New study finds options for climate change policy are well characterized

October 24 2014

Policy options for climate change risk management are straightforward and have well understood strengths and weaknesses, according to a new study by the American Meteorological Society (AMS) Policy Program.

"Large gaps remain in society's consideration of climate policy," said Paul Higgins, the author of the study. "This study can help in the development of a comprehensive strategy for climate change risk management because it explores a much larger set of policy options."

The study identifies four categories of climate change risk management: 1) mitigation – efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; 2) adaptation – increasing society's capacity to cope with changes in climate; 3) geoengineering or climate engineering – additional, deliberate manipulation of the earth system that is intended to counteract at least some of the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions; and 4) knowledge-base expansion – efforts to learn and understand more about the climate system, which can help support proactive risk management.

"As a policy challenge, climate change boils down to four issues," according to Higgins. "Climate is changing; people are causing climate to change; the societal consequences of climate change are highly uncertain but include the potential for serious impacts; but there is a wide range of responses that can meaningfully help reduce the risks of climate change."

The full report is available at the American Meteorological Society

Policy Program web site at http://www.ametsoc.org/studies.

Provided by American Meteorological Society