

# THE LEIPZIG DECLARATION ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

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As independent scientists concerned with atmospheric and climate problems, we -- along with many of our fellow citizens -- are apprehensive about emission targets and timetables adopted at the Climate Conference held in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997. This gathering of politicians from some 160 signatory nations aims to impose on citizens of the industrialized nations -- but not on others -- a system of global environmental regulations that include quotas and punitive taxes on energy fuels to force substantial cuts in energy use within 10 years, with further cuts to follow. Stabilizing atmospheric carbon dioxide -- the announced goal of the Climate Treaty -- would require that fuel use be cut by as much as 60 to 80 percent -- worldwide!

Energy is essential for economic growth. In a world in which poverty is the greatest social pollutant, any restriction on energy use that inhibits economic growth should be viewed with caution. We understand the motivation to eliminate what are perceived to be the driving forces behind a potential climate change; but we believe the Kyoto Protocol -- to curtail carbon dioxide emissions from only part of the world community -- is dangerously simplistic, quite ineffective, and economically destructive to jobs and standards-of-living.

More to the point, we consider the scientific basis of the 1992 Global Climate Treaty to be flawed and its goal to be unrealistic. The policies to implement the Treaty are, as of now, based solely on unproven scientific theories, imperfect computer models -- and the unsupported assumption that catastrophic global warming follows from an increase in greenhouse gases, requiring immediate action. We do not agree. We believe that the dire predictions of a future warming have not been validated by the historic climate record, which appears to be dominated by natural fluctuations, showing both warming and cooling. These predictions are based on nothing more than theoretical models and cannot be relied on to construct far-reaching policies.

As the debate unfolds, it has become increasingly clear that -- contrary to the conventional wisdom -- there does not exist today a general scientific consensus about the importance of greenhouse warming from rising levels of carbon dioxide. In fact, most climate specialists now agree that actual observations from both weather satellites and balloon-borne radiosondes show little if any atmospheric warming --in contradiction to computer model results.

Historically, climate has always been a factor in human affairs -- with warmer periods, such as the medieval "climate optimum," playing an important role in economic expansion and in the welfare of nations that depend primarily on agriculture. Colder periods have caused crop failures, and led to famines, disease, and other documented human misery. We must, therefore, remain sensitive to any and all human activities that could affect future climate.

However, based on all the evidence available to us, we cannot subscribe to the politically inspired worldview that envisages climate catastrophes and calls for hasty actions. For this reason, we consider the drastic emission control policies deriving from the Kyoto conference -- lacking credible support from the underlying science -- to be ill-advised and premature.

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This statement is based on the International Symposium on the Greenhouse Controversy, held in Leipzig, Germany on Nov. 9-10, 1995, and in Bonn, Germany on Nov. 10-11, 1997. For further information, contact the Europaeische Akademie fuer Umweltfragen or The Science and Environmental Policy Project in Arlington, Virginia.<[singer@sepp.org](mailto:singer@sepp.org)>