

Opinion

Global warming is harming

New Hampshire right now

GLOBAL WARMING can no longer be ignored. Global warming is the gravest environmental issue our culture has ever faced. It is not only an environmental issue; it is an urgent social, health, economic and moral issue that demands immediate action.

The debate has moved well beyond proving the science of global warming to the utmost need to act while we still have time. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) just released its fourth report since 1990 on the science of global warming. With each report, the scientists involved have concluded that the certainty of a human effect on global climate has increased, while the likelihood of other

factors playing a predominant role in observed warming has decreased.

The effects of global warming are not just occurring at the poles. Climatic changes are affecting New Hampshire here and now. Tourism is New Hampshire's second largest industry. Warm winters and lack of snow have resulted in economic hardship crippling snow-dependent attractions, with the ripple effect impacting restaurant, lodging, retail and service jobs. Logging and wood products comprise a \$2.7 billion industry that has been gravely impacted by warm winters impairing the ability to harvest timber.

These segments of the business community are vital to

ANOTHER VIEW

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New Hampshire's economy and character. Disruption is now on the scale of making this a disaster area!

The balance of biodiversity has been upset. Wood duck and other bird species are returning to New Hampshire weeks earlier. Lilacs and honeysuckle are blooming earlier, warmer winters are moving the maple syrup season earlier in the year and lakes and rivers are freezing later and thawing earlier.

Global warming will have serious implications for public health. Higher summer temperatures adversely affect children, seniors and people suffering

from cardiopulmonary disease, our most vulnerable citizens. Longer warm seasons increase the spread of infectious disease by insects: Lyme disease, West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis, all well-established in New Hampshire.

Several months ago, more than 100 groups, businesses and prominent leaders from all around New Hampshire came together to call on Congress for a federal limit on global warming pollution that would guarantee pollution reductions from today's levels and promote the development of clean and efficient energy sources. Some legislators stepped up to the plate; others are still bench warming.

We residents of New Hampshire value the quality of life

our state bestows. We are a small state that takes environmental stewardship seriously. According to a 2003 National Environmental Trust report, the United States is responsible for 25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the world. New Hampshire was ranked 45th, near the bottom in the U.S., in the amount of greenhouse gases we emit. We are not major contributors (although we can always improve) and by ourselves we may not make a big difference in the human impact on climate change. But we have the same number of senators as every other state and this gives us leverage to influence national policy.

Taking action now to protect our state and the nation from

the effects of global warming would help preserve the natural legacy our citizens deserve. Global warming is a global problem that requires global participation; most especially including the United States, which should be a leader in taking effective action.

We cannot change the past but we can shape the future! With the findings of the of the IPCC's fourth assessment on climate change, we must, as citizens and business owners, be steadfast in our conviction to require that our elected officials at every level of government immediately pledge to take action to reduce global warming pollution worldwide.

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