

CLIMATE CHANGE IN NC

Something in the Air??

CAPCA Spring Meeting
Asheville, NC
April 13, 2007

NC FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

- Founded 1911
- Represents forest product companies, wood suppliers, forest managers, landowners and others.
- Legislative and regulatory affairs; education; and communications



NORTH CAROLINA FORESTS

- Over **17 million acres** of forest – 58% of the state
- **87% is privately owned** – the majority by non-industrial private landowners.
- Government owns only about 13%.



FOREST INDUSTRY IN NC

- Now NC's **largest manufacturing industry;**
- **103,165** direct jobs with an annual payroll of **\$3.6 billion**
- **\$19.4 billion** in annual shipments;
- Total annual economic impact of **272,000+** jobs and **\$30 billion**



CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTS

Climate change is important because:

- “Forest” is the dominant land use in NC;
- Forest products is NC’s largest manufacturing industry;
- Climate determines species mix, growth rates, forest health and related environmental benefits of forests such as wildlife habitat.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTS

For every 1 lb of wood produced, a tree takes in 1.4 lbs of CO₂ and gives off 1 lb of oxygen

More CO₂ = Higher forest productivity

Younger forests are more efficient than older ones



Don't Forget That...

30 years ago the scientific “consensus” was that we were facing a coming ice age.

“It’s a cold fact: the Global Cooling presents humankind with the most important social, political and adaptive challenge we have had to deal with for ten thousand years.”

--Lowell Ponte

The NC Legislative Study Commission on Climate Change

Many perspectives represented;

Have heard from prominent scientists on both sides of the issue;

Commission members probably fall into one of three categories:

- True “Al Gore” Believers;
- True “Rush Limbaugh” Non-Believers; and
- Somewhere in between!

A Perspective on Climate Change

What we do know (and agree on):

- 1. The global mean temperature has risen about .5 degrees C over the last 100 years;**
- 2. Atmospheric CO₂ has increased;**
- 3. CO₂ is a greenhouse gas and likely to warm the Earth (along with other gases).**

A Perspective on Climate Change

“But-and I cannot stress this enough-we are not in a position to confidently attribute past climate change to carbon dioxide or to forecast what the climate will be in the future. ..Contrary to media impressions, agreement with the 3 basic statements tells us almost nothing relevant to policy discussions.”

Dr. Richard Lindzen, MIT

A Perspective on Climate Change

- Has the climate changed? Of course it has.
- Is it warmer? Yes. (Note: consensus stops here)
- Is man-made CO₂ driving it? Probably not.
- If we ceased all CO₂ emissions, would it matter?
Very little.
- If CO₂ isn't the problem, what is? Water vapor, methane (20x more potent) and natural cycles.

A Perspective on Climate Change

Some Inconvenient “Truths:”

All climate models **overstate temperature increases** (based on observed data);

Historical data indicates **warming preceded CO2 increases**;

Warming oceans release CO2 and may account for much of the increase.

A Perspective on Climate Change

This is probably the minority view point on the NC Climate Change Study Commission;

The majority of members are probably in the “true believer” category.

So What Do We Do? Or Don't Do?

Let's start with what we don't do:

1. Think the science is settled and massive man induced climate change is a fact.
2. We don't put NC or the US at an economic disadvantage with other states or nations by imposing significant new costs.
3. Outpace federal actions.

What We Should Do

Focus on actions that make both **economic and environmental sense**:

- Expand home grown fuel supply;
- Energy efficiencies;
- Land conservation (not preservation);
- Public education;
- Get over the NIMBY syndrome!

The NC Climate Change Study Commission Will ..

- **Probably focus on energy supplies and energy efficiencies including a renewable portfolio standard;**
- **Land conservation and public education will get some attention;**
- **Consider recommendations from the NC Climate Action Plan Group (CAPAG) and the Bio-fuels Strategic Plan.**

In the End ..

A warming climate is a fact but the degree of warming isn't clear;

Natural vs. Human-induced?

The NC Climate Change Commission will have to temper desires with political and economic realities.