

## **Teachers team up with non-profit to install solar panels**

### **Systems: Homes powered by the sun.**

By Sarah de Crescenzo, staff writer  
Porterville Recorder, Tues., Dec. 8, 2009

On Tuesday morning, Imelda Ramos witnessed something she had never seen before — an alternative energy demonstration.

Intently, she watched as her energy meter began a slow backwards spin, demonstrating an excess of power rather than a usage estimate.

The Ramos family is one of a number of Porterville families who had their traditional energy systems replaced by rooftop solar panels this week. The systems are worth thousands, but cost them nothing.

Funding for the installations comes from the \$108 million dollar budget of the Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) Program, part of the California Solar Initiative, a statewide program launched in 2007.

The installation of the system on the Ramos home also provided an opportunity for four Porterville High School teachers to learn about solar energy installation — something they will pass to PHS students, allowing them to gain entry into the growing alternative energy field.

“Anybody can be successful doing this,” Tom Reed, an instructor with the PHS Alternative Energy Related Occupations Academy, said. “The feeling is there’s going to be a lot of jobs and careers in solar energy.”

He and other Tulare County teachers worked with trained electricians from GRID Alternatives with the installation.

The installation, which involved a collaboration between Fresno-based non-profit organization GRID Alternatives and local community members, included placing an inverter box on the inner wall of the garage, a disconnect on the outer wall next to the meter (to turn off the system if necessary), and the central installation — a wide swath of solar panels across a single side of the house’s sloped roof.

According to GRID outreach coordinator Lauren Cobb, the installation on the Ramos’ home would typically have cost about \$20,000.

The Ramos family was one of two families in the southeast Casas Buena Vista subdivision to respond to initial efforts by GRID to contact homeowners for potential installations.

To be eligible for the subsidized installations residents must own their home, receive electric service from Southern California Edison or certain other energy companies, and have a household income at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

Because the Ramos family qualified, they won’t be charged a penny for their system. In fact, according to Fairbanks, if the family’s energy usage doesn’t match the energy produced by the solar system, the extra energy will turn a profit for them as Southern California Edison purchases the excess.

Ramos said her first reaction to the GRID’s initial information was related to the environment.

“This can help the planet,” she said in Spanish.

Ramos said she also read in the literature distributed by GRID that more than 75 percent of her energy bill could be eliminated by the solar power.

Her 4-year-old son, Daniel Ramos, wandered in and out of the garage clutching a large rubber ball as the installation progressed.

"He wants to help, too," Imelda Ramos joked.

As the workers handed the unwieldy panels up to their counterparts on the roof, other neighborhood residents gathered around the residence to find out what the commotion was about.

Baldemar Sierra, who is currently unemployed, said he sees training in alternative energies as a good career skill.

"I'm here because I want to learn," he said.

Additionally, he was interested in the installations taking place in the neighborhood because his mother owns a house nearby.

"It's a great opportunity to save money and energy," he said.

The roof installation, made up of 22 individual solar panels linked together, requires little care besides a biannual cleaning with a garden hose, Fairbanks told Ramos after the installation was complete.

GRID outreach coordinator Alicia Bohigian said she is currently working with five more families in the neighborhood, all of whom expressed interest in the project after seeing the Ramos' installation.

She said people often think the installation offers are "too good to be true" because of the expense involved.

"Once they see their neighbors have qualified and get a system, they become more trusting, I think," Bohigian said.

## **California state agency's green car fleet could cost millions**

Andrew McIntosh, Sacramento Bee

In the Merced Sun-Star, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009

The State Compensation Insurance Fund, the workers' compensation insurer, is shopping for 600 new hybrid vehicles for its automobile fleet — an expense that could top \$14 million.

The fund is contemplating the major purchase at the same time it's hitting its own customers with a 5 percent increase in premiums in January, blaming that recently announced boost on "medical inflation."

The State Fund is negotiating with both Toyota and Ford to buy 600 gasoline-electric hybrid cars in 2010 to replace traditional gasoline-only cars in its fleet, State Fund spokeswoman Jennifer Vargen confirmed.

Vargen defended the purchase, saying the state-owned insurer is very careful about when it replaces its vehicles, adding that State Fund officials also are embracing Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's statewide plan to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

"We don't willy-nilly replace vehicles just because we want to drive something new," Vargen said. "We haven't replaced a car in four years, and green initiatives are very important to us."

