

# Leaders Say Slowing Climate Change Will Benefit Economic Opportunity; Others Disagree

Monday, September 30, 2013 Posted: 11:28 AM EST

**Washington—Today's scientific report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides unequivocal evidence that climate change is happening now, is caused by humans, and is producing harmful societal impacts.** Many scientists and policy-makers urge us to take action to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, primarily by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. Various groups are advocating for us to reduce our nation's greenhouse gas emissions to slow climate change. One such group is economic leaders.

## **Dealing with Climate Change Will Benefit Economic Opportunity**

Economic leaders argue that dealing with climate change will improve our economic competitiveness with other countries, drive a new wave of American innovation and entrepreneurialism, and create millions of full-time blue-collar jobs that cannot be exported.

The US is falling behind in the global race to the next economic revolution: an economy based on renewable energy. Our economic competitors, such as China, Japan, and Germany, are developing renewable energy technology and promoting energy efficiency much faster than the US. Some economic leaders argue that the well-being of our nation's economy demands that we catch up to—and surpass—our economic competitors.

Economic leaders argue that aggressively promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy technology will create new markets that will drive a new wave of innovation and entrepreneurialism, as we saw in earlier decades with the rise of the automobile, the shift to mass production, and the emergence of the internet. Increased energy efficiency will also help businesses save money they can reinvest in further growth. Further, if US companies invent successful renewable energy technologies (e.g., new windmill designs, new batteries), they can make large profits and ensure large global market share by exporting these technologies around the world.

Perhaps most important, many economic leaders argue that the greatest benefit may be the creation of millions of full-time blue collar jobs across the US. These would be jobs in the development, installation, operation, and maintenance of wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal energy production. Because they are tied to a physical location, these high-quality jobs could not be exported—allowing us to strengthen the US middle class.

For these reasons, economic leaders urge us to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies to substantially decrease our greenhouse gas emissions. Doing this will significantly increase our economic opportunities.

## **But Conservative Leaders and Republican Politicians Don't Agree**

However, most conservative leaders and Republican politicians believe that so-called climate change is vastly exaggerated by environmentalists, liberal scientists seeking government funding for their research, and Democratic politicians who want to regulate business. Conservative Republicans argue that there is no strong evidence that humans are influencing the climate and that the alleged scientific consensus is politically motivated.

Some scientists testifying at Congressional hearings are quick to point out that the Earth hasn't actually warmed in the last decade. Even if climate change would happen in the future, these scientists claim it would be a good thing for our agriculture, health, and overall quality of life—not something we should stop. Further, conservative Republicans argue that trying to reduce our nation's greenhouse gas emissions via regulations would harm our economy, national security, and national sovereignty.