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## EDITORIAL

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# Global warming existence debate over

**T**he release last week of a comprehensive international study by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change should lay to rest any reasonable doubts about the human contribution to global warming.

The research by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change represented the sober consensus of dozens of scientists and officials from more than 113 countries. It also builds on research compiled from the past two decades and shows the unmistakable human contribution to global warming that is leading, for example, to rising sea levels and increased weather pattern extremes such as more violent hurricanes and extended drought periods.

The report finds that 11 of the warmest 12 years on record took place in the past 12 years with a likely increase of 3 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit through the year 2100. While we can't know the extent of the seismic impact this temperature rise will have on everything from growing vegetables to altered coastlines, one doesn't need to be a scientist to imagine our children and grandchildren living on a different planet than us.

To his credit President Bush has started to take global climate change seriously and discard the foolish rhetoric that represents six years lost to political atrophy. Alas, old habits die hard and what Bush proposed in his recent State of the Union speech was less a call to action than a wager that volunteer methods and technologies yet invented will save the day.

We hope the IPCC report and other obvious evidence signposts such as the quickly melting Greenland ice pack and a federal proposal to list polar bears as an endangered species because of global warming, will begin to eliminate the policy and political logjam that has held up progress.

Presidential hopefuls Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., have introduced a bipartisan bill calling for mandatory carbon emission reductions — a measure supported by 10 major corporations and business groups including General Electric, Alcoa, DuPont and BP America. As McCain, who has bucked his own party on the issue for years, recently said, the global warming existence debate “is over.”

The great unknown is what to do next. For naysayers who believe the economic costs of mandated action and government involvement will be too detrimental, it's a cause losing both context and meaning. Economic disruption and potential pain is coming no matter what.

“There may yet be some people who will look at nuances in data points among the various elements of the IPCC report in a last attempt not to face the overwhelmingly obvious,” said Adam Markham, executive director at Clean Air-Cool Planet, a Portsmouth-based nonprofit that promotes solutions to climate change in the northeastern United States. “It is no longer a matter of if the water will rise or even, quite literally, how high. The only question is, How fast can we do what we must do to stop it?”

It's not a stretch to portray global climate change as the big bang of issues because of its collective environmental, social, economic and national security impact on our region, the country and the world. The status quo of essentially taking the Earth and its resources for granted is an inconvenient truth we can no longer afford.

Find out more: On Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch); On Clean Air-Cool Planet: [www.cleanair-coolplanet.org](http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org).

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