



Written by [James Heiser](#) on September 4, 2009

Study Finds Small Increase in Arctic Temps

Environmental alarmists are using a new report to increase the pressure on the U.S. Senate as that body considers passage of its own version of the “cap and trade” bill.

As was noted [previously](#), advocates of drastic limitations of the carbon dioxide emissions that accompany an industrial civilization have been spending large sums of money on advertising that prognosticate imminent disaster unless radical measures are taken.

Now, a new report on arctic ice is being used as the latest proof of disastrous climate change. [According to the Associated Press](#): “The Arctic is warmer than it’s been in 2,000 years, even though it should be cooling because of changes in the Earth’s orbit that cause the region to get less direct sunlight. Indeed, the Arctic had been cooling for nearly two millennia before reversing course in the last century and starting to warm as human activities added greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.” Although human causation remains unproven, media reports on environmental issues appear to simply ignore the on-going debate.



Leaving aside valid methodological questions concerning the assertion of the quantifiably anomalous increase in temperatures, the matter of the cause of the increase is not proven merely by proving the temperatures have increased. Numerous articles have cited [the increase in temperatures on Mars](#), for example, which even environmentalists have not yet attempted to blame on Western industrialization.

What are the drastic changes in arctic temperatures being invoked to panic the public into supporting “cap and trade”? According to the AP, “Summer temperatures in the Arctic averaged 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit (1.4 degrees Celsius) warmer than would have been expected if the cooling had continued, the researchers said.”

Understand what that means: the average temperature was 2.5 degrees higher than it would have been “if the cooling had continued,” not 2.5 degrees higher than what the temperature actually was, according to this report. Arguably 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit is not as trivial as it sounds, since an it could have a cumulative effect if sustained over a long period of time. However, this finding raises the real question of the extent to which temperatures are rising, and the extent to which research models showing how much cooling should have taken place were simply wrong.

Consider an analogy to federal spending: how often have you heard of a “cut” in federal spending that



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really was not a cut at all, but simply a decrease in the rate at which such spending was increasing? Such a “cut” could only be considered a decrease in federal spending in the language of Washington policy wonks.

Estimates of past temperatures are largely inferential, being based on phenomena usually linked to temperature that we can measure; after all, there are no actual recorded temperatures for the overwhelming majority of the time under consideration. But given what is being posited: that a small increase in temperature, rather than an expected small decrease in temperature, is the result of the last 150 years of development, the question is: should we — could we — undo all of the past century and a half of technological progress for the sake of a theoretical cause of a small temperature fluctuation in the Arctic? According to the AP: “The finding adds fuel to the debate over a House-passed climate bill now pending in the Senate. The administration-backed measure would impose the first limits on greenhouse gases and eventually would lead to an 80 percent reduction by putting a price on each ton of climate-altering pollution.” The looming disaster is not a small increase in arctic temperatures — it’s the on-going implosion of the American economy that such a reckless move would exacerbate.



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