

12 Facts That Are Not Widely Appreciated.

The statements and data given are based in the main on the IPCC AR4 and on the government energy statistics for 2003. (They have not changed significantly in more recent years.) Details concerning flying are based on manufacturers specifications and on work at the Oxford University Centre for the Environment. (other research gives similar results.)

1. The Data in the last IPCC Report Indicates that there is no Realistic Chance of Keeping Global Warming Below the Target 2°C Rise.

Despite the targets and assurances of politicians. The IPCC suggests that no realistic scenarios for action will meet this target, further the CO₂ level is already above that for a 2°C Rise.

2. There is a Real Possibility of Feedback Mechanisms Making Global Warming Run Away Out of Control Quite Soon.

If the temperature rises sufficiently it is probable that the positive feedback mechanisms (of the reduction of albedo (melting ice caps etc), and methane release from tundra and under the arctic ocean) make global warming self generating. Both of these are already beginning to happen, but the scientific research is still in a state of uncertainty as to when they will grow to the danger point (It is possible that already we are past the point of no return). This is to predicted cause temperature rises of 4-6°C (possibly 10°C), Any of these would be catastrophic.

3. There is Immediate Need for Drastic Action to Reduce Seriousness of Global Warming.

The Inter-governmental Panel for Climate Change is scientifically conservative in its predictions and its last report(2001-2006) is now nearly 5 years out of date. Yet it said that it was our emissions in period to 2030 which would determine how much global warming we suffer. More recent science has indicated that we have only 5-15 years in which to reduce world emissions dramatically. Realistically we should not have polluted the atmosphere to the extent we already have, now the aim should be to reduce world emissions by 10% every year. Yet politicians are still talking about rises in world emissions until 2030.

4. If ALL UK Energy Used was Electricity We Would Need 4½ Times as Much.

Currently our electricity production is about equivalent to 33 M tons of oil
Currently about 60 M tons of gas are used for heating purposes.
and about 80 M tons of oil are used for power purposes (in engines).

If these sources were replaced by electricity:-

The gas heating would require electricity equivalent to about 66 M tons of oil using conventional heating or about 25M tons using heat pumps.

The power would require electricity equivalent to about 45 M tons of oil.

5. It is not Feasible to replace The Existing Number of Vehicles by Electric.

For electric vehicles to be efficient they need Lithium Batteries.

There is not enough available Lithium in the World for us all to drive electric vehicles. Probably 10% of vehicles is pushing the limit. Though there are other battery

possibilities.

6. Flying Produces almost 3 Times As Much Global Warming As Its CO₂ Output.

The aviation industry ignores the research findings that indicate that the effect of aircraft emissions at altitude means that their global warming effect is about 2.7 times that of their CO₂ emissions.

7. Flying From the UK amounts to about 6% of our Fossil Fuel Use.

Figures are often quoted that say aviation only amounts to 2% of world CO₂ emissions. However the amount of aviation fuel used in the UK is 6% of our total fossil fuel and 6% of our CO₂ emissions. Allowing for the aviation factor (see 3 above) this produces about 15% of our global warming effect.

8. There is No Way that Flying Can be Made Efficient.

The aviation industry talks about making flying efficient. There is no way this can be achieved. They talk about:-

more efficient planes - possibly 20% is achievable,

using bio-fuel - but there is only a very limited amount of bio-fuel available if it all is used for aviation it will not be available for other uses.

carbon trading - but this simply exports the problem to other countries and industries.

On balance planes cannot be made to achieve a global warming effect better than about equivalent to 30 mpg per passenger when full. In contrast coaches can achieve about 500 mpg per passenger when full.

9. We Cannot Continue to Travel and Consume at Our Present Level.

Controlling Global Warming requires a huge and urgent reduction in our fossil fuel consumption. Whatever we do to improve transport efficiency, if we are to prevent environmental collapse we must cut our travel. Further we must make a huge reduction in energy used to produce goods. In addition there are not enough resources (metals, chemicals, renewable materials, etc.) to support our present level of consumption.

10. Global Warming is not the Only Problem.

What we are seeing is the coming to pass of the simple and obvious truth predicted by Thomas Malthus and many other economists and commentators (Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx, Franz Schumaker, Fritjof Capra, Brandt Commission etc.) that on a finite Earth it is impossible to sustain an ever growing population. Already we are over exploiting the resources of the Earth. Fish will be gone in 50 years. Many tropical hardwoods are virtually gone. Fresh water is becoming an increasing problem. Etc.

11. Not Only must we Tackle Global Warming we Must also Reduce Our Population.

This is the elephant in the room that is barely talked about. There was an article in the Observer about 4 weeks ago which tackled the subject, usually it is unmentionable.

12. Politicians Who Claim that Economic Growth Can Continue Either Don't Understand or Are Lying.

The 11 facts given above indicate quite clearly that we will be compelled either by environmental collapse or by voluntary restraint to reduce our consumption and travel.

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