

China to surpass U.S. emissions levels

7 November 2006

The International Energy Agency says China will surpass the United States in carbon dioxide emissions by 2009, about a decade ahead of previous predictions.

China's increase in emissions, fueled by its enormous reliance on coal, is particularly troubling to climate scientists because carbon dioxide is the main ingredient linked with global warming. Moreover, China is exempt from the Kyoto Protocol's requirements for reductions in emissions of global warming gases, The New York Times reported.

The IEA's prediction, issued Tuesday, highlights the unexpected speed with which China is emerging as the biggest contributor to global warming.

Instead of limiting emissions, Chinese officials have called repeatedly for tighter limits on the emission of global warming gasses from industrialized countries, claiming rich nations are responsible for the planet's already high CO₂ levels, the Times said.

"You cannot tell people who are struggling to earn enough to eat that they need to reduce their emissions," said Lu Xuedu, the deputy director general of the Chinese Office of Global Environmental Affairs.

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APA citation: China to surpass U.S. emissions levels (2006, November 7) retrieved 20 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-11-china-surpass-emissions.html>

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