The insurer had requested quotes from Toyota, Honda and Ford. Honda declined to participate, so State Fund is now negotiating with just the two suppliers, Vargen said.

"We haven't signed a contract yet," she added, declining to say how much will be spent, other than to call it "a substantial investment."

The Department of General Services bought 50 Toyota Prius sedans earlier this year for \$1.2 million, state records show, so any deal for 600 cars could easily top \$14 million.

## **EPA is preparing to regulate emissions in Congress's stead**

By Steven Mufson and David A. Fahrenthold

The Washington Post, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009

The Obama administration moved closer Monday to issuing regulations on greenhouse gases, a step that would enable it to limit emissions across the economy even if Congress does not pass climate legislation.

The move, which coincided with the first day of the international climate summit in Copenhagen, seemed timed to reassure delegates there that the United States is committed to reducing its emissions even if domestic legislation remains bogged down. But it provoked condemnation from key Republicans and from U.S. business groups, which vowed to tie up any regulations in litigation.

In Monday's much-anticipated announcement, the Environmental Protection Agency said that six gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, pose a danger to the environment and the health of Americans and that the agency would start drawing up regulations to reduce those emissions.

"These are reasonable, common-sense steps," EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson said, adding that they would protect the environment "without placing an undue burden on the businesses that make up the better part of our economy." At the same time, however, EPA regulation is no one's preferred outcome -- not even the EPA's. Jackson said her agency and other administration officials would still prefer if Congress acted before they did.

Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.), a leading proponent of a Senate climate bill, issued a statement after the EPA's announcement saying, "The message to Congress is crystal clear: Get moving."

The EPA's "endangerment finding" -- a key bureaucratic step in the regulatory process -- was seen as a message to Congress and Copenhagen, but it was also a belated response to an order from the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in April 2007 that carbon dioxide should be considered a pollutant under the Clean Air Act. As a result, the court said, the EPA had not only the power but the obligation to regulate the gas. (In that case, *Massachusetts v. EPA*, the Bush administration was fighting against regulating carbon dioxide from vehicle tailpipes.)

Michael Morris, chief executive of American Electric Power, a utility that is the nation's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, said Monday that "we have been a proponent . . . to a congressional approach to this undertaking. This is the most awkward way we could go about it."

The EPA had to comply with direction from the courts, Morris said, but "there are better approaches, more cost-effective approaches and more productive approaches."

It remains unclear whether the EPA's regulatory cudgel will spur Congress to take faster action on the climate legislation that is now mired in the Senate or whether it will provoke a backlash.

"The stick approach isn't going to work. In fact, Congress may retaliate," said Mark Helmke, a senior adviser to Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.). "They could stop the funding, and they could change the law."

Anticipating EPA action, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) tried unsuccessfully in September to prevent the agency from spending money to regulate stationary sources of greenhouse gases, such as power plants or factories, for one year. Murkowski, the ranking Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said in a statement Monday that the endangerment finding is "a blunt instrument that will severely hamper our attempts to bolster the economy and get Americans back to work."

Some senators who environmental groups hope might vote for a climate bill also said they were unhappy. Sen. Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine) called the move "regrettable." And Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said in a statement that she is concerned that the move "will create burdens on American industry without providing any significant environmental benefits."

"I strongly urge EPA to wait for Congress to find a solution," Lincoln said.

Earlier this year, the Obama administration took the first step toward complying with the Supreme Court's 2007 ruling by requiring automakers to increase the fuel economy -- and therefore decrease the carbon emissions -- of new cars and trucks by 2016. The ailing automakers supported the accord.

Monday's finding is another step toward compliance. "There are no more excuses for delay," Jackson said. "This administration will not ignore science and the law any longer."

Supporters of regulation note that the Clean Air Act has led to some of the great U.S. environmental success stories, producing significant drops in smog and soot. But greenhouse gases could prove far more difficult to fight. They don't just come from smokestacks, but from millions of auto tailpipes, airplanes, ships, home furnaces and even the digestive tracts of cattle.

