

Report on Trip to Washington DC

Jan Blumenkrantz and Linda Swift

March 23 – March 28, 2009

The purpose of our trip was both for enjoyment and to lobby for action on climate change as representatives of our local League of Women Voters (LWVBAE) and of the League of Women Voters, U.S. (LWVUS). This report will deal in detail only with the lobbying efforts on climate change.

American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)

Monday, March 23

We met with Stacey Kelly and Paul Schroeder, lobbyists for AFB, who described some of their efforts (Linda is on the AFB SF Board). Lobbying is detailed work involving attention to the needs of all the affected people and companies, plus forming coalitions to pass legislation. In their experience, it often takes 7 years of daily work to pass a piece of legislation such as the part in the IDEA (special education) legislation for the blind requiring publishers to make available their texts for the blind.

League of Women Voters, U.S. (LWVUS) Meeting

Monday, March 23, LWVUS office

We met with LWVUS staff Lloyd Leonard (chief lobbyist), Christina Vamvas and Sergio Espana (contact information below). Our intention was to describe our activities and handouts, get their input and approval, and learn how we could best represent the LWVUS. We were enthusiastically welcomed and taken onboard with their efforts. Lloyd described four major points to be stressed with our Congress members and staff, which we formulated into a one page handout (see attached “*LWVUS Summary 3-23-09*”). We were provided with LWV folders and additional information to hand out on Capitol Hill. Included was the LWVUS letter to Waxman’s Energy and Commerce Committee found at

<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=13121>

In the latter, the League and partner organizations urged the leaders of the House Energy and Commerce Committee to develop comprehensive climate legislation that includes substantial investments in developing countries to support adaptation to climate change impacts and the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions. We also included our LWVBAE summary (see attached “*How Do We Reduce GHG – DC Trip 2009*”).

In addition, we met with Zaida Arguedas to share with her the book on reducing your carbon footprint used by the Berkeley Ecology Center. She suggested that we make the book available on the LWVUS website. Linda will write the words and provide the image to accompany the posting. Nancy Tate, Executive Director of LWVUS, also welcomed us.

Contact Information

Nancy Tate 202-429-4508 ntate@lww.org
Zaida Arguedas 202-263-1351 zarguedas@lww.org
Lloyd Leonard 202-263-1302 lleonard@lww.org
Christina Vamvas 202-263-1328 cvamvas@lww.org
Sergio Espana 202-429-4508 sespana@lww.org

Meeting with Scott Exner**Climate Change Congressional Aide to Congresswoman Barbara Lee**

Tuesday, March 24

We delivered our LWVUS folder. Scott described Congresswoman Lee's committee work (Foreign Affairs Committee, Appropriations Committee, State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Subcommittee of Appropriations). The committees' work had succeeded in giving \$10MM for international adaptation to climate change to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) of the UN for FY '09. They are working to get \$200MM for FY'10. Congresswoman Lee has issued a statement (speech) on how climate change affects women disproportionately in less developed countries (sent as a separate email to all Climate Change Team members).

Scott requested that we send him information on climate change, particularly on the effects of sea level rise, which we did (see attachment "Exner 3-2009").

Contact Information

Scott Exner 202.225.2661 scott.exner@mail.house.gov

National Science Funding exhibition and reception with Speaker Nancy Pelosi

Tuesday evening, March 24

This was a cocktail party with posters of projects funded by federal programs. Speaker Nancy Pelosi spoke informally on the importance of using science as the basis for decisions. Although we were within arms length of her, we did not get the chance to hand over our materials.

Constituent Breakfast with Senator Dianne Feinstein

Wednesday, March 25

Senator Feinstein spoke at length, including a discussion of the need to reduce and adapt to climate change. She sees California moving toward desertification. During her talk, we took the opportunity to speak with and hand our materials to Matt Nelson, her energy advisor and the individual most involved with climate change. Senator Feinstein describes herself as practical and willing to compromise in order to get climate change legislation passed. In addition, she wants scientific oversight with

modifications possible based on evolving scientific knowledge. Her specific effort is toward cap and trade, working to be sure that such a market is appropriately regulated.

Our conversation with Senator Feinstein herself was very brief, but we mentioned the League and our support for strong climate change actions.

Contact Information

Matt Nelson 202.224-3841 matt_nelson@epw.senate.gov

Photo Op with Senator Barbara Boxer

Wednesday, March 25

Our meeting with Senator Boxer was brief, but we were able to meet some of her staff and pass our information to her staff member responsible for climate change, Joseph Goffman. When hearing we were from the League, Senator Boxer welcomed us and our efforts on climate change with enthusiasm.

