

Opinion

Climate 'fix' price a high one

THIS greenhouse gas witch hunt is beginning to get scary.

Not because the earth is warming, the polar caps melting and the sea levels rising. That would be scary enough, if we were admitting that we can't do much about it and should be planning for an altered future.

What scares me is that we seem to be barreling headlong into self-made disaster under the illusion that we are in control and have the power to make it stop.

Consider this:

For a little light reading, I was going page by page through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2007 report, looking at how scientists concluded that the burning of fossil fuels was destroying the planet.

I didn't find much explanation, other than the famed rising carbon dioxide levels, which from a climatology standpoint appear to be as much an effect as a cause. But oh, well.

What really got my attention was the subsection on Page 4 of Chapter 3 which talked about the anticipated cost of mitigation efforts.

It says there are "different metrics for reporting costs of emission reductions, although most models report them in macroeconomic indicators, particularly GDP losses."

Gulp. That's serious stuff.

The current global recession, proclaimed the worst since the Great Depression and requiring all sorts of efforts to keep us from sliding into economic chaos, has logged losses in the annual rate of around 4 to 6 percent for two quarters now.

The IPCC report says that getting where we need to be on reducing emissions will cost losses in the baseline GDP of 1 to 2 percent for the least stringent measures, and from 4 to 5 percent for more stringent measures.

What this says is that implementing carbon emission controls is going to seriously wallop our already reeling economy — in the realm of doubling the current crisis.

The take of the panel is that without these controls, climate change will be devastating.

Excuse me, but the fix sounds worse than the problem.

Once we totally decimate the world economy and wipe out the "industrial" in the industrialized world, what kind of victory over the devastation from a changing climate do we have? Do we win if we die and the polar bears survive?

At the top edge of the math, human activities are responsible for maybe 4 percent of the earth's greenhouse gases. Nature controls the other 96 percent. And that's only if you don't count the most potent greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, water vapor.

Throw in water vapor and man-made goes to less than one-tenth of 1%. Take away ALL man-made activity — just stop doing everything — and nature is still powerfully, overwhelmingly in control of what happens next.

Our chances of stopping the forces of nature are about as good as standing out in the yard with a blow-dryer trying to



As I See It

By P.J. GRIEKSPoor

push the tornado away from the house.
Smart people know enough to stock

up for the worst, hunker down in the storm cellar and pick up the pieces when the wind stops blowing.

We are certainly smart enough to know that emptying out the bank account when you see tough times coming probably isn't a good idea.

Try to get that across to your congressman. We're running out of time.

