



Full of Hot Air by Kendra Caputo

Global warming is thought by many to be a very serious issue, but by others, not so much. The discussion includes a number of different components that are sometimes difficult to understand. Pros and cons differ as to whether man has or has not made a significant impact on global warming. After examining both sides of the debate, it is clear to see that man does have a large affect on global warming. Let's start off with what global warming is and what it does.

What is global warming? Greenhouse gases are gases that trap the sun's heat in the atmosphere and, therefore, slightly increase the Earth's overall temperature. This is called a greenhouse effect. The term greenhouse is used because these gases act as a greenhouse for plants; they let heat and sunlight in, but not out. Examples of greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide and methane. Methane is combustible and has a lighter density than air. It is made of

CH<sub>4</sub> and is an important part of natural gas. Sea levels rise for a variety of reasons including global warming and climate change. Because of this a few things could happen such as the melting of glaciers and icebergs in the polar ice cap regions which could then cause flooding. Now what does this have to do with man?

Next, there are several pros and cons as to man's impact. An example of a way that man is a large part of global warming would be that people and industries put harmful gases into the atmosphere. In the article *Why world's weather will be going to extremes* from *Toronto Star* in Canada states, "...extreme events are caused by the increase of man-made greenhouse gases in the atmosphere...cities might need to move because of weather extremes and sea level rise from man-made warming..." This shows that man has a large impact on global warming because humans emit greenhouse gasses into the air and the atmosphere when they perform regular activities in their everyday lives. For instance, running their factories, driving their cars, or even using electricity in their homes and workplaces all pollute the air and contribute to the problem. As a result, there could be a rise in sea level that would cause extreme weather. This could, in turn, force people to move from vulnerable areas around the world, such as coastlines and low lying land. Another instance of a way that man contributes to global warming is that the United States government and our President are not taking action to help alleviate the problem. They are even asking other countries not to take action. In the article *On emissions, we trade with China* from *Newsday* in Melville, NY it says, "President Obama...his actions amount to even less than his words...visiting other countries and urging them not...to advocate...programs that would reduce carbon emissions." This confirms that man has a large impact on global warming because the government doesn't act responsibly and

just lets the problem pass by and accumulate. An instance where man is not a large part of global warming is that many public officials (specifically Republicans) deny that Man is largely feeding into the problem. Some say that it isn't important or doesn't even exist at all. In the article *In Climate Denial, Again*, from the *New York Times* it states, "...none of the Republicans...accept...that humans are largely responsible for global warming...by denying its existence – or at least by diminishing its importance." This shows that man does not have a large impact because if global warming isn't even really there, then man couldn't possibly be the problem. A second example where man is not a large part of global warming is that many people say that global warming is not a significant issue that needs to be taken care of. They state that the facts being given about global warming definitely stretch the truth. In the article *Shifting Attitudes on Global Warming* from the *New York Times* it says, "...deny that man-made climate change is a serious problem...global warming was uncertain at best, and certainly greatly exaggerated." This shows that man doesn't have a large impact on global warming because some people don't feel like global warming is a big deal and neither is man's affect. Some also believe that it is a myth altogether. On the other hand, the overwhelming evidence tells a different story.

Man can positively or negatively affect global warming. This is because man is constantly emitting gases into the atmosphere and, therefore, hurting the environment and being unaware of doing so. As a result of the harmful gases, there has been a slight increase in temperatures and sea levels. This increase has already caused glaciers and icebergs to melt, which can trigger extreme weather such as floods to happen because of a higher sea level. That could possibly lead to people having to move away from certain areas because the rise in sea

level and floods would be too dangerous to chance in low, vulnerable places. The government is not helping either. By this I mean that it is not addressing the problem whatsoever. It is even hurting other countries, making the situation worse throughout the world instead of just in the United States. In my opinion, man is absolutely to blame for the issue of global warming. I say this for a few reasons, the first being, as I said before, people in their everyday lives, myself included, are contributing to the problem of polluting without even knowing it. The pollution may or may not be intentional, but it is still happening. I feel that the problem should definitely be addressed and in some cases it is. Examples include, communities limiting the amount of trash allowed each week and encouraging recycling, car companies producing more environmentally friendly and efficient automobiles, and even school systems are teaching their students about environmental conservation. The thing is that even if some communities are working to improve their cities, the overall problem is still there. Governments and public officials, I believe, should have the biggest influence on the problem and the people, but it seems that for this particular instance, they have one of the smallest. If they do have an influence at all, it is a negative one. This needs to stop and I fully believe that people as a whole need to work together to fight this issue of global warming that is inevitable otherwise.

In conclusion, global warming is a very serious issue that needs to be taken care of, and fast! Or else the problem will keep on growing until the planet is faced with lethal extreme weather and detrimental conditions in various places around the globe. There is an ongoing debate on the extents of man's affect and the government is partly to blame for the inaction both from us and the rest of the world. If we don't clean up our act now, mankind will be in deep trouble in the very near future.

## **Works Cited**

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2. Goldmark, Peter "On emissions we trade with China". Newsday, (Melville, NY). 11/12/2011.
3. "In Climate Denial, Again.". New York Times. 10/18/2010.
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