

Kerry, Obama to raise global warming issues in Alaska

August 31 2015, by Dan Joling



This Aug. 4, 2015, file photo shows U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry waving after delivering a speech at Singapore Management University in Singapore. Kerry says history will not look kindly on climate change skeptics who fail to take action to curb warming. Speaking Sunday, Aug. 30, 2015, in Anchorage, Alaska, Kerry says scientists are overwhelmingly unified in the conclusion that humans are contributing to global climate change and that steps must be taken to reduce the carbon in the atmosphere. (Brendan Smialowski/Pool Photo via AP)

Scientists are "overwhelmingly unified" in concluding that humans are

contributing to global climate change, Secretary of State John Kerry said Sunday night, and the public is slowly getting the full picture.

Skeptics who stand in the way of action to respond to [climate change](#) will not be remembered kindly, he told Alaska reporters.

"I think the people who are slow to come to this table will be written up by historians as having been some of the folks most irresponsible in understanding and reacting to [scientific analysis](#)," he said.

Kerry spoke one day before he and President Barack Obama will address the State Department's Conference on Global Leadership in the Arctic. The purpose, according to the State Department, is to focus world attention on urgent issues facing the Arctic and provide foreign ministers and residents a way to address challenges.

"The president believes this is one of the most important issues we face," Kerry said. "It is a national security problem."

Warming's effects on Alaska have been more dramatic than elsewhere in the country as glaciers thaw, coastlines erode and sea ice, the habitat for threatened polar bears, Pacific walrus and ice seals, diminishes.

The president is taking steps to address warming, Kerry said, and will advocate strongly for an international pact on cutting carbon emissions at a United Nations conference in December in Paris.

Kerry said he traveled to China to negotiate on carbon reductions and the country has set targets. China is taking the issue seriously, he said.

"We've been urging other countries all around the world to do so," he said.

The president's climate action plan involves all carbon sources, from appliances to automobiles to power generators.

"So we're doing as much as we can to try to move people toward sustainable sources of energy and the president will talk about this very much while he's up here in Alaska. Part of the reason for being here is to underscore this problem."

Environmental groups plan to protest Monday over Obama's decision to grant permits to Royal Dutch Shell for exploratory drilling in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska's northwest coast. Kerry said the administration is taking a balanced approach to moving away from carbon sources of energy.

"You have to balance it with the fundamentals of your economy and of basic needs. That's one of the things we'll talk about here—how fast can we encourage people to switch."

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