And there is no simple piece of hardware that emitters can buy to keep the gases out of the air. "There's no catalytic converter. There's no scrubber. There's nothing," said Jeffrey R. Holmstead, who headed the EPA's air-pollution programs during the Bush administration and now works with the law firm Bracewell & Giuliani. Instead, solutions probably would include switching the fuels burned in power plants and, in the future, using machinery to capture emissions and store them underground.

The Clean Air Act set a low threshold for regulation that opponents argue would require rules for everything from laundries to office buildings, from cow farms to coal plants. But the EPA said it would impose new rules only on large factories, refineries, power plants and other facilities emitting more than 25,000 tons a year of carbon dioxide.

When these plants upgrade their facilities, or when new ones like them are built, they would be required to install the "best available control technology" for limiting greenhouse-gas emissions, while "taking into account costs." In October, the EPA said there were 13,661 facilities that size; it estimated that every year 128 new facilities and 273 existing facilities seeking modifications would require new permits.

"What EPA can require is controls that are technically feasible and cost-effective," said David Donziger, policy director of the climate center at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "With CO<sub>2</sub> there is the chance to save money, which is rarer for other pollutants."

Together, these large sources account for about half of all U.S. emissions, the EPA said. But it's still unclear what, exactly, the "best available" technology should be. Jackson said the EPA is still working on that.

Although many business leaders have urged Congress to adopt climate legislation, some remain staunchly opposed. Those groups also condemned the EPA for moving forward with regulations.

"This action poses a threat to every American family and business if it leads to regulation of greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. Such regulation would be intrusive, inefficient and excessively costly," said Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, whose members have big oil refineries and petrochemical plants. "It is a decision that is clearly politically motivated to coincide with the start of the Copenhagen climate summit."

## **Questions and answers about EPA action on warming**

By Dina Cappiello, Associated Press

In the Merced Sun-Star, Modesto Bee and other papers, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009

A big meeting in Copenhagen. A cap-and-trade bill in Congress. And now, a determination by the Environmental Protection Agency that global warming pollution is a threat to public health - a move that clears the way for the first-ever federal regulations targeting climate-changing emissions.

Confused about the EPA's action on greenhouse gases?

Here are some questions and answers about what was announced by the EPA on Monday, and what it means for international climate negotiations, action in Congress and global warming in general:

Q: What did the EPA do exactly?

A: The EPA classified six greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride - as pollutants that threaten the health and welfare of the American people. This will compel the federal government - unless it is blocked by Congress - to regulate emissions of greenhouse gases for the first time under the 1970 Clean Air Act. The government already controls releases of sulfur dioxide, ground-level ozone, nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide under the law.

Q: How do these six newly classified gases threaten us?

A: Unlike other pollutants, greenhouse gases threaten public health and welfare indirectly, by warming the planet rather than directly by having people breathe them in. In terms of health, the EPA expects global warming to expand the range of certain diseases such as Lyme disease, boost many allergens and worsen smog, which is known to trigger asthma attacks and cause lung damage. On the welfare front, a rise in sea level brought about by climate change could worsen flooding.

Q: Why did the EPA decide to do this?

A: A 2007 Supreme Court ruling declared that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are air pollutants as defined by the Clean Air Act and that the EPA had the authority to regulate them if they are found to endanger public health and welfare. It directed the EPA to make that determination. The Bush administration never acted on the court order. By contrast, the Obama administration found the science overwhelming and announced it would set the first-ever greenhouse gas standards for automobiles and would move to control heat-trapping emissions from large industrial sources such as factories and power plants. The endangerment finding announced Monday was needed to make those proposed rules a reality.

Q: How does the EPA finding related to the climate negotiations now under way in Copenhagen, Denmark?

A: It will allow the Obama administration to present another piece of evidence that the White House is tackling global warming in the absence of new legislation and convince other nations that the U.S. is taking climate change seriously. However, the emission reduction target of 17 percent by 2020 that Obama will propose in Denmark falls short of what European leaders wanted and scientists say is needed to avoid the worst consequences of global warming. The EPA's endangerment finding in itself produces no pollution reductions without actual regulations - and those have yet to be written.

Q: How would the EPA regulate greenhouse gases?

