



GLOBAL WARMING "FACTS" JUST DON'T ADD UP

Scientific research shows that the "facts" used by advocates as evidence of global warming are, in fact, myths.

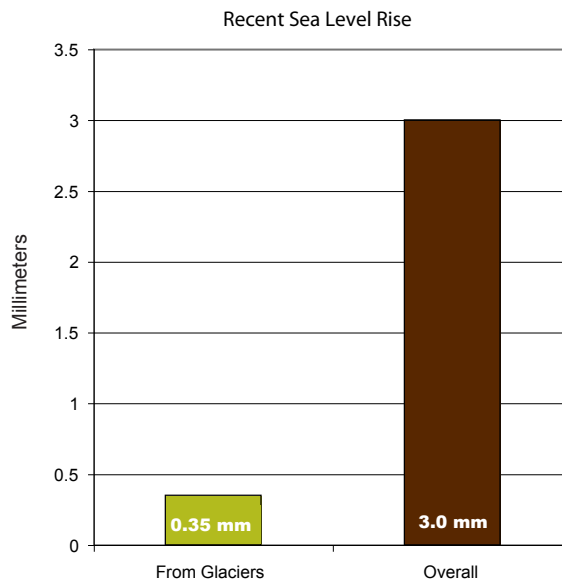
FACT: GLACIERS IN GREENLAND ARE GETTING 5.4 CENTIMETERS THICKER EVERY YEAR

Activists often claim that evidence of the dramatic effects of global warming is already available today. Declining polar bear populations and melting glaciers are served up as prime examples of the "proof" of global warming. However, the use of such claims to advocate policies that will restrict many Utahns' basic liberties, from the choice of what cars can be driven to the choice of what light bulbs can be used, begs the question of how factually-based is their evidence? In short: It isn't.

There has actually been general agreement that polar bear populations have been increasing in recent years.¹ Further, recent academic research has found that, in every case, studies predicting that this upward trend will reverse have been based on false assumptions and have followed unscientific research practices.² These same researchers predict that, based on scientific methods, polar bear populations will continue to grow. This prediction agrees with available anecdotal evidence.³

Conversely, other anecdotal examples of Greenland's and Antarctica's melting glaciers are commonly used to show that global warming is occurring and will lead to disastrous increases in sea level in the near future.⁴ The scientific research on this point, however, has at best yielded mixed results, with some studies finding that these glaciers are actually growing.

One recent study found that glacial melting has contributed only 12% to the rise in sea levels of 3 millime-



ters per year.⁵ Another study found that glacial thinning in areas of Antarctica has been offset by glacial thickening in others, and yet another study found that glaciers in Greenland have been thickening at a rate of about five centimeters per year.⁶

The scientific research clearly shows that stories of vanishing polar bears and disappearing glaciers are more hype than fact. Instead, the evidence suggests that polar bears are thriving and that Mother Nature is finding ways to care for its glaciers. The evidence also illustrates that it is important that we move beyond the spectacular stories and misleading information that are so prevalent in environmental policy debates so that we can make wise policy decisions that balance the freedom of Utahns with the need for proper stewardship of our state's resources.

ENDNOTES

1. Armstrong, J. Scott, Kester C. Green, and Willie Soon. 2008. "Polar Bear Population Forecasts: A Public-Policy Forecasting Audit." To be Published in forthcoming edition of *Interfaces*. At http://www.forecastingprinciples.com/Public_Policy/PolBears.pdf.
2. *Ibid.*

3. Langan, Fred. 2007. "Canadian Controversy: How do Polar Bears Fare?" *Christian Science Monitor*. May 3, 2007.
4. Roach, John. 2006. "Greenland Glaciers Losing Ice Much Faster, Study Says." *National Geographic News*. February 16, 2006; and Editorial Board. 2008. "Another Warning – Antarctic Ice Melt Shows Warming is Speeding Up." *Salt Lake Tribune*. March 28, 2008.
5. The researchers reported that glacial melting in Greenland and Antarctica contributed only .35 millimeters to the average annual sea-level increase of three millimeters per year. See Shepherd, Andrew and Duncan Wingham. "Recent Sea-Level Contributions of the Antarctic and Greenland Ice Sheets." *Science* 315 (5818): 1529-32.
6. Johannessen, Ola M., Kirill Khvorostovsky, Martin W. Miles, and Leonid P. Bobylev. 2005. "Recent Ice-Sheet Growth in the Interior of Greenland." *Science* [DOI: 10.1126/science.11115356]; and Davis, Curt H., Yonghong Li, Joseph R. McConnell, Markus M. Frey, and Edward Hanna. 2005. "Snowfall-Driven Growth in East Antarctic Ice Sheet Mitigates Recent Sea-Level Rise." *Science* 208 (5730): 1898-1901.