

## What is climate change- also known as global warming?

The average temperature over the earth is increasing. It has increased by 1.35 °F. The decade 2000- 2010 is the warmest decade on record. However, this does not mean the whole earth gets warmer. Some places on the earth get much warmer and drier, while others get colder and wetter.

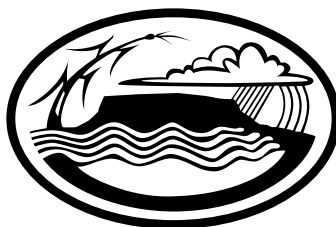
## Why is there a debate over climate change?

Some people believe the change is not caused by humans, but is actually just part of a natural fluctuation of the earth's temperature. However, science increasingly points to human activity as the cause of climate change. How bad climate change will end up being for the earth is also under debate- although most scientists agree that it will be bad for the earth.

# Climate Change and the Navajo Nation



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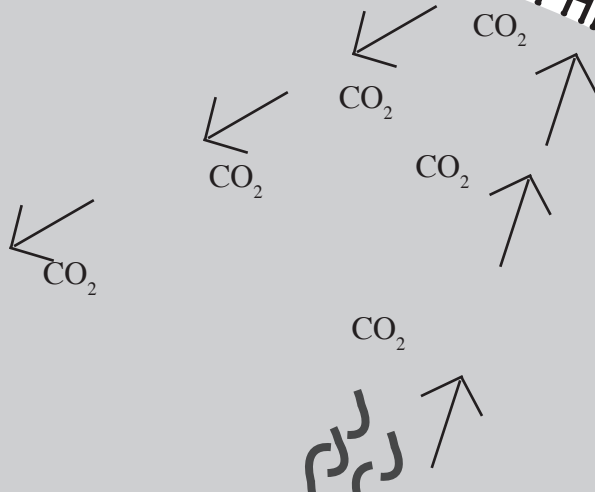
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## How does climate change work?

Activities like burning coal and destroying forest release carbon dioxide into the air. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) stays in the earth's atmosphere- the gaseous layer around the earth. The carbon dioxide does not escape the atmosphere for hundreds of years. Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere heats up the earth. Levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere are higher than they've been in 850,000 years. Other gases like ozone also contribute to global warming.

### ATMOSPHERE



## What will happen to the earth as a result of climate change?

- Rise of sea levels, anywhere from 7-23 inches
- Disappearance of land as the sea rises around it
- Rise of extreme weather effects like wind storms and hurricanes
- Changes in rainfall patterns
- Rise in the number and size of deserts and sand dunes
- Less fresh water
- Difficulties growing food
- Extinction of animal and plant species that can't adjust to new temperatures

## What will happen specifically to Navajo?

Navajo is one of the regions of the earth that is expected to get hotter and drier. Other regions of the earth farther away from the equator, like Canada, are expected to get wetter.

## What current events are being attributed to climate change?

Some say an increase in forest fires in the west of the United States has been a result in global warming. There have been record high temperatures in the US Midwest and all over the world, in places like Egypt and Japan. Glaciers have started to melt, and the sea level is rising about 2mm/ year.

## What can Navajos do about climate change?

The coal- fired power plants on Navajo like the Navajo Generating Station contribute to global warming by releasing greenhouse gases into the air. Navajos can work to move away from an economy based on coal and towards one based on enterprises better for the planet. For instance, traditional ways like farming and shepherding are very good for the planet. Generating energy from sun and wind would also be a good way for Navajos to make money and also stop practices that lead to climate change. There are some false solutions to climate change- like carbon capture and nuclear power- that claim to be much better for the environment, but actually come with a whole other set of environmental

challenges, unlike solar and wind energy.