A: The agency has plans to do something similar to what it does for other pollutants, by requiring new and expanding factories and power plants to install best-available technology to reduce heat-trapping pollution. For automobiles, it has drafted the first-ever greenhouse gas emissions standards that would require automobiles to be more fuel-efficient than they are today. But industry worries that the EPA could go further - regulating greenhouse gases from small sources such as buildings, farms and small businesses. The Obama administration has said it does not intend to do that.

Q: What would these new regulations cost?

A: It's not yet clear. The cost for power producers, which would probably be passed onto electricity customers, would depend on what technology the EPA requires. Pollution reductions could come from installing carbon capture technology, reducing energy use through efficiencies or shifting away from fossil fuels. The EPA estimates it will cost automakers about \$60 billion to meet planned fuel economy requirements. The cost to power plants and factories are likely to be more.

Q: Isn't Congress also trying to pass legislation to control greenhouse gas emissions?

A: Yes. In June, the House of Representatives passed a bill that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent by 2020 and about 80 percent by 2050. But the Senate, which has been tied up with legislation to reform health care, is not expected to vote on the bill until next spring. Both versions of the bill limit how the EPA can use the Clean Air Act to regulate emissions, but to differing degrees. The legislation would reduce greenhouse gases by setting a limit on heat-trapping pollution and by allowing companies to buy and sell pollution permits as long as they don't exceed the overall limit. This system, known as cap-and-trade, would be more flexible and would probably be cheaper than straight EPA regulation.

Q: Which would come quicker: EPA regulations or Congressional action?

A: It's hard to say. The decision by the EPA will set in motion a complex set of rules that could take years to draft and could be delayed by lawsuits from the business community and others. Congress faces its own challenges in getting a bill passed. Many Republicans and moderate Democrats are worried cap-and-trade would increase energy prices and could result in job losses for those who work in energy-intensive industries. These concerns will only become magnified as midterm elections in November get closer.

Q: How will the EPA decision affect Congress?

A: Prominent politicians on both sides of the aisle have said the Clean Air Act was not designed to control greenhouse gases. Supporters of cap-and-trade will try to use the EPA's decision to jump-start action in Congress. But it could backfire. Earlier this year there were attempts to block the EPA from taking action and to buy more time for Congress to draft a bill. Look for efforts to try and block the EPA again.

Q: How can a gas we all exhale be considered a dangerous pollutant and be regulated?

A: Don't worry - the EPA has no plans to control breathing. But scientists say the widespread burning of fossil fuels and activities that reduce the natural absorption of carbon dioxide on earth have disrupted the natural carbon cycle. Growing concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are creating a heat-trapping blanket in the atmosphere, thereby warming the

earth. The EPA's focus is to reduce the flow of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from human activities, many related to burning fossil fuels.

[NY Times commentary Monday, Dec. 7, 2009:](#)

## **Unhelpful Hansen**

By Paul Krugman

James Hansen is a great climate scientist. He was the first to warn about the climate crisis; I take what he says about coal, in particular, very seriously.

Unfortunately, while I defer to him on all matters climate, today's op-ed article suggests that he really hasn't made any effort to understand the economics of emissions control. And that's not a small matter, because he's now engaged in a misguided crusade against cap and trade, which is — let's face it — the only form of action against greenhouse gas emissions we have any chance of taking before catastrophe becomes inevitable.

What the basic economic analysis says is that an emissions tax of the form Hansen wants and a system of tradable emission permits, aka cap and trade, are essentially equivalent in their effects. The picture looks like this:

A tax puts a price on emissions, leading to less pollution. Cap and trade puts a quantitative limit on emissions, but from the point of view of any individual, emitting requires that you buy more permits (or forgo the sale of permits, if you have an excess), so the incentives are the same as if you faced a tax. Contrary to what Hansen seems to believe, the incentives for individual action to reduce emissions are the same under the two systems.

This is true even if some emitters are "grandfathered" with free allocations of permits, as will surely be the case. They still have an incentive to cut their emissions, so that they can sell their excess permits to others.

The only difference is the nature of uncertainty over the aggregate outcome. If you use a tax, you know what the price of emissions will be, but you don't know the quantity of emissions; if you use a cap, you know the quantity but not the price. Yes, this means that if some people do more than expected to reduce emissions, they'll just free up permits for others — which worries Hansen. But it also means that if some people do less to reduce emissions than expected, someone else will have to make up the shortfall. It's symmetric; there's no reason to emphasize only one side of the story.

