

OPINION

Climate change truth and consequences

So here's the deal. Two hundred years ago, carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was at its highest historical levels. Today, it's 35 percent higher. If I put an extra layer of transparent insulation on my greenhouse, is it going to get cooler in there? Probably not.

However, this is what John Carlson's recent commentary column seems to be saying. In fact, he seems to be mistaken about a number of things.

To begin with, an average rise in worldwide temperatures means all sorts of crazy weather, not just hotter days. Too much fresh water from melting polar ice, for example, could interfere with the warm Atlantic currents and cause deep-freeze winters on the East Coast. That would get somebody's attention in Washington.

When Carlson claims there is no warming trend, he's probably referring to a recent article in *Nature* that predicts short-term cooling over the next 10-15 years. The article does not deny, however, that the long-term warming observed over the

My Turn

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last 100 years will continue.

Carlson also says the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) model is wrong. This is hard to understand, since IPCC predictions are a combination of several models, and allow for a great deal of short-term variation. To say their calculations are wrong is to confuse weather change (short term) with climate change (long term).

Worried about all of this? Don't know what to do? Then you'd probably prefer scientific facts rather than uninformed opinions.

Search on "IPCC AR4 synthesis report" to find out what the IPCC really says. Read what other climate scientists think at realclimate.org.

And then decide for yourself.