

MY THOUGHTS ON GLOBAL WARMING – MY CONCLUSIONS AND “FAR FETCHED OR HUMOROUS”

Stephen L. Bakke, December 2007 and April 2011

My Conclusions

My conclusions are not very complicated:

- Cleaning and preserving the environment, including reducing CO2 emissions, is inherently good and self redeeming on its own merits – without regard to any related impact on global warming.
- Reducing our consumption of petroleum products is the right thing to do. And reducing our reliance on foreign energy sources is important for many reasons.
- Drilling in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico is right to do in the short term.
- Developing alternative energy sources, including nuclear, is an imperative.
- Global warming is now occurring and humans contribute to climate change.
- The many problems identified by Mr. Gore et al, include some representations that, in my opinion, aren't just “spin”, but appear to be exaggerations, errors, incomplete representations, or misrepresentations.
- The solutions advanced by Mr. Gore et al, most about reducing CO2 emissions, will have nowhere close to the impact that is suggested, and their successful implementation is doubtful and expensive in more ways than just economically.
- There are many forces at play other than human influence in climate change and, before making impetuous or potentially wrong and damaging policy decisions, the debate needs to be continued - and in fact it is heating up.
- There are few easy or ideal solutions to the world's problems. Let's pay attention as science develops and the debate continues.
- There is CLEARLY no consensus! The debate is CLEARLY not over. After reading this I hope you understand why I reached that conclusion, even if you don't agree with all of my opinions.

Why do I reach these conclusions? I honestly would not have compiled the same list prior to this project. While the information which I gathered from both sides of the debate often can be described as “spinning” and misleading, my research assures me that the absolute certainty displayed by Al Gore and others is incorrect, misleading, and potentially very risky. I do not pretend to be a scientific expert, nor could I effectively

debate this issue with many of those who disagree with me. I just know that informed logic doesn't compel the actions suggested by climate change zealots. I will present observations and questions prompted by apparent exaggerations, apparent misstatements, inconsistencies, incomplete representations, and apparent research errors.

I think it is unfortunate that Al Gore and others have presumed Mr. Gore into the de-facto leadership position on this issue. There are so many more who, for me, would be more influential in that role. Nevertheless there he is – he's the one the public listens to. As a result many of my comments refer to him, his group, et al, or a similar reference. His presence, in the context of his book and movie, seem to make my job easier and place an exclamation mark on my arguments. If you notice some bias in how I frame my comments or conclusions – to that I plead guilty. The bias exists because I am writing this after almost 1 ½ years of considerable research and thought, and to eliminate my bias from this writing would take more energy than I want to expend – and I'm not sure I would prefer the result.

Certainly, many points made by the zealots are “right on”. For example, I believe humans do contribute to climate change – and some opposition to their theories and opinions are “knee-jerk” and simplistic. Even more certainly, some of the questions I raise could be incorrect, or eventually proven to be incorrect. And I am quite sure I have made some errors in interpretation. But taken as a whole, I believe these points probably will remain relevant and should be sustained as part of the debate. Of course, my opinions are always subject to adjustment as new information is available.

What Should We Do?

While constructing this section I was influenced by several sources, including the IPCC. But I must point out that my biggest influence for this section came from articles by Bjorn Lomborg and his book entitled “Cool It”. He was a uniquely credible source because he asserts global warming as being man made, and at the same time he is reasonable and extremely analytical in his evaluation of global warming's likely impact. He develops meaningful and practical solutions. He considers both science and economics, and usually ends up, in my opinion, with a very logical result. So here goes.

First, let's just calm down. We need to seriously study what we can really do about the problem and then decide among alternatives, including the likelihood or practicality of “old fashioned” adaptation. But while we are starting this process we need to keep studying climate change in general and let the science develop – let the debate continue. I am confident in this approach because I agree with Mr. Lomborg that the alarmists are way out of line in their predictions of the extent and impact of global warming. He also extensively analyzes, technically and economically, the impact of remedies such as Kyoto. He asserts that whatever the cause, we need to decide wisely what to do to devise simple, smart, and efficient solutions. We must reject most of the existing excessive and ineffective, albeit well meaning, alarmists' programs.

We need to get our perspective back and remember there are many other issues which we may find are equal or more important than global warming. For example, refer to the discussion of the Copenhagen Consensus referred to on page 7. The approach I am suggesting should make sense to those who agree with my opinion as to causes and effects of global warming, and the futility of programs such as Kyoto.