And as far as I can see, the question about uncertainty is secondary; the fact is that cap and trade works. Hansen admits that the sulfur dioxide cap has reduced pollution, but argues that it didn't do enough; well, it did as much as it was designed to do. If Hansen thinks it should have done more, he should be campaigning for a lower cap, not trashing the whole program.

Oh, and the argument that if you create a market, you're opening the door for Wall Street evildoers, is bizarre. Emissions permits aren't subprime mortgages, let alone complex derivatives based on subprime; they're straightforward rights to do a specific thing. It will truly be a tragedy if people generalize from the financial crisis to block crucially needed environmental policy.

Things like this often happen when economists deal with physical scientists; the hard-science guys tend to assume that we're witch doctors with nothing to tell them, so they can't be bothered to listen at all to what the economists have to say, and the result is that they end up reinventing old errors in the belief that they're deep insights. Most of the time not much harm is done. But this time is different.

For here's the way it is: we have a real chance of getting a serious cap and trade program in place within a year or two. We have no chance of getting a carbon tax for the foreseeable future.

It's just destructive to denounce the program we can actually get — a program that won't be perfect, won't be enough, but can be made increasingly effective over time — in favor of something that can't possibly happen in time to avoid disaster.

*Paul Krugman is a Nobel Prize-winning economist and columnist for the New York Times.*

[L.A. Times editorial Tues., Dec. 8, 2009:](#)

### **The EPA's long-overdue climate change ruling**

**The agency finally agrees that greenhouse gases are a danger to public health.**

The Environmental Protection Agency released a historic finding Monday that greenhouse gases are endangering public health and welfare. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Vista), an outspoken critic of the theory of climate change and of congressional attempts to cut carbon, responded by issuing a statement headlined, "Why the Rush? What's to Hide?"

We have a different question for the EPA: Why has it taken so long?

In 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that greenhouse gases were pollutants covered by the Clean Air Act, and it directed the EPA to determine whether they represented a health threat that would require federal regulation. Thus began more than a year and a half of foot-dragging by the Bush administration, which had reams of data pointing out the clear dangers of climate change but refused to take action. The EPA is hardly rushing to judgment by finally obeying the law and acknowledging the overwhelming worldwide consensus that carbon-fueled climate change threatens human health. Global warming is expected to cause deaths related to adverse temperatures, greater incidence of disease, worsened air quality, rising sea levels, more intense weather events and food and water shortages, among other things. These are not the conclusions of a handful of conspiracy-minded scientists at a British university, as climate skeptics would have people believe; the EPA's finding was based primarily on the work of the U.S. Global Change Research Program, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the National Research Council.

The finding by the EPA, which paves the way toward concrete regulatory limits on greenhouse gases, is the most significant action taken by the federal government to date to address the problem. That should make President Obama's mission in Copenhagen next week a little bit easier. As global leaders convene to negotiate a worldwide climate treaty, all eyes are looking to the United States, the world's second-biggest carbon emitter after China (and a far bigger polluter than China on a per capita basis). If the U.S. refuses to take strong steps, which it has done consistently until now, it's unreasonable to ask or expect any other nation to do so.

Nonetheless, the EPA finding on its own isn't enough to spur a breakthrough in Copenhagen. The agency has signaled that it plans to go after only the very largest polluters, at least initially. In March, it will issue guidelines on major sources such as oil refineries and coal-fired power plants; it is also expected to set rules on light-duty vehicles patterned on tailpipe emissions standards approved by California. That's a nice start, but climate negotiators are looking for a strict commitment on economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, something the EPA isn't in a position to provide.

More important, the EPA action sends a strong message to the Senate, where progress on a crucial climate bill has stalled. The cap-and-trade system created by the bill is a market-based method for cutting carbon that would be less expensive to industry and consumers than the direct regulatory approach taken by the EPA. In other words: If you don't like cap-and-trade, you'll like the alternative less. That's something even science-denying obstructionists ought to be able to understand.

[Merced Sun-Star editorial, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009:](#)

## **Our View: Time is right for action on climate**

### **World leaders meet in Copenhagen starting today, but stakes couldn't be higher in California.**

Is climate change real? Has the planet been warming? Are human activities contributing to the harm? Can we predict with certainty the worst consequences, and how quickly they will occur?