In a conversation with Kathy Dedrick, Senator Boxer's aid on transportation, we discussed how to best reach opponents to climate change legislation. Her advice was to approach the national defense and energy independence issues. Advice we will take.

Contact Information

Joseph Goffman 202.224.1049, joe_goffman@epw.senate.gov

Kathy Dedrick, kathy_dedrick@epw.senate.gov

Meeting with Congressman Jerry McNerney

Thursday, March 26

Because of Jan's acquaintance with Congressman McNerney, we were able to meet with him briefly in his office and meet his Chief of Staff, Nick Holder. His staff member responsible for climate change, Andrew Horowitz, was out of the office. After a cordial welcome to Jan from Congressman McNerney, we gave him our materials and a brief summary of our message. They were interested in our technical information, which we will share with them.

Contact Information

Andrew Horowitz 202-225-1947, Andrew.horowitz@mail.house.gov

Nick Holder 202-225-1947 Nick.Holder@mail.house.gov

House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, Public Witness Hearing

March 26, 2009

Public Witnesses:

Cynthia McCaffrey, Senior Vice President, United States Fund for UNICEF

Thomas C. Dillon, Senior Vice President, World Wildlife Fund
Andrew E. Manatos, President, National Coordinated Effort for Hellenes
Dwight L. Bush, Sr., Member, Board of Directors, GAVI Fund
Stephen F. Moseley, Chairman, Basic Education Coalition
Sarah Johnson, Director, Weill Music Institute, Carnegie Hall
John K. Naland, President, American Foreign Service Association
Ambassador Michael Klosson, Associate VP & Chief Policy Officer, Save the Children
Henry Barkhorn, Board Trustee, Helen Keller International
Maurice I. Middleberg, Vice President for Public Policy, Global Health Council
Nicholas Larigakis, Executive Director, American Hellenic Institute
John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President for Public Affairs, Wildlife Conservation Society
The Honorable Marjorie Margolies, President, Women's Campaign International

Jan saw Representative Barbara Lee sitting on this subcommittee listening to people testify on adaptation to climate change worldwide. She gathered their testimonies outside the door and delivered them to LWWUS, since this was a topic the league is working on and on which the LWWUS is forming coalitions.

Hall Meeting with Congressman Henry Waxman
Thursday, March 26

We had the opportunity to speak with Congressman Waxman during a break of one of his committee meetings. We gave him our folder and a brief message. We also had previously passed on our folder to his committee staff assistant, Caitlin Haberman.

Contact Information

Caitlin Haberman 202-225-2927 caitlin.haberman@mail.house.gov

Committee Meetings and Hearings. In addition to the specific lobbying described above we attended a number of committee meetings and hearings including: Joint Hearing, Natural Resources, Outer Continental Shelf Energy Development; Hearing on Institutional Review Boards (with Congressman Waxman), and two meetings on a transportation bill sponsored by Senator Boxer called Moving Ahead for Progress -21 (MAP21). These were a Transportation briefing by American Society of Civil Engineers and Boxer's Transportation Committee meeting.

Debriefing for League of Women Voters, U.S.
Thursday, March 26, LWWUS office

To update our LWWUS colleagues we met with Lloyd Leonard and Sergio Espana for a lengthy debrief on our efforts. And as a support of that, we will send this report.

Respectfully,

Linda Swift and Jan Blumenkrantz

Attachments:

LWVUS Summary 3-23-09

How Do We Reduce GHG – DC Trip 2009

Exner 3-2009

OVERVIEW

Data Show Climate Change is Now

- Already greenhouse gases are higher, by a lot, than anything in the entire evolution of humans.
- Resulting temperature and rate of heating to expect are uncertain, but certainly serious, and potentially catastrophic.

The impact is on people

Continued warming will affect all of us

- **Threats to water and food supplies** Droughts and changing patterns of agriculture.
- **Severe weather** and less predictable weather, leading to flooding and storm losses.
- **Rising sea level** A sea level increase of just 3 feet would affect 100,000,000 people.
- **Defense threat** Displaced populations, food and water stresses lead to global security threats.

The Need is Urgent

- Strong climate action is needed now – even in the current deep recession.
- The cost of doing nothing is five to thirty times higher than the cost of action now (*Stern Review, as modified 2009*).
- The U.S. must lead the way.

ACTION NEEDED

25% by 2020

We urgently need a declining cap – without loopholes – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% (below 1990 levels) by 2020.

