

# U.S. must take climate change seriously

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I read with considerable interest Charles Mason's article in Sunday's Daily News on the reaction to President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate agreement. This line in particular caught my attention: "Not everyone agrees with the assessment that less carbon in the atmosphere will curb global warming."

Who, exactly, are these people who disagree with the overwhelming consensus of the scientific community? Economists? Philosophers? Career politicians? Massage therapists?

If I want to know about anthropology, I'll go see an anthropologist. If I want to know about climate change, I'll defer to those who have spent their entire careers studying its underlying dynamics.

The verdict is in on this one. The planet is heating up as a direct result of human activity. And by the way, scientists do not "vote" on what is real; they study phenomena and as evidence mounts a consensus tends to emerge.

The problem, as always, is money. The science is being questioned because of its potential financial consequences. We saw exactly the same thing 50 years ago. The tobacco companies intentionally muddied the waters about the emerging link between cigarettes and cancer because of the obscene profits they were raking in.

What we need to do is separate science from its economic, political and ideological implications. It is apparent several of the sources Mason cites have positions informed more by their personal belief systems than an objective appraisal of the scientific data. The determination of what is "real" has nothing to do with whether or not it supports free enterprise.

When it comes down to a choice between relatively short-term commercial viability or comparatively long-term ecological sustainability, the only rational choice is one that preserves a hospitable environment for future generations. We are at a crossroads and we are about to take a huge step backward.

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