The answers to these questions, based on several decades of peer-reviewed research, are "yes" on the first three, and "no" on the fourth.

There's broad scientific agreement on the planet's thermostat: Average temperatures increased significantly in the final decades of the last century.

There's also broad agreement -- not universal -- that a buildup of greenhouse gases, largely from the burning of fossil fuels, has contributed to this rise.

But the debate isn't over. Climate scientists are not soothsayers. They cannot predict the future any better than, say, economists.

Thus, there is intense scientific debate about how quickly glaciers and land-based ice sheets will melt and sea levels will rise, and how quickly other fearsome impacts -- catastrophic floods, droughts and extinctions -- could occur.

For members of the public, the trick is to understand the real points of debate.

That means separating consensus from misrepresentations put forth by groups on the fringe. These include "climatistas" -- environmental activists who hype the worst possible outcomes.

But more often they are the "contras" -- deniers of climate change who recklessly want to cling to the status quo.

In Copenhagen, Denmark, today, leaders from around the world will meet to discuss the next steps on addressing this planetary threat.

With countries such as China and India showing a willingness to reduce emissions, it could set the stage for a truly international effort to pursue cleaner energy policies.

Sadly, much of the world's media may remain focused on the release of thousands of embarrassing e-mails hacked (stolen) from a climate research institute in England. These e-mails reveal the shocking fact that, within academia, individual researchers can act badly and harbor biases that exclude others.

But this small subset of e-mails doesn't change the fundamental findings of atmospheric science, as the contras would claim. Nor are they representative of an entire profession. Imagine if someone hacked thousands of your private e-mails -- or those of a colleague -- and then broadcast them worldwide as part of an organized smear campaign.

Given the stakes involved, environmental and economic, there's a real need to watchdog the science of climate change. The public and advocacy groups must be part of this truth police. But the ultimate job of verifying science rests on the shoulders of scientists -- those who subject themselves to publication and brutal peer review.

Here in California, the stakes couldn't be larger. Our state is on the front lines of storms from the Pacific, whose frequency and force can leave us parched or flooded. Sea level rise could submerge cities, including parts of Los Angeles, San Francisco and the Silicon Valley that are drivers of this state's economy.

Science shouldn't be worshipped for its own sake. Nor should it be ignored because its findings are inconvenient.

Like the rest of the world, California must adapt to global climate change.

That adaptation must include a constant examination of ongoing research, an open mind and a recognition of the consequences of making the wrong choices.

[Merced Sun-Star and Modesto Bee commentary, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009:](#)

### **Climate of suspicion**

The following editorial appeared in the Chicago Tribune on Thursday, Dec. 3:

The first rule of solid science is: Show your data. The second: Admit what you don't know. Third: Be willing to entertain other theories, because you could be wrong.

Apparently there's another set of rules for a few leading climate scientists.

Those rules include: Muzzle skeptics of global warming. Don't share data with independent researchers who disagree with your theories. Fuzz over inconvenient evidence that may cast doubt on your theories.

Thousands of e-mails between climate scientists in England and the United States were recently stolen by computer hackers and hit the Internet with the fury of a Category 5 hurricane. Skeptics of global warming say the e-mails prove a conspiracy to falsify evidence and exaggerate the threat of climate change.

The skeptics want to indict the e-mailing scientists ... and the news media, which they say have largely ignored the scandal that has come to be known as Climategate.

It all comes as bad timing for those who are pushing for a global response to climate change. Just as they head to Copenhagen for a world parley on how to combat warming, there are new questions about the validity of the science.

At the vortex of this storm is Phil Jones, director of the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit. In one e-mail he wrote about using a "trick" to "hide the decline" in some temperature data. In another e-mail, he suggested to a colleague that they should try to prevent global warming skeptics from publishing research in scientific journals. We "will keep them out somehow - even if we have to redefine what the peer-review literature is!" the e-mail says.

In science parlance, them's fightin' words.

You may not have heard of that university in Norwich, England, but some of its scientists are prominent players in climate change circles. Jones has been a lead author in several reports for the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That panel made a splash in 2007 when it concluded - with 90 percent certainty - that climate warming was driven by human activity.