International adaptation

Climate change impacts will require adaptations for all of us.

The U.S. can assist less developed countries by exporting technologies, business and financial assistance.

Pass President Obama's budget with climate change funding intact

Contact: Christina Vamvas, cvamvas@lwv.org
League of Women Voters US, 1730 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036-4508 202.429.1965

Data Show Climate Change is Now...

- Already greenhouse gases are higher, by a lot, than anything in the entire evolution of humans.
- Resulting temperature and rate of heating to expect are uncertain, but certainly serious, and potentially catastrophic.

...and Urgent Action is Needed

- Strong climate action is needed now – even in the current deep recession.
- Costs of inaction could be economically debilitating.

Priorities to Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Energy Efficiency

Zero cost – puts money in consumers' pockets

- Energy use: *vehicles, aviation, buildings, infrastructure*
- Energy transport: *transmission, Unified National Smart Grid*
- Energy efficiency standards (*e.g. aggressive mileage standards*)

Global Price on GHG Emissions

Put the market economy to work

- Carbon tax, charge or fee, cap and trade (or auction), carbon offsets with strong controls
- Government cannot be exempt from GHG limits and prices

Clean Energy Economy

Opportunity for jobs

- Renewable generation – *solar, wind, tides, new ideas*
- Standards for biofuels
- Enforceable limits, real goals (*e.g. 100% clean energy in 10 years*)
- Clean energy transportation infrastructure

Portfolio of Technologies

Research underlies progress

- Government support – *incentives (or disincentives), funding, tax credits, market creation*

Our Personal Choices

Resources are finite

- Build a new social norm – *move away from consumerism, excess*
- Use less, buy locally, reuse/recycle

A Global Solution

Alone we make little difference

- Common global goal, developed countries lead the way
- Fair and sustainable global burden-sharing
- Peace reduces greenhouse gases
- Protect biodiversity; enhance climate-friendly agriculture and land-use practices

Adaptations to Climate Change

Ease Consequences

- Minimize economic impact from global warming legislation
- Aid ecosystems vulnerable to harm from global warming
- Ease consequences of climate related hardship to low income households

League of Women Voters – Berkeley, Albany Emeryville

Linda Swift 510 548-4808, Jan Blumenkrantz 510 548-3845 Climate Change Team co-chairs

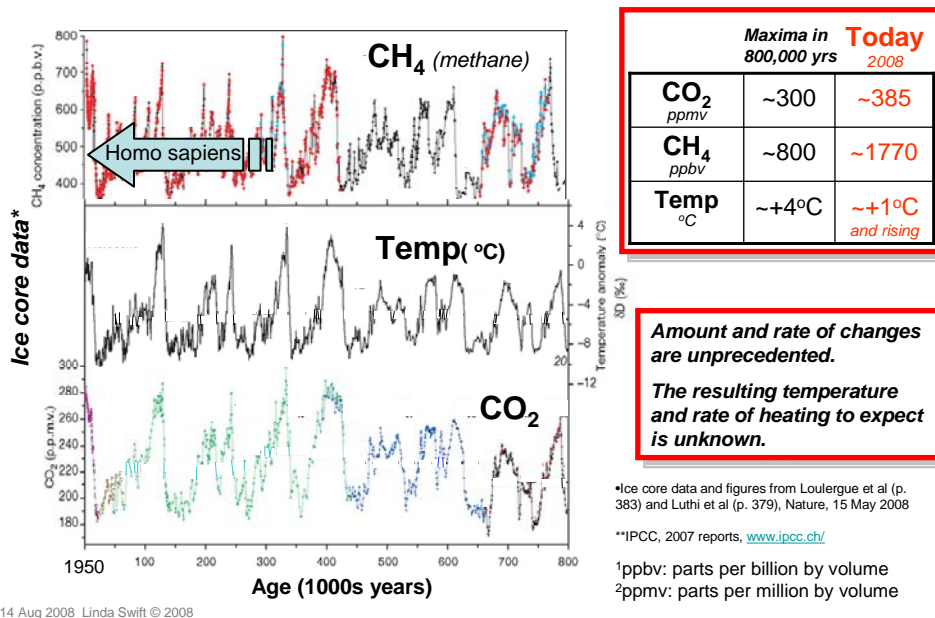
The Climate is Changing...We Need to Change Too

Data Show Climate Change is Now...and Urgent Action is Needed. Data are clear that climate change is happening, and it's caused primarily by human generated greenhouse gas emissions.

