

# Net Zero Policies Will Have A Trivial Effect on Temperature, But Disastrous Effects on People Worldwide

**Richard Lindzen**

Professor of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences, Emeritus  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**William Happer**

Professor of Physics, Emeritus, Princeton University

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The United States and countries worldwide are vigorously pursuing regulations and subsidies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to Net Zero by 2050 on the assumption, as stated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that the “evidence is clear that carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the main driver of climate change” and is “responsible for more than 50% of the change.”

We are career physicists with a special expertise in radiation physics, which describes how CO<sub>2</sub> affects heat flow in Earth’s atmosphere. The physics of carbon dioxide is that CO<sub>2</sub>’s ability to warm the planet is determined by its ability to absorb heat, which decreases rapidly as CO<sub>2</sub>’s concentration in the atmosphere increases. This scientific fact about CO<sub>2</sub> changes everything about the popular view of CO<sub>2</sub> and climate change.

Carbon Dioxide is Now a Weak Greenhouse Gas. At today’s CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere of approximately 420 parts per million, additional amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> have little ability to absorb heat and therefore is now a weak greenhouse gas. At higher concentrations in the future, the ability of future increases to warm the planet will be even smaller. This also means that the common assumption that carbon dioxide is “the main driver of climate change” is scientifically false.

In short, more carbon dioxide cannot cause catastrophic global warming or more extreme weather. Neither can greenhouse gases of methane or nitrous oxide, the levels of which are so small that they are irrelevant to climate.

Referring to additional atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> as “carbon pollution” is complete nonsense. More CO<sub>2</sub> does no harm. Quite the contrary, it does two good things for humanity: (1) It provides a beneficial increase in temperature, although slight and much less than natural fluctuations. (2) It creates more food for people worldwide, which we cover further below.

## Implications

*First.* Net Zero Efforts Will Have a Trivial Effect on Temperature. More of the atmospheric greenhouse gas, CO<sub>2</sub>, will increase temperature, but only slightly. How changes in atmospheric greenhouse gases affect radiation transfer are described by precise physical equations that have never failed to describe observations of the real world. We applied these formulas to the massive efforts in the U. S. and worldwide to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to Net Zero by 2050 in a simple paper<sup>1</sup> that we recommend to those with a technical background. We show that all the efforts to achieve net zero emissions of carbon dioxide, if fully implemented, will have a trivial effect on temperature:

- United States Net Zero by 2050 -- only avoids a temperature increase of 0.015 °F with no positive feedback, and only 0.06 °F with a positive feedback of 4 that is typically built into the models of the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

- Worldwide Net Zero by 2050 -- only avoids a temperature increase of 0.13 °F or 0.50 °F with a factor of 4 positive feedback.

These numbers are trivial, but the cost of achieving them would be disastrous to people worldwide.

*Second. Net Zero Policies Will Be Disastrous for People Worldwide.* In the United States and worldwide, Net Zero regulations and subsidies will have disastrous effects, including elimination of coal-fired and gas-fired power plants that provide the majority of the world's electricity, elimination of gas-fueled heaters and cooking stoves, elimination of internal combustion engines for transportation and other uses and elimination of energy sources and feedstocks for producing nitrogen fertilizer that feeds nearly half the world and for the manufacture of nearly everything used in daily life. Investments into inefficient "green" energy technologies diverts resources from more useful purposes. These and other effects would destroy entire economies.

*Third. More Carbon Dioxide Means More Food.* Contrary to the demonization of the carbon dioxide as a pollutant, increasing concentrations of atmospheric carbon dioxide boosts the amount of food available to people worldwide, including in drought-stricken areas. Doubling carbon dioxide to 800 ppm, for example, will increase global food supplies by many tens of percent<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, carbon dioxide emissions should not be reduced, but increased to provide more food worldwide. There would be no risk of catastrophic global warming or extreme weather because carbon dioxide is now a weak greenhouse gas. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions will reduce the amount of food available to people worldwide and produce no benefit to the climate.

*Fourth. Fossil Fuels Must Not Be Eliminated.* Net Zero requires that fossil fuels be eliminated because they account for about 90% of human-induced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, the elimination of fossil fuels will have no effect on the climate since carbon dioxide is now a weak greenhouse gas. The use of fossil fuels should be expanded because they (1) provide more carbon dioxide which makes more food, (2) are used to make nitrogen fertilizer that enables the feeding of about half of the world's population, and (3) provide reliable and inexpensive energy for people everywhere, especially for the two-thirds of the world's population without adequate access to electricity.<sup>3</sup>

#### Conclusion

All Net Zero Actions Worldwide Should Be Stopped Immediately. All Net Zero carbon dioxide regulations and subsidies in the United States and worldwide must be stopped as soon as possible to avoid the disastrous effects on people worldwide, especially in developing countries.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Lindzen, W. Happer and W. van Wijngaarden, *Net Zero Avoided Temperature Increase*, ([Net Zero Averted Temperature Increase - CO2 Coalition; http://arxiv.org/abs/2406.07392](http://arxiv.org/abs/2406.07392))

<sup>2</sup> R. Lindzen, W. Happer and S. Koonin, "Fossil Fuels and Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) Climate Science" (April 2024), p. 3, [Lindzen-Happer-Koonin-climate-science-4-24.pdf](https://co2coalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Lindzen-Happer-Koonin-climate-science-4-24.pdf) (co2coalition.org)

<sup>3</sup> R. Bryce, "Powering the Unplugged: Overcoming the Barriers to Electrification in the Developing World" (2023).