Jones tried for a week to explain away those e-mails. On Tuesday, he announced that he would step down temporarily as director while university officials investigate the matter.

"My colleagues and I accept that some of the published e-mails do not read well," Jones wrote earlier. "I regret any upset or confusion caused as a result."

Don't read well? They read like evidence that the authors wanted to bury research that disagreed with their own findings. That's how they read.

The revelation of scientists' efforts to silence dissenters shakes the public's trust in the evidence that human activities are causing a dangerous warming of the Earth's atmosphere. The evidence, however, remains overwhelming. The trends - rising sea levels, temperature changes, melting glaciers - have been observed not over a few years, but over many decades by different groups of scientists around the world.

The U.N. panel says the evidence for warming is "unequivocal." In other words, you can't argue with a melted glacier. The evidence that it is human-driven remains strong. But it shouldn't be closed to debate.

The models that scientists use to predict warming are imperfect and always will be. There is some doubt about how bad the effects of climate change will get and how fast it will happen.

These e-mails discredit a few scientists - a few key scientists. But the research conducted on global warming goes far beyond their efforts. The planet is getting hotter. To avert the worst consequences, we need to figure the most cost-effective ways to curb carbon emissions.

[Sacramento Bee editorial, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009:](#)

### **Climate is right for action on CO 2**

Is climate change real? Has the planet been warming? Are human activities contributing to the harm? Can we predict with certainty the worst consequences, and how quickly they will occur?

The answers to these questions, based on several decades of peer-reviewed research, are "yes" on the first three, and "no" on the fourth.

There's broad scientific agreement on the planet's thermostat: Average temperatures increased significantly in the final decades of the last century. There's also broad agreement – not universal – that a buildup of greenhouse gases, largely from the burning of fossil fuels, has contributed to this rise.

But the debate isn't over. Climate scientists are not soothsayers. They cannot predict the future any better than, say, economists. Thus, there is intense scientific debate about how quickly glaciers and land-based ice sheets will melt and sea levels will rise, and how quickly other fearsome impacts – catastrophic floods, droughts and extinctions – could occur.

For members of the public, the trick is to understand the real points of debate. That means separating consensus from misrepresentations put forth by groups on the fringe. These include "climatistas" – environmental activists who hype the worst possible outcomes. But more often they are the "contras" – deniers of climate change who recklessly want to cling to the status quo.

In Copenhagen, Denmark, today, leaders from around the world will meet to discuss next steps on addressing this planetary threat. With countries such as China and India showing a willingness to reduce emissions, it could set the stage for a truly international effort to pursue cleaner energy policies.

Sadly, much of the world's media may remain focused on the release of thousands of embarrassing e-mails hacked (stolen) from a climate research institute in England. These e-mails reveal the shocking fact that, within academia, individual researchers can act badly and harbor biases that exclude others.

But this small subset of e-mails doesn't change the fundamental findings of atmospheric science, as the contras would claim. Nor are they representative of an entire profession. Imagine if someone hacked thousands of your private e-mails – or those of a colleague – and then broadcast them worldwide as part of an organized smear campaign.

Given the stakes involved, environmental and economic, there's a real need to watchdog the science of climate change. The public and advocacy groups must be part of this truth police. But the ultimate job of verifying science rests on the shoulders of scientists – those who subject themselves to publication and brutal peer review.

Here in California, the stakes couldn't be larger. Our state is on the front lines of storms from the Pacific, whose frequency and force can leave us parched or flooded. Sea level rise could submerge cities, including parts of Los Angeles, San Francisco and the Silicon Valley that are drivers of this state's economy.

Science shouldn't be worshipped for its own sake. Nor should it be ignored because its findings are inconvenient. Like the rest of the world, California must adapt to global climate change. That adaptation must include a constant examination of ongoing research, an open mind and a recognition of the consequences of making

[Letter to the Modesto Bee, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009:](#)

### **Pollution trumps warming right now**

Are we causing global warming?

Arguing this is a waste of time. According to meteorologists and climatologists, it takes hundreds of years for CO2 emissions and other atmospheric events to be fully integrated into the oceans and atmosphere. We will not have the answer in our lifetimes. So stop wasting your passion on the unknowable and look at a real, solvable problem.

The real problem is pollution, caused by fossil fuels.