The data below, from Antarctic ice cores, show that the levels of two greenhouse gases methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) correlate with temperature. To put the time scale in perspective, homo sapiens evolved only in the last 200,000 to 300,000 years, and all of civilization occurred in a narrow line on the left of the chart. During the 800,000 years shown, greenhouse gas concentrations varied within a fairly narrow range, as did temperature. Still temperatures reached about 4°C (7°F) above temperatures in 1950 (zero point on the vertical scale).

Greenhouse gas concentrations today are significantly above the maxima in the last 800,000 years as shown in the table – values are literally off the chart. Further, the rate of change is much more rapid than anything seen during the last 800,000 years. Based on these data we can expect temperatures to rise at least 4°C, but how fast and how far temperatures will actually rise is essentially unknown.

Climate Change is Now



14 Aug 2008 Linda Swift © 2008

What Does an Increase of 4°C Mean? Scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the United Nations warn of severe consequences if we have as much as 4°C change. Among the consequences we should expect:

- **Droughts**, especially areas already dry; changes cause loss of grain production. Droughts exacerbate fires, weaken vegetation, cause decrease in food production which can lead to famine, or at the very least, higher food prices.
- **Severe Weather**, and less predictable weather, leading to flooding and storm losses. Further, changes make it difficult for farmers to know how, when, and what to plant.
- **Significant Extinctions around the Globe**. Even at an increase of 2°C, we expect up to 30% of species to be at risk of extinction. The most at risk are amphibians and mammals.
- **Rising Sea Level**. Sea level rose 4-6 meters (13 to 20 feet) in the last 800,000 years. We don't know how fast sea level may rise, but an increase of just 1 meter would affect 100,000,000 people.
- **Defense Threat**. Displaced populations, food and water stresses will likely lead to major global security threats.

Urgent Action is Needed

The greenhouse gases we have already put into our atmosphere will stay there for 10s to 100s of years. We must start reducing now.

Think of it like a diet. If I weigh 200 pounds and start eating a caloric intake of someone who weighs 120, I won't actually weigh 120 for quite awhile. Neither will the atmosphere reach healthy levels overnight. But we can't keep "eating" at the unhealthy level.

Is Action or Inaction More Expensive?

The Stern Review was completed in October, 2006 in the United Kingdom under the auspices of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was done to better understand the economics of climate change. What would be the economic ramifications of doing nothing, versus the economics of taking action now?

From the Stern Review

“There is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we take strong action now.”

“The scientific evidence is now overwhelming: climate change is a serious global threat, and it demands an urgent global response.”...

“Using the results from formal economic models, the Review estimates that if we don't act, the overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5% of global GDP each year, now and forever. If a wider range of risks and impacts is taken into account, the estimates of damage could rise to 20% of GDP or more.

“In contrast, the costs of action – reducing greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change – can be limited to around 1% of global GDP each year.”

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm

Lord Stern, the author of the quotes above, in a March 15, 2009 Copenhagen talk to scientists, revised upward his estimate of the cost of doing nothing to as high as 33% of GDP.

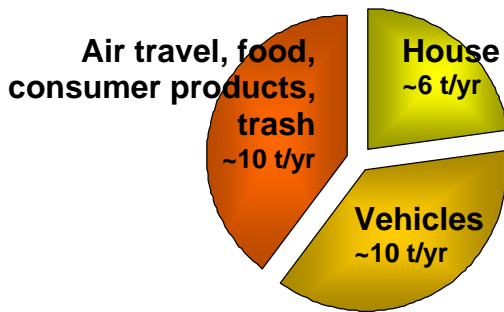
<http://www.heatisonline.org/contentserver/objecthandlers/index.cfm?ID=7301&Method=Full>

Therefore the cost of doing nothing is five to thirty times higher than the cost of action now.

What Can I Do?

Individuals, especially in the U.S., can do a lot. We have one of the largest “carbon footprints” on the globe, with an average American household emitting 26.5 tons/year of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e is the amount of greenhouse gases emitted calculated as if it were all due to CO₂). This contrasts with the average Indian household emissions of 1.0 CO₂e ton/year.

Within our households, CO₂e emissions are from primarily three sources: our house, our cars, and everything else – more specifically, air travel (the big one), food, consumer products and trash. We can also buy carbon offsets, financially supporting efforts that reduce or offset carbon emissions. A good list is at www.carbonoffsetlist.org showing legitimate projects screened by the Environmental Defense Fund. See our website www.lwvbae.org/climateaction.htm for a list of carbon footprint calculators.



