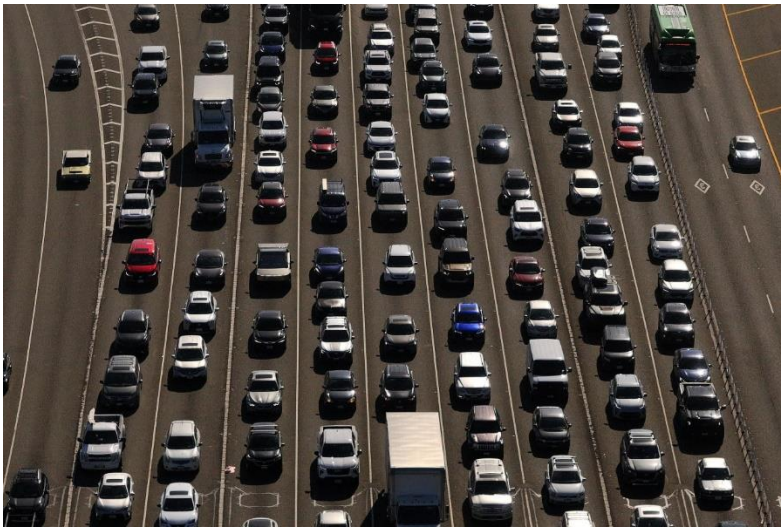


At Long Last, Clarity on Climate

The Energy Department's recent report is drawing predictable criticism from politicized scientists.

[WALL STREET JOURNAL](#), By Steven E. Koonin, Sept. 7, 2025

A recent Energy Department report challenged the widespread belief that greenhouse-gas emissions pose a serious threat to the nation. It likely soothed Americans irked by forced energy transitions, but you would be wrong to assume it reassured many alarmed by hypothetical climate catastrophes.



There is a disconnect between public perceptions of climate change and climate science—and between past government reports and the science itself. Energy Secretary Chris Wright understands this. It's why he commissioned an independent assessment by a team of five senior scientists, including me, to provide clearer insights into what's known and not about the changing climate.

Collectively, our team brought to the task more than 200 years of research experience, almost all directly relevant to climate studies. The resulting peer-reviewed report is entirely our work, free from political influence - a departure from previous assessments. It draws from United Nations and U.S. climate reports, peer-reviewed research, and primary observations to focus on important aspects of climate science that have been misrepresented to nonexperts.

Among the report's key findings:

- Elevated carbon-dioxide levels enhance plant growth, contributing to global greening and increased agricultural productivity.
- Complex climate models provide limited guidance on the climate's response to rising carbon-dioxide levels. Overly sensitive models, often using extreme scenarios, have exaggerated future warming projections and consequences.

- Data aggregated over the continental U.S. show no significant long-term trends in most extreme weather events. Claims of more frequent or intense hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and dryness in America aren't supported by historical records.
- While global sea levels have risen about 8 inches since 1900, aggregate U.S. tide-gauge data don't show the long-term acceleration expected from a warming globe.
- Natural climate variability, data limitations and model deficiencies complicate efforts to attribute specific climate changes or extreme events to human CO2 emissions.
- The use of the words "existential," "crisis" and "emergency" to describe the projected effects of human-caused warming on the U.S. economy finds scant support in the data.
- Overly aggressive policies aimed at reducing emissions could do more harm than good by hiking the cost of energy and degrading its reliability. Even the most ambitious reductions in U.S. emissions would have little direct effect on global emissions and an even smaller effect on climate trends.

Our report is the first from Washington in years that deviates from the narrative of a climate headed for catastrophe. That these findings surprised many, speaks to a governmental failure to communicate climate science accurately to the public.

Our work has attracted strong criticism, despite its grounding in established science. Almost 60,000 comments were submitted to the Federal Register during the month after its publication, and the Environmental Defense Fund and Union of Concerned Scientists filed a lawsuit to prevent the Energy Department or Environmental Protection Agency from using the report in decision-making. Most of these challenges have no scientific backing. Though scientists supporting the so-called consensus on climate change have organized several serious critiques, these at most add detail and nuance to our findings, without negating the report's central points. They still merit response, which will form the next round in an overdue public debate on the effects of greenhouse-gas emissions.

Climate policies must balance the risks of climate change against a response's costs, efficacy and collateral effects. Reports like ours may draw a lot of anger but our work accurately portrays important aspects of climate science. Acknowledging the facts is essential for informed policy decisions.

Mr. Koonin is a senior fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution and author of "Unsettled: What Climate Science Tells Us, What It Doesn't, and Why It Matters."