



May 18, 2009

Global Warming Confusion - Particulate Pollution

Proponents of human induced global warming like to make comments such as “The debate is over,” or “the science is settled.” Questioning the possibility that temperature change may be naturally occurring is met with accusations of confusing the issue for political gain. If there is confusion, however, it is being caused by proponents of human induced global warming. Consider the following example.

Proponents are convinced rising CO₂ levels are causing global temperature increases. These proponents, however, have a difficult time explaining how the Earth’s climates cooled from 1940 to 1980 while CO₂ levels were slowly but steadily rising.

Enter particulate pollution (dust, diesel-exhaust and soot). Global warming advocates came up with the convenient explanation that particulate pollution was blocking the Earth’s sunlight, outweighing the warming effects of rising CO₂ levels, and causing an overall global cooling trend.

These proponents claim the passage of the 1970 Clean Air Act caused particulate pollution levels to fall. This supposed drop-off of particulate pollution allowed the increasing CO₂ levels to resume warming the globe. Two recent studies, however, have contradicted this entire line of thinking.

First, a March 2009 study published in the journal *Science* found levels of airborne pollution have actually increased over the last 30 years everywhere except Europe. If this study is correct, it has important implications. It means the Clean Air Act did not actually reduce particulate pollution levels, as claimed. Also, it strongly would suggest increasing particulate pollution levels do not cause global cooling, since we saw a climate warming trend from 1980 until ten years ago.

Second, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program conducted a study which found soot coming from inefficient diesel engines and agricultural burning is causing a haze. The study argues the haze may actually be warming the global and arctic atmospheres by absorbing sunlight. The soot may also be helping to melt the arctic snow pack because when the soot is deposited on the snow cap it darkens its surface, causing absorption of sunlight and melting.

So which is it? Do particulates cool or warm the planet? If particulates cooled the planet before 1980, why didn’t they keep on cooling it afterwards, since the *Science* study shows

particulates have continued increasing? If particulates can cause warming, as the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program study suggests, how do proponents explain the 1940 to 1980 cooling period, which occurred during rising levels of both particulate pollution and CO2 levels?

Proponents of human induced global warming believe the planet is overheating and dire consequences lie ahead if we don't do something now! Like it or not, there is significant disagreement within the scientific community over the issue of human influence on the Earth's climates.

Next week: How has "cap and trade" been working in other countries? Access my reports online, at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm23/news/media.htm>.

If you wish to remove yourself from the mailing list, please respond back to this email with the subject line "REMOVE".

State Capitol • Room 317 North • Post Office Box 8953 • Madison, WI 53708
(608) 266-0486 • District: (262) 240-0808 • Toll Free: (888) 534-0023
Rep.Ottj@legis.wi.gov