Our Houses

- Change to “green” energy (solar or wind) – *savings 6-10 t/yr*
- Insulate, seal and weatherstrip – *savings 1-2 t/yr*
- Conserve energy and water – *use less light, appliances, switch to CFL or LED bulbs*

Our Vehicles

- Walk more, use public transportation, carpool
- Use high mileage, well maintained vehicles (*keep your tires properly inflated*)
- Travel less, combine trips

Data from National Geographic Green Guide, Spring 2008

Consumer Products

- Minimize air travel (*2-3 cross country trips emit about the same as powering your house, 6-10 t/yr*)
- Buy food that is locally grown/produced (*especially avoid products flown in*)
- Grow your own food. Eat everything you buy.
- Reuse and recycle.

What Can WE Do?

Ultimately we need a unified, global agreement to go forward together and in harmony. Meanwhile, we need to continue research and education to improve our understanding. And we need to make some real changes – some real actions – to reduce carbon emissions at all scales – as soon as we can. But what?

Social pressure. Together we can build momentum and agree on a common goal – a common mission. Again, this requires good information to know what actions are the most effective.

Consumerism. Our western culture of buying and throwing away must change. We need to think before we follow our normal lifestyle patterns.

Economic. How do we put a value on lowering emissions? Is the best solution cap and trade? Tax? Tradable energy quotas (TEQs)?

Business. Support business efforts to “go green” – those that rely on sustainable, renewable systems and energy. Support businesses that provide “green” products. Invest in those businesses. Buy their products.

Governmental. Support local efforts. Work to find legislation that will make a real positive impact, avoiding actions that will actually hamper climate change mitigation efforts.

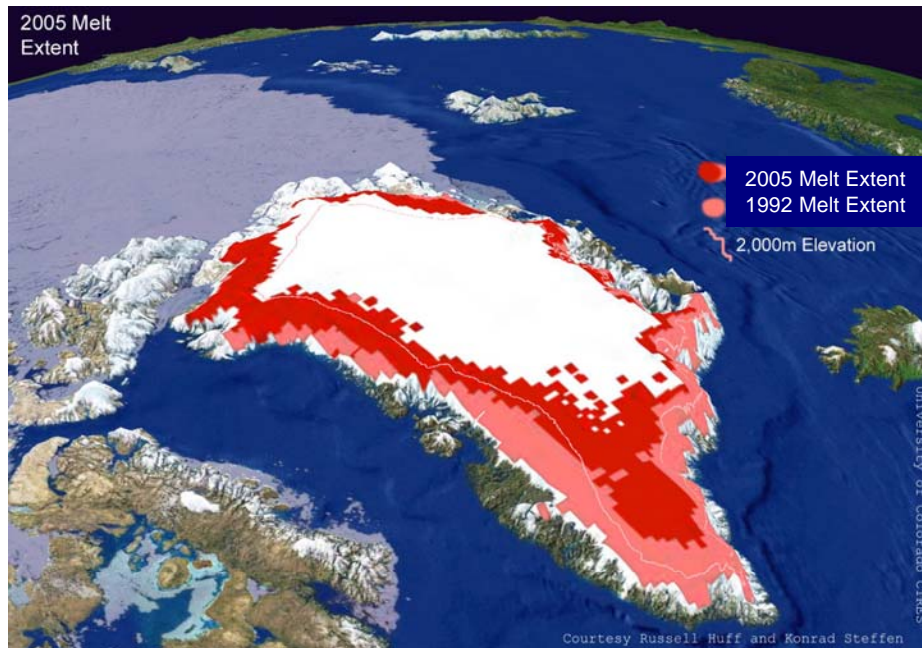
Vote. Know the issues and proposals, advocate, support candidates that share your views on climate change.

Join the LWVBAE Climate Change Team to help us learn more!

