



Climate change data is wildly overestimated

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As the federal Liberals forge ahead with expensive tax-and-spend policies to tackle climate change, more and more Canadians aren't buying into their agenda. In June, Ontarians finally disposed of their left-wing tax-friendly government in favour of one that will fight Justin Trudeau's carbon tax. Albertans are likely to do the same next year.

While the Trudeau government is bent on making climate policy more expensive, recent studies show that climate change itself probably will not be nearly as costly as previously thought. That's because models being used to predict future climate damages are grossly overestimating the amount of warming that will take place.

A study last year by Thorsten Mauritsen and Robert Pincus in the journal *Nature Climate Change* and another one this year by Nicholas Lewis and Judith Curry in the *Journal of Climate*, produced median estimates suggesting that a doubling in atmospheric carbon dioxide would increase global temperatures by only about half of what Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) models predict.

Recently, two Heritage Foundation scholars and Canadian economist Ross McKittrick re-estimated the social cost of carbon dioxide emissions using earlier empirical estimates from Lewis and Curry, instead of relying on simulated estimates of the sensitivity of temperature to carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere. In one model, the social cost of carbon fell 40-50% and in another the costs dropped a staggering 80%.

In addition to future warming and its associated costs likely being over-predicted by climate models, historical warming might also be less than what most temperature records suggest. That is because some techniques for producing temperature records systematically display more warming than actually occurred.

According to Patrick J. Michaels and Ryan Maue, scientists with the Cato Institute, one of the most reliable temperature data sets is from the Japan Meteorological Office. This record also shows the least amount of warming. “The fact of the matter is,” the Cato researchers write, “that what should be the most physically realistic measure of global average surface temperature is also our coolest.”

Not only is the amount of warming often exaggerated, but climate cost estimates are often inflated by assuming that humans will not adapt to the warmer climate. This assumption makes no sense when we consider how long the warming is supposed to take and how creative our society is when it comes to solving complex problems.

Adding all this up suggests that climate change probably won't be anywhere near as disastrous as many people imagine. This has profound policy implications – it means that the drastic and expensive tax and regulatory actions taken by governments in the name of saving the climate are increasingly difficult to justify.

Indeed, even if we ignore all the problems with climate models, the climate policies delivered by Canadian politicians are still far too costly. Environment and Climate Change Canada estimates the social cost of carbon to be around \$40 to \$50 per tonne, but many government policies fail even this standard because the government priced “solutions” are so much higher.

Take for example British Columbia's clean fuel standards. According to recent studies, the cost of these regulations is in the neighbourhood of \$170 per tonne of emissions reduced. Despite this high price tag, the federal government plans to have its own costly clean fuel standards in place in a few years.

If the goal is to have the costly climate policies, Liberals are on the right track – but if the goal is sound environmental policy, they're missing the mark.