

## Climate change: Government report warns of growing impact on U.S. life (English 8)

Required Annotations		Student-Created Annotations		Summary / Questions / Reflection	
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Student-created	Required (bold)
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A new report from the federal government has an unmistakable message. The effects of climate change, including deadly wildfires, debilitating hurricanes and heat waves, are already harming the United States, and the danger of more disasters is worsening.

The report's authors are from federal government agencies. They say they are more certain than ever that climate change **poses** a threat to Americans' health and pocketbooks, as well as to the country's natural resources. The report, released Friday, November 23, does not give recommendations to the government. However, the report's sense of urgency contrasts with the lack of any clear plan from President Donald Trump to tackle the problems.

The document, required by law, is the first of its kind during the Trump administration. It details how disasters and other changes are becoming more common and how much worse they could become without efforts to slow the heating of Earth's climate.

### More Evidence Of Climate Change

Already, coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea, Hawaii, Florida and the United States' Pacific Ocean territories are experiencing damage. Wildfires are devouring ever-larger areas during longer fire seasons. Alaska is seeing a stunning rate of warming. Changes have turned its ecosystems upside down, from once ice-clogged coastlines to increasingly thawing tundras.

The publication by the National Climate Assessment marks the government's fourth in-depth look at climate-change impacts on the United States since 2000. The last was in 2014. The new report was produced by 13 federal departments and agencies and overseen by the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

### "Growing Challenges To Human Health"

The authors say that global warming "presents **mounting** challenges to human health and quality of life, the economy, and the natural systems that support us." They conclude that humans must act quickly. We must adapt to impacts and reduce disasters to avoid damages to the environment, our health, and businesses and jobs, they say.

"The impacts we've seen the last 15 years have continued to get stronger, and that will only continue," said Gary Yohe, a professor at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, who served on a panel that reviewed the report. "We have wasted 15 years of response time. If we waste another five years of response time, the story gets worse."

That **urgency** is at odds with the actions of Trump and his administration. It has ended several environmental regulations that were in place under President Barack Obama. These rules were put in place to help prevent damage from climate change.

### Trump Questions Reports On Climate Change

Trump announced the United States would leave a worldwide climate agreement. He questioned the science of climate change last month, saying on television that the warming trend "could very well go back."

Then, during last week's cold weather, Trump tweeted, "Whatever happened to Global Warming?" This shows a confusion between daily weather changes and long-term climate trends that scientists have tried to correct.

Government experts said the contents of the report had not been changed by administration officials.

"This report has not been altered or **revised** in any way because of political considerations," said Monica Allen. She is a spokeswoman for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

### **Senator Takes On Trump's Remarks**

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, from Rhode Island, said the report shows how climate change will affect all Americans.

"The Trump administration can't bury the effects of climate change," he said in a statement. "The president says outrageous things" like that climate change was made up by the Chinese, he said. However, he added that "serious consequences" await if we don't act.

Climate change is already affecting the U.S., and it is getting worse, the report says.

The report finds that the **continental** United States already is 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than it was 100 years ago. The surrounding seas are on average 9 inches higher. The nation gets far worse heat waves than it experienced 50 years ago, the report says.

### **Warmer Temperatures Predicted**

Potentially worse impacts are ahead. The report suggests that by 2050, the country could see as much as 2.3 additional degrees of warming in the continental United States. A record-warm year like 2016 would become routine.

Crops, including corn, wheat and soybeans, would see declining yields as the country heats up.

Another federal climate study reaches a more positive conclusion.

### **The Effect Of Greenhouse Gases**

The Second State of the Carbon Cycle Report examines all of North America. It finds that while North America released 24 percent of the world's emissions in 2004, it dropped to 17 percent in 2013. This came in part from improvements such as cars getting better gas mileage.

"For the globe, we're still going up, but regionally, there have been these changes in how humans have been acting that have caused our **emissions** to go down," said Ted Schuur. He is a Northern Arizona University expert who contributed to the report.

The U.S. remains at risk because of other greenhouse gases released around the globe.

Some Americans are seeing the effects of climate change.

"We don't debate who caused it. You go outside, the streets are flooded. What are you going to do about it?" said Susanne Torriente. She works for the city of Miami Beach, Florida, which is spending millions of dollars to deal with rising sea levels. She said we need to use the best data to make decisions. "It shouldn't be that complicated," she said.

## Questions

1. Read the sentences below from the article.

- 1 We must adapt to impacts and reduce disasters to avoid damages to the environment, our health, and businesses and jobs, they say.
- 2 These rules were put in place to help prevent damage from climate change.
- 3 Trump announced the United States would leave a worldwide climate agreement.
- 4 This shows a confusion between daily weather changes and long-term climate trends that scientists have tried to correct.

Which two sentences from the article include CENTRAL ideas of the article?

- b) 1 and 3
  - c) 1 and 4
  - d) 2 and 3
  - e) 2 and 4
2. Which statement would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?
- a) Government experts claim that administration officials have not changed the contents of the newly issued climate-change report.
  - b) President Trump and his administration have ended several environmental regulations that were put in place by President Obama.
  - c) A newly issued report by the federal government provides an urgent message about the dangerous effects of climate change.
  - d) An important way that global warming has impacted Alaska is by turning its ice-clogged coastlines into increasingly thawing tundras.
3. How does the author draw the MOST attention to a weakness in Trump's views about climate change?
- a) by pointing out that Trump has questioned the science of climate change
  - b) by quoting a senator who claims that Trump said climate change was made up by the Chinese
  - c) by stating that Trump announced the U.S. would leave a worldwide climate agreement
  - d) by highlighting Trump's apparent confusion about daily weather changes and climate change
4. What is the author's MOST likely purpose for writing this article?
- a) to suggest that there is growing disagreement within the science community about climate change
  - b) to present two opposing views about climate change and the impacts of climate change
  - c) to emphasize that the effects of climate change are worsening and need to be addressed
  - d) to explain some possible strategies for taking action against the many effects of climate change