<http://lwvbae.org/climateaction.htm>

Linda Swift 510- 548-4808, JanBlumenkrantz 510-548-3845 Team co-chairs

Melting of Ice Sheets



Greenland Melt Extent, 2005

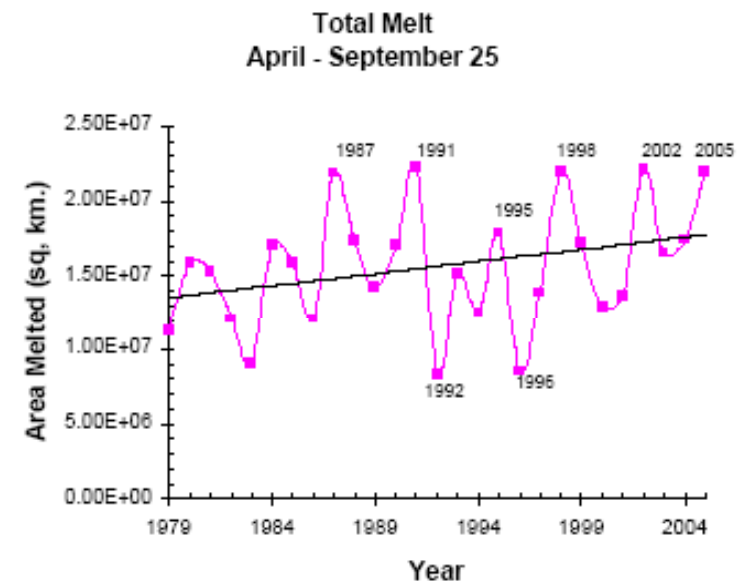
Data from Steffen and Huff, Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES), University of Colorado at Boulder, CO

September 28, 2005

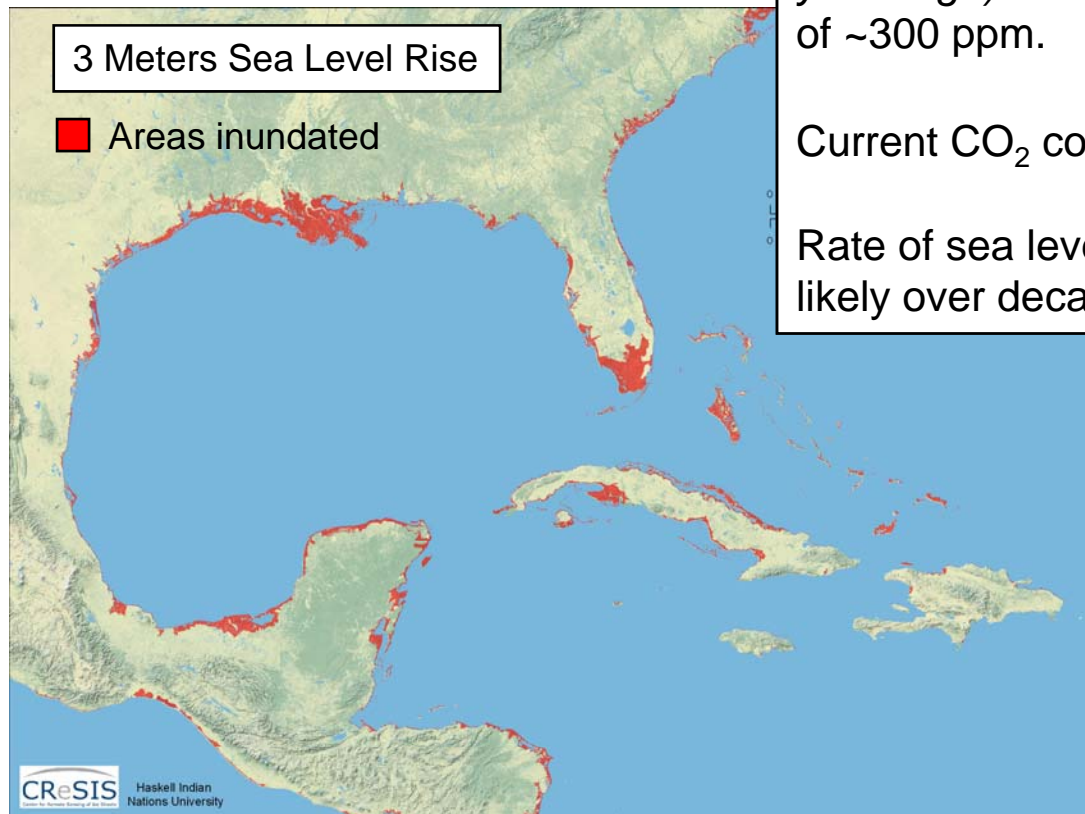
<http://cires.colorado.edu/science/groups/steffen/greenland/melt2005/>

Measurements show increased melting of Greenland ice

(some is due to soot from North America)



