

## Win The Kyoto Fight, Save Your Money

By Patrick J. Michaels, Ph.D.

### Summary

President Bush had several very good reasons to kill the Kyoto Protocol. Kyoto was unworkable, did little, was enormously expensive, and deflected attention from real environmental problems and their solutions.

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***Researcher Tom Wigley calculated that the Protocol would reduce global surface temperature by an average of 0.07°C by the year 2050, and 0.14°C by 2100. It is a reduction in warming that is simply too small to measure.***

Since the Bush Administration announced the death of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the social atmosphere has become increasingly tense. It seems everyone has strong feelings about this issue, while few pay attention to the facts. This is especially notable at cocktail parties and around water coolers. Consequently, in the interests of comity, here is a pocket guide to the truths that killed Kyoto.

**1. Kyoto does nothing.** In December, 1997, shortly after he ordered U.S. negotiators at Kyoto to agree that we would reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases (consumption of energy) by one-third of what they would become in 2008 had we done nothing, Al Gore asked federal scientists at the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) how much warming such an action would prevent. Assuming that all the nations of the world honored their commitments under Kyoto, USGCRP researcher Tom Wigley calculated that the Protocol would reduce global surface temperature by an average of 0.07°C by the year 2050, and 0.14°C by 2100. The result was subsequently published in the prestigious scientific journal *Geophysical Research Letters*, and has never been seriously challenged. It is a reduction in warming that is simply too small to measure.

**2. Kyoto costs a fortune.** Besides doing nothing, Kyoto is very expensive. Again, we can thank the Clinton Administration for this. Their Energy Information Administration (EIA), a boatload of MIT scientists, the Australian Bureau of Resource and Agricultural Economics (ABARE), and the WEFA group (formerly known as Wharton Associates), together estimate the cost of Kyoto to be from 1 to 3.5 percent of GDP *per year*.

Thanks to the intransigence of European environment ministers at a meeting on Kyoto implementation held at The Hague last November, we can confidently predict the high (3.5%) end. The lower figure is obtained when we are allowed to "sequester" our emissions in trees or farms, or when we "trade" them, for example, by giving clean, efficient new technology to dirt-poor Africa. France's Dominique Voynet and Germany's Jürgen Trittin decided that the U.S. could not meet its obligations in these ways even though the reductions in greenhouse gases are real. Instead, they insisted we must stop burning fossil fuel, demonstrating, once again, that the purpose of Kyoto is more to damage the economy of the U.S. rather than to modify the climate. At this point, even the Clinton-Gore team walked away!

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**3. Global warming is overblown.** You need look no further than in Chapter 9 of the new report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and in *Nature* magazine.

In the IPCC report, you will find an illustration that averages the results from some 20-odd "general circulation climate models," our most sophisticated tools for looking at the future. It shows a mean warming of around 2.5°C in the next 100 years. But it is well known that these same models have, in general, predicted too much warming in recent decades. With this in mind, two of the IPCC's most respected scientists, Myles Allen and J.F.B. Mitchell, adjusted the model output, and the most likely warming for this century according to their evaluation was 1.5°C. Six months earlier, I made a similar calculation in my book *The Satanic Gases* and found virtually the same: 1.4°C. *Nature* hailed Allen and Mitchell's result as a "breakthrough."

In addition, historical records show that about two-thirds of this warming will be in the cold portion of the year, and the lion's share will be in the coldest, most deadly air. Does this sound like something we should spend a fortune trying to stop?

**4. Kyoto is fiscally irresponsible.** Imagine, as the greens like to analogize, that Kyoto is an "insurance policy" on your "house" (i.e. your planet). Would you pay 3.5% of your household income per year if you knew that, should the house burn down, the Kyoto Insurance company would only return 6% of your property value? That's the way it works, because that's the percent of warming that Kyoto stops!

**5. Kyoto would harm the environment.** Wouldn't it be better if we could, as individuals, take some of the money that the government would have confiscated from us in a futile attempt to stop climate change and invest it in future technologies? As it stands, the feds are likely to take the taxes meant to force us to stop burning gasoline, and literally throw them at windmills, or burn them in one of our dumbest technologies (because it can't ever work on a large scale), solar energy. Why can't we financially support what we, as individuals, think might work?

We could invest in a company that produces fuel cells. Or we could buy cute little 70-mpg gas-electric hybrid Honda Insights. I own one and it's great. Or maybe we could buy bonds supporting that new, cleaner, fossil-fuel power plant that California so desperately needs.

Or maybe we could just save our dough because the climate change issue is an overblown bunch of hooley, which is why President Bush killed Kyoto.

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