

Comments for EPA Public Hearings [5/18/09, Arlington VA]

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My name is Jan Dash. I have a PhD in physics, and published over 50 papers in science journals. I also spent 20 years in business doing quantitative risk management. I have studied global warming and climate change intensely. I am on the Board of Directors of the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, which I represent here. I refer to the 2006 Unitarian Universalist Association Statement of Conscience, calling for action against global warming. I refer to the IPCC reports and to realclimate.org. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I urge strong EPA regulation of US greenhouse gases as prudent risk management and also critical for US interests economically, militarily, and ethically in the 21st century. Global warming caused by greenhouse gases will endanger US public health and welfare. Impacts will be overwhelmingly negative. If we do not regulate and control greenhouse gases, the impacts of global warming will damage US and world economies. Regulation will spur economically beneficial new technologies - wind, solar, and in the long term, nuclear fusion energy. If we do not regulate and control greenhouse gases, military sources say that worldwide instabilities will produce military conflicts, hurt peace, and negatively impact the US militarily. Regulation will decrease conflicts and help peace. If we do not regulate and control greenhouse gases, we forfeit ethical leadership. We have ethical responsibility for huge amounts of greenhouse gases already put into the atmosphere by US emissions, and we have ethical responsibility for future US emissions.

The basic science is clear, and there is broad consensus among climate scientists who agree if human greenhouse gases continue uncontrolled, a substantial upward trend of the global average temperature will occur. Melting glaciers will produce water shortages. Substantially more heat will damage crops, producing food shortages. Diseases and a plethora of other impacts will worsen. The US is not exempt. There is no safe haven. The world is interconnected. We need mitigation and adaptation.

What about contrarians or global warming deniers? Real scientists are skeptics by nature, convinced by evidence. But contrarians distort science. Their tactics resemble the unethical tobacco-industry tactics with cigarettes. Contrarians ignore evidence, confuse weather fluctuations with climate trends, and misrepresent climate models. They push irrelevant unsupported hypotheses. They minimize impacts. They maximize mitigation costs. They oppose regulation. The EPA should hold firm and disregard them.

We don't have much time. Impacts exist today. Future impacts will be far worse. We need to act now. We cannot wait for other countries. Delayed action will be far more difficult, more expensive, and less effective. Inaction will be very dangerous.

I hold up a picture of my grandson. The world should be livable for him and all children. The EPA must regulate greenhouse gases to help make this possible. Thank you.