



Global Climate Coalition
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Dear Journalist:

In the blink of a planetary eye — five years to you and me — *TIME* magazine has authored a pair of articles that characterize the current debate on climate change. It's getting warmer...or is it getting cooler? How well do scientists really know how to predict climate changes into the next century?

In the Jan. 2, 1989 issue of *TIME* that paid tribute to the "Endangered Earth" as Planet of the Year, the newsweekly covered the so-called "global warming" story and echoed what some scientists advised then and now, "The possible consequences are so scary that it is only prudent for governments to slow the buildup of CO₂ through preventive measures."

Conversely, while covering the recent Arctic chill story in the Jan. 31, 1994 issue, *TIME* asks, "What ever happened to global warming?" Five years after the earlier story on warming, the report states that "it might be more to the point to start worrying about the next Ice Age instead. After all, human induced warming is still largely theoretical, while ice ages are an established part of the planet's history." Continuing, "the next one -- for there will be a next one... may have already started."

Is this part of some scientific conspiracy to confuse the public? No, but it does point out the fact that the science of climate change continues to be uncertain. The data, and interpretations of that data, change almost daily. That is the process of science. Develop a theory, test it, improve the theory and test it again. Computer predictions of a dangerous global warming sometime late in the next century are still in the theory stage.

One of our concerns, as we watch the scientific drama play out, is that the public and policy makers may misinterpret today's analysis for tomorrow's fact. There is, I'm told, no environmental liability in waiting the ten years or so scientists say it will take to separate fact from theory regarding climate change. Even so, the Global Climate Coalition supports doing now whatever we can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that also makes good economic sense -- which is a lot. If you would like to hear more about the Coalition, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

John Shlaes
Executive Director

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