

# Global Warming *Update* for Local Leaders

A highly compressed tour of a huge subject for those with an urgent need to know.

*There is no significant controversy in the scientific community about Global Warming.*

For those who have lingering doubts, recommend the article from the August 4, 2008 Boston Globe *Convincing the climate-change skeptics*. You can find it at: [http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2008/08/04/convincing\\_the\\_climate\\_change\\_skeptics/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/08/04/convincing_the_climate_change_skeptics/) Even those stubborn meteorologists are coming around, like Stu Ostro, a senior guy at the Weather Channel [http://climate.weather.com/blogs/9\\_13685.html](http://climate.weather.com/blogs/9_13685.html)

*The effects and consequences of Global Warming are kicking in faster than predicted.*

Many of us have observed that there has been an increase in news about melting ice caps and acidification of the oceans. These stories are the tip of the iceberg. Sir Nicholas Stern said the gloomy predictions of his high-profile review of the future effects of global warming underestimated the risks, and that climate change poses a bigger threat than he realised. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/apr/18/climatechange.carbonemissions>)

One summary can be found at the Public Interest Research Centre

[http://www.pirc.info/component/option,com\\_myblog/Itemid,42/](http://www.pirc.info/component/option,com_myblog/Itemid,42/)

Louisiana is experiencing big precipitation changes, including more storms:

<http://www.environmentamerica.org/home/reports/report-archives/global-warming-solutions/global-warming-solutions/when-it-rains-it-pours> The National Academy of

Sciences has been worried about sudden shifts in climate regimes for years & so should we:

<http://www.nap.edu/html/climatechange-brief/abruptclimatechange-brief.pdf>

It's not just Bangladesh & Tuvalu facing the waves any more, it's Britain!

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1046270/Parts-Britains-coastline-need-evacuated-rising-tides-Governments-environment-chief-warns.html>

*Why?*

To quote a study from the National Academy of Sciences: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil-fuel burning and industrial processes have been accelerating at a global scale ... The emissions growth rate since 2000 was greater than for the most fossil-fuel intensive of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change emissions scenarios developed in the late 1990s. ... Nearly constant or slightly increasing trends in the carbon intensity of energy have been recently observed in both developed and developing regions. No region is decarbonizing its energy supply. (<http://www.pnas.org/content/104/24/10288>)

*Do we really know what is going on?*

Yes, but not in every detail of course, and some of the uncertainties are important. For instance, the prediction for sea level rise by 2050 varies from a couple inches to a couple feet or more. The stakes are too high to be anything but cautious. Action today has the most value.

*What can we do?*

Fast action is important. Use common sense: If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging it deeper! That means that we must stop our greenhouse gas polluting as soon as possible. **The single most important issue in Louisiana is Entergy's plan to convert the Little Gypsy power plant to burn dirty coal and petroleum coke.** Everyone in Louisiana should change our incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs to order to reduce the amount of electricity we use because that will reduce the pollution from making the electricity. But pollution from that one power plant can wipe out all that improvement. **Think big, to do the most transformative things, and to do them quickly**, because there is no sure margin for error that we know of. This time, *it is our civilization at stake.*

## The Alliance for Affordable Energy

[www.all4energy.org](http://www.all4energy.org)

1001 S. Broad Street, Suite 202

New Orleans, LA 70125

Phone: (504) 208-9761 – Fax: (504) 208-9768



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... *for more information* ...

Note: The hurricanes in 2005 were intensified by Global Warming and in their aftermath we learned that effects of Global Warming do not occur in isolation. Other issues that come under the general heading of "energy policy" are very relevant-- issues like peak oil, damage to children by fossil fuel pollution, and the orientation of transportation systems to private automobiles vs public transit, etc., etc. So I realize that I approach global warming with a narrow focus, and I'm comfortable doing it this way because because Global Warming is the overriding issue that makes almost everything else possible or impossible.

## Books:

**Boiling Point** by Ross Gelbspan

**Thin Ice** by Mark Bowen

**Field Notes from a Catastrophe** by Elizabeth Kolbert

**Heat** by George Monbiot

## Web Sites:

### **Earth Equity News**

A service of the Climate Crisis Coalition, very highly recommended.

<http://earthequitynews.blogspot.com/>

### **Real Climate**

This blog is by climate scientists, and it is conservative but informative.

It features in-depth discussions and links to introductory material.

<http://www.realclimate.org/>

### **The Heat Is Online**

News highlights and materials written by Ross Gelbspan

<http://heatisonline.org/>

### **Arbor Day Foundation animation**

<http://arborday.org/media/mapchanges.cfm>

### **Climate Ark**

Climate Change and Global Warming Portal

<http://climateark.org/>

This document is available for download at <http://all4energy.org/GW.html>.

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