental Geologists, current chairman of the Massachusetts Geological Survey State Mapping Advisory Committee and a member of the Westborough Conservation Commission

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The oil spills, hurricanes, floods, mudslides, and the global heat wave (which have been the cause of many fires, toxic smoke, and deaths) have many searching for answers. The internet is buzzing with articles and excellent blogs. But could it be simply the biblical sequence of God's wrath being poured out upon the earth which is relevant to current events in today's world. What if we are dealing with the wrath of God? Please understand the wrath of God is letting man slip deeper and deeper into the consequences of his own sin. Please visit my website at <http://www.revelation-truth.org>. Rev. Daniel W. Blair author of the book Final Warning

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Everything that you list can be explained without having to resort to a deity or God or whomever you pray to. This sort of assertion leads to the conclusion that if this is all God's will, then we can, and should not, do anything about it, other than accept Jesus Christ as our saviour and wait to be called to Heaven.

I for one, will not accept that premise (nor will I take the Old and New Testaments as the literal word of God - there are many things one can learn from scripture, but prophecy about the future is not among them).

With the exception of supervolcanoes and major asteroid/comet impacts (none of which are immediate threats at the moment, to the best of our knowledge), it is within humanity's power to prevent, mitigate or respond to natural disasters and to deal with climate change. All it takes is leadership and commitment, something that has been sadly lacking in the political arena for far too long.

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