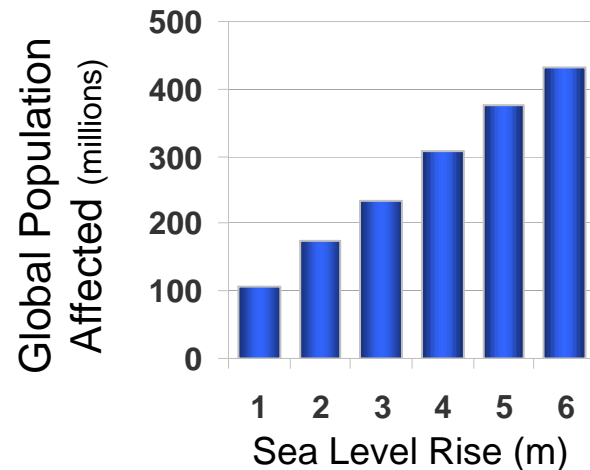
Sea Level Rise



Sea level rise in the last interglacial (~125,000 years ago) was 4-6 m with CO₂ concentrations of ~300 ppm.

Current CO₂ concentrations are ~380 ppm

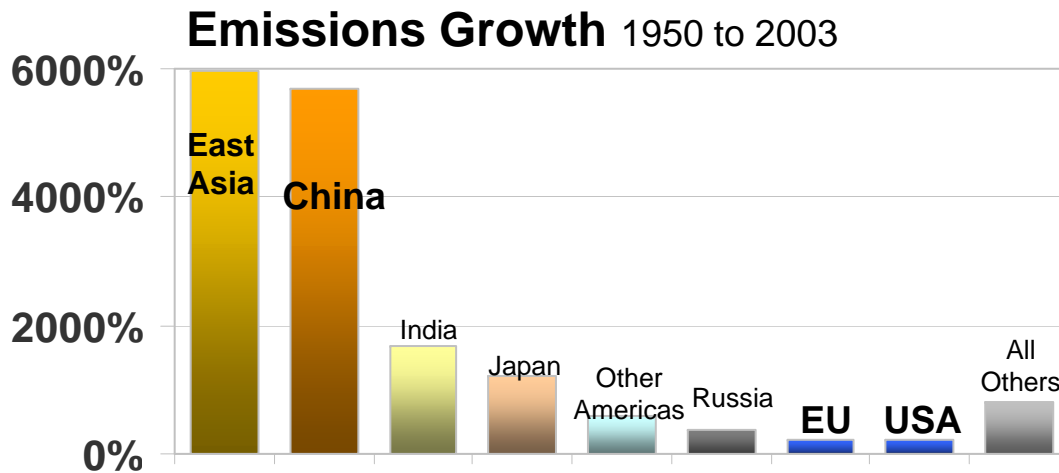
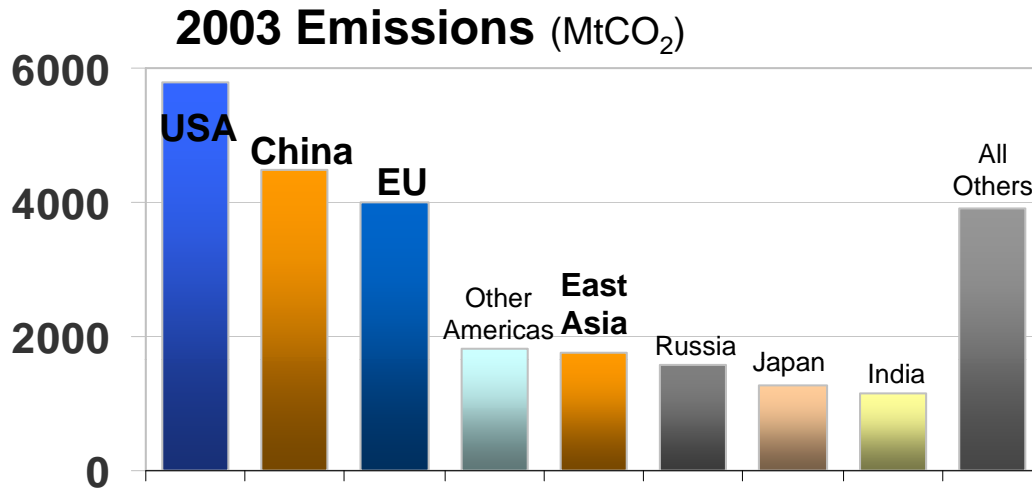
Rate of sea level rise is poorly understood, but is likely over decades-centuries



