



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 20, 2014

Study Claims That Melt of Arctic Ice Contributes to Global Warming

A study published on February 17 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS) posited that because of more ice melting in the Arctic Ocean (shown) there is more dark, open water in the summer, causing less of the sun's heat to be reflected back into space and more heat to be absorbed by the Earth.



The study's lead author, Ian Eisenman, a climate scientist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California, believes that the amount of extra energy absorbed because of this phenomenon is so great that it amounts to about one-quarter of the total heat-trapping effect of our atmosphere's carbon dioxide.

Eisenman's studies show that the Arctic grew eight percent darker between 1979 and 2011, measuring how much sunlight is reflected back into space.

"Basically, it means more warming," Eisenman said in an interview.

AP reporter Seth Borenstein, whose article about Eisenman's study has been widely published, wrote that the North Pole region consists of an ocean that is mostly covered with ice that shrinks in the summer and grows back in the fall. The study indicates that the size of the north polar ice cap during its peak melt each September has shrunk on average by nearly 35,000 square miles per year since 1979.

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Snow-covered ice reflects several times more heat than the dark, open ocean, which replaces the ice when it melts, said Eisenman.

Given AP's wide reach, the Borenstein article about Eisenman's study has been picked up by many news outlets, including ABC News and NBC News, where it will undoubtedly reinforce the commonly held belief that human (anthropogenic) activities — especially the burning of fossil fuels) are increasing the level of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere, leading to what is commonly termed global warming.

However, Borenstein's objectivity when reporting on "global warming" has been called into question. A commenter wrote about Borenstein in the *Tacoma News-Tribune*:

Associated Press reporter Seth Borenstein has a terrible reputation as a runaway alarmist. Even global warming enthusiasts and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are embarrassed by his over-the-top prognostications of doom and selective use of data to support his fading dream that mankind can actually control climate.

Other journalists also noted the study, including a report in the EarthSky Science News website, which identified Eisenman's colleagues, graduate student Kristina Pistone and fellow climate scientist



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Veerabhadran Ramanathan. The trio used satellite measurements to calculate Arctic “albedo” (reflectivity) changes associated with the changing sea ice cover. The researchers calculated that the overall albedo of the Arctic region fell from 52 percent to 48 percent between 1979 and 2011.

However, the researchers did not state, or perhaps had no way of determining, if this change measured during a very brief period in the Earth’s (or even modern science’s) history had any precedent, since periodic fluctuations in all climate data are to be expected.

Coinciding with this news, but taking a different viewpoint, is a February 19 report in the *Daily Princetonian* (an independent student newspaper at Princeton University) that cited a joint letter published in *Science* (the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science) by Princeton University lecturer Isaac Held and his colleagues University of Washington professor John Wallace, Colorado State University professor David Thompson, University of Alaska Fairbanks professor John Walsh, and Kevin Trenberth at the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

The letter, noted the article, argued against the claim that human-induced global warming could result in colder winters — which is a claim that many proponents of the catastrophic global-warming scenario have been making since the United States endured extreme cold weather more than once this winter from the “polar vortex.” The letter also argues that statements asserting that the polar regions have recently begun warming more rapidly than the rest of the world are inconclusive.

“I don’t think that’s the case. I think [the polar regions have] been warming more rapidly all along,” the *Daily Princetonian* quoted Held. Held was identified as both a lecturer in the Princeton Program in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences and a scientist with the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The *Daily Princetonian* quoted Held’s co-writer, John Wallace, who challenged assertions that global warming could disturb the polar vortex, noting that the polar vortex continually changes its shape, and when its lobes sweep down over temperate areas, those regions get periods of cold weather. “I don’t think the slowing down of the polar vortex is enough to really affect behavior of the vortex very much,” he said.

Significantly, the article cited Wallace’s position that the belief that human-induced climate change could cause more extreme cold is, in fact, held by only a small minority of researchers. “The reason we wrote the letter is because of our concern that this is getting picked up by the press and presented as if it were part of the consensus about global warming,” Wallace said, referencing the claim that climate change results in more frigid winters.

The *Daily Princetonian* also quoted Princeton University physics professor William Happer, who said that this year’s weather is not highly unusual. “It’s exactly the same as weather we’ve had in my own lifetime many times,” Happer said. “Why should it suddenly be climate change?”

Happer said that this year’s record lows have been unduly emphasized in order to support the climate-change “myth.” “You know, for years we were told we’re going to fry, and the earth refused to cooperate. And so they desperately look for something else to hang their hat on,” he said, referring to those who promote the global-warming theory.

“I think for climate change you have to take a much longer view,” Held said. “A changing over a 10-year period is just too mild. It gets overwhelmed by the natural variability of the system.”

The position taken by the Princeton professor concurs with numerous articles published by *The New*



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American over the years. As just one example, [an article posted on January 23](#) referenced data presented by NOAA and NASA that, far from shrinking to climatically dangerous levels, the extent of Antarctic sea ice was at unprecedented highs throughout much of 2013. In fact, during March of last year, ice coverage was the second largest on record. The previous record high was set in 2012, only to be overtaken in 2013.

At the opposite pole, the latest data from NASA and NOAA showed that Arctic sea ice coverage, while still below the four-decade average, also grew to reach a level in 2013 that exceeded the previous three years. And while some “climate scientists” and Al Gore had predicted an “ice-free” Arctic in the summer of 2013, polar sea ice in the Northern Hemisphere grew by more than 50 percent over 2012 levels. So far have these trends continued that more than a few experts are now predicting global cooling.

Considering that all the evidence related to “global warming” has not been collected, and even that which has been collected is still being debated, implementing harsh measures that would harm our economy and way of life to combat this unproven threat would be both premature and foolish.

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