

Study: Disaster unless fossil fuel use cut

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Livermore National Laboratory scientists warn if fossil fuel use is not significantly reduced in the next few centuries, the polar ice caps will melt.

The scientists used a climate-carbon cycle model to look at global climate and carbon cycle changes. They determined the Earth's sea levels will rise by 23 feet and temperatures will soar by 14.5 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2300 if we continue to use the planet's available fossil fuels.

The jump in temperature would have alarming consequences, said lead author Govindasamy Bala of the laboratory's Energy and Environment Directorate.

In the polar regions alone, the temperature would spike at nearly 70F, forcing the land in the region to change from ice and tundra to boreal forests.

As for global warming skeptics, Bala said the proof is already evident. He pointed to the 2003 European heat wave, and the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season as examples of extreme climate change.

"We definitely know we are going to warm over the next 300 years," he said. "In reality, (it) may be worse off than we predict."

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