

U.S. government report warns of drastic impact of climate change

Scientists say they fear Trump administration may change or suppress findings

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The average temperature in the United States has risen rapidly and drastically since 1980, and recent decades have been the warmest of the past 1,500 years, according to a sweeping federal climate change report awaiting approval by the Trump administration.

The draft report by scientists from 13 federal agencies, which has not yet been made public, concludes that Americans are feeling the effects of climate change right now. It directly contradicts claims by President Donald Trump and members of his Cabinet who say that the human contribution to climate change is uncertain, and that the ability to predict the effects is limited.

"Evidence for a changing climate abounds, from the top of the atmosphere to the depths of the oceans," a draft of the report states. A copy of it was obtained by *The New York Times*.

The authors note that thousands of studies, con-



Dire predictions: The coal-fired Plant Scherer in Georgia, which is one of the top carbon dioxide emitters in the U.S. • AP

ducted by tens of thousands of scientists, have documented climate changes on land and in the air. "Many lines of evidence demonstrate that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse (heat-trapping) gases, are primarily responsible for recent observed climate change," they wrote.

The report was completed this year and is a special science section of the National Climate Assessment, which is congressionally mandated every four years. The Na-

tional Academy of Sciences has signed off on the draft report, and the authors are awaiting permission from the Trump administration to release it.

Rise in temperature

The report concludes that even if humans immediately stopped emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the world would still feel at least an additional 0.30 degrees Celsius of warming over this century compared with today. The

projected actual rise, scientists say, will be as much as 2 degrees Celsius. A small difference in global temperatures can make a big difference in the climate: the difference between a rise in global temperatures of 1.5 degrees Celsius and one of 2 degrees Celsius, for example, could mean longer heat waves, more intense rainstorms and the faster disintegration of coral reefs.

Among the more significant of the study's findings is that it is possible to attribute some extreme weather to climate change.

The field known as "attribution science" has advanced rapidly in response to increasing risks from climate change.

Scientists say they fear the Trump administration could change or suppress the report. But those who challenge scientific data on human-caused climate change say they are equally worried that the draft report, as well as the larger National Climate Assessment, will be publicly released. NYT

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