- Set aside any further consideration of the Kyoto Protocol. Remember, there is ample evidence that even if the world were to comply 100% with the provisions, the benefit would be miniscule even after a century – arguably only 3 degrees F lower temperature. This data is not terribly controversial, even according to the IPCC modelers. And the Washington Post refers to Kyoto as “mostly symbolic”. But isn’t it better than nothing? But at what cost?! If the Kyoto Protocol is complied with we will see very little benefit, and the economic costs would be staggering. Reasonable persons have said it could result in the end of society and civilization as we know it. **It’s not as if Kyoto would work, while being too expensive. It wouldn’t work AND the costs would be devastating.**
- We can safely dispense with the concern with any increase of heat related deaths. It can be effectively demonstrated that heat related deaths are far less than the reduction in cold related deaths. The death rate will actually decrease overall. And we should use our wealth to develop technologies to eliminate the very small increase in heat related deaths. This can be done.
- For the developing world, which will be most harshly affected by negative effects of warming, we don’t serve them well by expending funds on hopeless measures such as Kyoto. Rather, we should use those savings to make a meaningful difference such as fighting HIV/AIDS through research and new medications.
- And how about other “third world” concerns like malaria, typhus, and other serious insect born diseases. We should wisely use the money saved from avoiding Kyoto by fighting these and other diseases in very effective ways. For example, the use of DDT (now determined not to be harmful if used correctly) will relatively easily and cheaply wipe out many of these diseases. DDT would improve the lifestyle in wealthy countries as well.
- Rising sea level is another concern for the next 100 years. If it is to happen, the best estimate is approximately a one foot increase – about the same as the last 150 years. Knowing this in advance will give us the opportunity to implement adaptive measures along our coasts as we have done with success in past decades and centuries. Society will make changes if they have the resources.
- Those supporting Kyoto are concerned with hurricanes increasing in frequency and intensity. However, evidence indicates that if there is an increase in hurricane damage it will most likely will be due to societal forces (e.g. more people living closer to coasts) and not more frequent or stronger storms. If we have saved

money by avoiding the predictably worthless Kyoto efforts, we can deal with structural and infrastructure improvements.

- Starvation, water shortages, etc. etc. Again, if we make the right choices for economic resource allocation, we can make the right social policy changes. Kyoto wouldn't have worked and we wouldn't have had the funds to make these choices and changes. There is no indication that overall crop production will do anything but improve, and our water resources will remain. The problem may well have more to do with allocation and distribution, so that everyone has access to what is predictably an adequate supply.
- If we don't spend money foolishly (e.g. Kyoto), we will have more available to spend on R&D for renewable and non-carbon energy sources, including nuclear.
- And so on. I believe this is the best approach given what we know today.

So, really the answer is to pick the choices that DO GOOD (e.g. adaptation, research, infrastructure, social policies) not just ones that FEEL GOOD (e.g. Kyoto). Given the most likely results of global warming we need to combine adaptive strategies (e.g. infrastructure) while doing other things to reduce or eliminate damage (e.g. R&D for energy) and applying known remedies like DDT for disease. **This is all possible because science truly is not telling us to act in an alarmist and foolish way.**

Refer to the information presented about the Copenhagen Consensus in an earlier report. We should find a good lesson in that exercise. We can all react better, as wealthy nations with resources "dealing with and adapting", than we could with very few resources and weak economies. The latter would be the likely result of pursuing the wasteful strategies of the Kyoto Protocol. And as we continue to listen to science and continue the debate, it won't be long until we will discover even better short and long term strategies.

Kum Ba Yah

I wrote this for me. I wanted to personally review all that I had gathered and organize my thoughts as I finalized my current opinions. If others want to read it, fine. I have copies of most of the sources and information available if questions arise. And the balance of the information I reviewed is available by reference to the websites listed herein.

This project was, I believe, broad, fair, and honest. It should show a non-scientist trying to make a credible attempt at reaching a conclusion about a very important and complex issue. I sincerely believe I have covered all the bases I originally intended to, and stayed on course.

In the interest of clarity of purpose I will repeat myself from an earlier report. I am sure I am wrong in some of my comments and opinions. I am also quite sure that some of the "competing information" I present may be incorrect, or may not stand the test of time. I am also quite sure the alarmists have some very good points to

make and we should continue to listen to them. However, incorrect, misleading, and incomplete information is still very prominent and could lead to incorrect decisions with potentially disastrous results. We need to be more certain – and I don't mean to imply I want unreasonable or infinite certainty. My primary goal is to extend the debate and I believe I have shown that it certainly IS NOT AND SHOULD NOT be over!

Far-Fetched or Humorous

A few unusual or unexpected things have been tied to global warming (No vetting), e.g.:

Divorce – “If more people knew the environmental consequences of divorce, more of them might choose to stay together”... “Even those people who care dearly about the environment are not aware of the environmental impacts of divorce.” (I didn't make it up.)

Birth Control or Whatever – One group is suggesting that in addition to other measures, a global warming solution will require a worldwide population reduction by 75%. (I understand they're looking for volunteers – you go first.)

Glacial Growth AND Glacial Retreat – Can we have it both ways?

Accelerating Evolution – Isn't that called “adapting”?

Collapse of Gingerbread Houses – Emeril to the rescue.

Extinction of Woodlice – I thought I noticed a difference.

Beer is Better – Beer is always good.

Decline in Circumcision – They really know how to mess with a guy's feelings.

Erosion of Footpaths – I find that kind of hard to “follow”.

Mammoth Dung Melt – Watch your step.

Megacryometeors – I thought so.

Seals Mating More – They gotta' like that.

Tropopause Raised – I could have sworn it had lowered.