



Written by [James Heiser](#) on May 29, 2012

Environmentalists Warn of 150,000 Heat-related Deaths by 2099

With the heat of summer looming in the immediate future, radical environmentalists have conjured a new global warming threat with which to alarm the public. According to a new report from the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), tens of thousands of Americans will begin to die from the effects of global warming. The report, "[Killer Summer Heat](#)," begins with the measured, calm tones of scientific discourse: "Climate change is literally killing us." However, despite the panic language, mankind has proven to be an amazingly adaptive species, and even climate scientists have had to admit there is [little evidence of warming](#) — let alone a human cause to any such warming.



In the assessment of public opinion, the theory of anthropogenic [human-caused] climate change has steadily unraveled since the 2009 Climategate scandal which erupted when thousands of emails were secretly collected from the server of the Climate Research Unit at the UK's University of East Anglia, demonstrating what many saw as, at best, slipshod scientific methodology, [which included destruction of the original climate data](#). As Steven Hayward [wrote for the Weekly Standard last December](#): "Climategate did for the global warming controversy what the Pentagon Papers did for the Vietnam war 40 years ago: It changed the narrative decisively." The political pressure created by the scandal helped to dramatically slow the efforts by the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to impose its global political agenda on the nations of the world. After all, a program to [redistribute \\$76 trillion](#) from the economies of the first world to those of the third world over the next two generations is much harder to sell when the science underpinning the theory behind the program begins to unravel.

The NRDC's "Killer Summer Heat" report is, of course, well-timed. With a particularly warm beginning to summer already underway, a news media which is sympathetic to the theory of manmade climate change will likely find the NRDC report virtually irresistible: The charge that global warming will cause 150,000 heat-related deaths in the United States by the end of the century makes for eye-catching headlines.

According to the [press release from the NRDC](#), there is a direct connection between the projected deaths and a failure to impose a particular environmental policy agenda:

More than 150,000 additional Americans could die by the end of this century due to excessive heat caused by climate change, according to a detailed analysis of peer-reviewed scientific data by the Natural Resources Defense Council. ...



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The projected deaths are based on the widely-used assumption that carbon pollution will steadily increase in the absence of effective new policies, more than doubling the levels seen today by the end of the century.

“This is a wake-up call. Climate change has a number of real life-and-death consequences. One of which is that as carbon pollution continues to grow, climate change is only going to increase the number of dangerously hot days each summer, leading to a dramatic increase in the number of lives lost,” said Dan Lashof, director of NRDC’s climate and clean air program. “To prevent the health impacts of climate change from getting even worse, we need to establish a comprehensive program to reduce heat-trapping pollution from all sources, by building on the Environmental Protection Agency’s proposals to limit carbon pollution from new power plants and cars.”

Despite the difficulties which the authors of various computer models have experienced trying to accurately predict real world climate change — let alone next week’s rain — the NRDC does not hesitate to predict very specific death counts for various American cities over the course of the next five generations or so.

The “Killer Summer Heat” report, released today, projects heat-related death toll through the end of the 21st century in the most populated U.S. cities. The three with the highest number of total estimated heat-related deaths through 2099 are: Louisville, Ky. (19,000 deaths); Detroit (17,900); and Cleveland (16,600), according to the report.

Other cities’ estimated death tolls through the end of the century include: Baltimore (2,900 deaths); Boston (5,700 deaths); Chicago (6,400); Columbus (6,000); Denver (3,500); Los Angeles (1,200); Minneapolis (7,500); Philadelphia (700); Pittsburgh (1,200); Providence, R.I. (2,000); St. Louis (5,600); Washington, D.C. (3,000).

According to [the statistics of NOAA’s National Weather Service](#), 206 Americans died from heat-related causes in 2011 — a number higher than the 10-year average of 119 per year. However, according to a CDC report which covered 1999 through 2003, one must distinguish between deaths caused by heat, and those in which heat was a contributing factor:

During 1999-2003, a total of 3,442 deaths resulting from exposure to extreme heat were reported (annual mean: 688). For 2,239 (65%) of these deaths, the underlying cause of death was recorded as exposure to excessive heat; for the remaining 1,203 (35%), hyperthermia was recorded as a contributing factor.

And there could be a statistical rise in heat-related deaths in recent years which is attributable to the inclusion of heat as one of several factors which may lead to the death of an individual; [as the CDC stated in a 2006 report](#):

In this analysis, the inclusion of hyperthermia as a contributing cause of death increased by 54% the total number of heat-related deaths during 1999-2003 that would have been counted through inclusion of a heat-related underlying cause alone. Because heat-related illnesses can exacerbate existing medical conditions and death from heat exposure can be preceded by various symptoms, heat-related deaths can be difficult to identify when illness onset or death is not witnessed by a clinician.

Given the simple fact that there are few factors of human life which are more uncertain than our interactions with the weather, it would seem unlikely that the NRDC’s dramatic predictions are likely to gain much traction in the realm of public opinion — especially when they might be interpreted as being



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freighted in terms which directly link death projections with a failure to implement a particular political agenda.



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