Data from Center for Remote Sensing of Ice Sheets (CReSIS: established by NSF in 2005)

http://www.cresis.ku.edu/research/data/sea_level_rise/h_southeast-usa.html

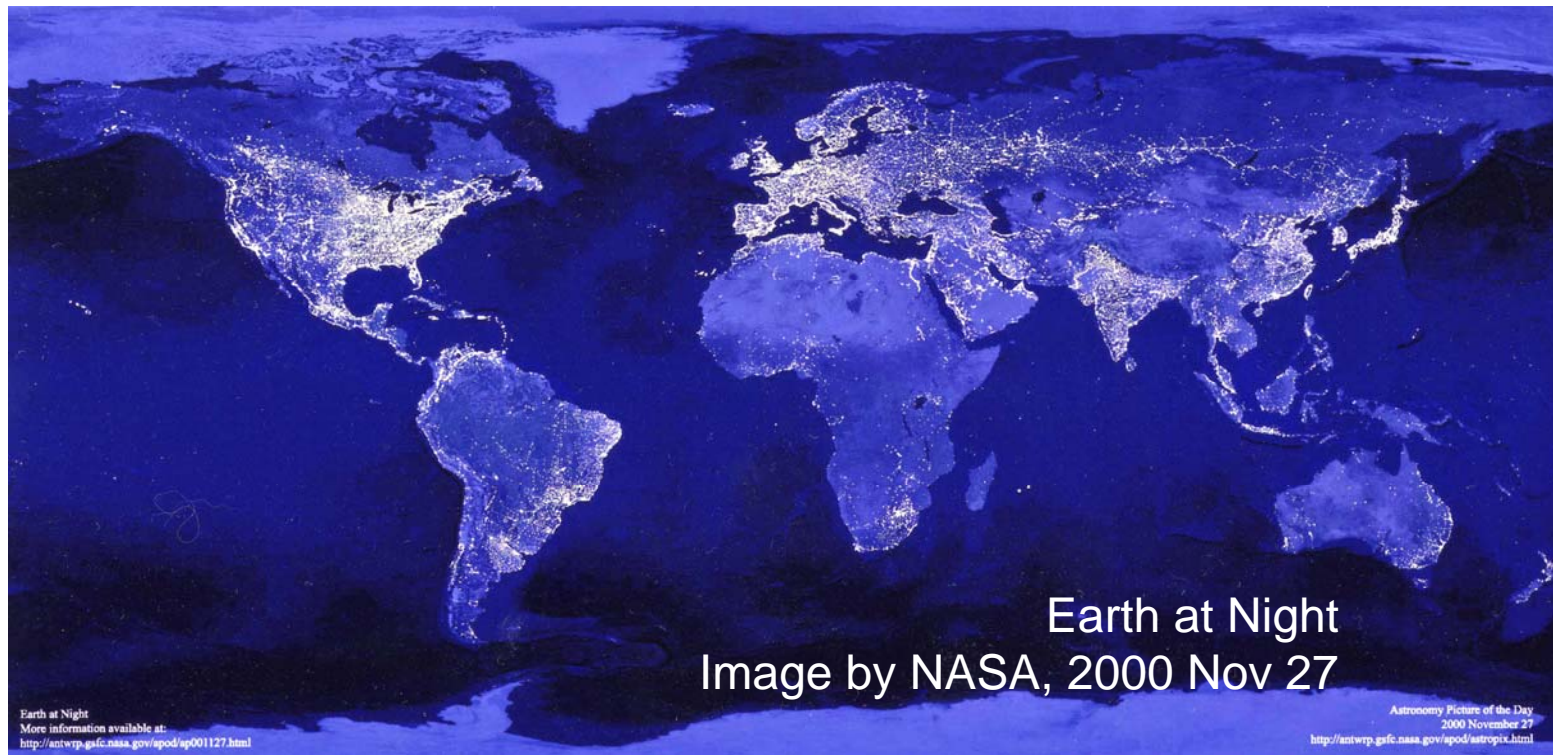
Can We Control Emissions?



- The US and Western Nations have been the largest contributors to emissions
- But China as of July, 2007 outpaced the US and is growing rapidly
- To change the trends will require significant changes in lifestyle and systems

Data from CAIT, World Resources Institute, <http://cait.wri.org/>
Graph by Swift

Welcome to the Anthropocene – the Age of Man



The Anthropocene – or Age of Man – is proposed as a formal geologic epoch by Zalasiewicz et al, *Geology*, Feb 2008.

“Since the start of the Industrial Revolution, Earth has endured changes sufficient to leave a global stratigraphic signature distinct from that of the Holocene or of previous Pleistocene interglacial phases, encompassing novel biotic, sedimentary, and geochemical change.”