The California economy loses about \$28 billion annually due to premature deaths and illnesses linked to ozone and particulates spewed from hundreds of locations in the south coast and San Joaquin air basins, according to findings released by a Cal State Fullerton research team.

The argument over global warming keeps us distracted from the current problem of fossil fuel pollutions in the air, ground and water.

Do not be distracted. Pollution is here, now, deadly, and solvable and can only be curtailed by renewables and conservation. We need renewables right now and forever.

*Douglas Ploehen, Yosemite*

[Letter to the Bakersfield Californian, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009:](#)

### **Allow fireplace usage**

I would like to add an energy tip to your Dec. 2 article, "Heating bills set to rise -- for different reasons."

Don't turn on the heater; use the fireplace whenever it's cold. Right now it's cold, but again we cannot use the fireplace to get the chill out of the house. Are the standards too high?

*Ellie Dijkstra, Bakersfield*

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the danger of greenhouse gases to the human race. EPA has concluded that the greenhouse effect puts the health of humans at risk and consequently, need to be regulated. For more information on this Spanish clip, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

**Gases Invernadero son una amenaza para la raza humana, advierte EPA**

**La Agencia de Protección Ambiental (EPA, siglas en inglés) ha concluido que los gases de efecto invernadero ponen en peligro la salud de las personas y deben ser reguladas, dijeron funcionarios a The Associated Press.**

Terra, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009

La EPA anunció sus conclusiones en una conferencia de prensa, en un momento oportuno para impulsar los argumentos de la administración de Obama en la conferencia internacional sobre el clima que arrancó este lunes en la capital de Dinamarca, Copenhague.

Estados Unidos está comprometido a combatir el calentamiento global, a pesar de que el Congreso aún no ha dado los pasos deseados para encarar el debate sobre la legislación climática.

El Presidente Barack Obama tiene previsto hablar con el ex Vice President Al Gore en la Casa Blanca el lunes, mientras el presidente se prepara para su aparición el 18 de diciembre en la cumbre del clima en Copenhague. Gore ganó el Premio Nobel de la Paz en 2007 por su trabajo hacia la lucha contra el cambio climático.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the climate summit beginning with a call to abruptly stop global warming.](#)

### **Cumbre de clima inicia con llamados de alerta**

La Crónica, La Frontera, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009

Copenhague, Dinamarca (Agencias) Con un insistente llamado a frenar de manera conjunta el calentamiento global, comenzó ayer en la capital danesa la mayor cumbre sobre el cambio climático que haya sido celebrada.

El tiempo de las puras explicaciones ya pasó, dijo el secretario general de la Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático, Yvo de Boer, en su discurso de apertura. \

Reclamó metas vinculantes en la protección del clima así como la confirmación inmediata de ayuda financiera por más de 10 mil millones de dólares anualmente de 2010 a 2012 para los países pobres.

Las estimaciones de Naciones Unidas, del Banco Mundial y de otros organismos internacionales es que se requieren 10 mil millones de dólares anuales al 2020 en la lucha global contra el cambio climático.

Desde ayer y hasta el 18 de diciembre, los representantes de los gobiernos de 192 países buscarán establecer ambiciosas metas climáticas. Nunca antes tantas naciones presentaron propuestas para reducir o frenar sus emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero. Pero queda la duda de si eso alcanza para llegar a un acuerdo.

El jefe de gobierno del país anfitrión, Lars Lokke Rasmussen, confió en que los interlocutores de todo el mundo tomarán “decisiones difíciles pero necesarias”.

Un acuerdo está al alcance de la mano, dijo Rasmussen y apeló a las delegaciones: “Concentrémonos no en lo que nos separa, sino en lo que nos une”. La cumbre climática es una oportunidad extraordinaria.

El mundo no puede perderla, agregó.

La presidenta de la conferencia de Copenhague, Connie Hedegaard, dijo que la clave para un acuerdo es encontrar la manera de recaudar fondos privados y públicos y canalizarlos a los países pobres durante muchos años para que puedan combatir los efectos del cambio climático. Hedegaard indicó que si los gobiernos desperdician esta oportunidad, quizás nunca haya una mejor. “Esta es nuestra

oportunidad. Si la desperdiciamos, podrían pasar años antes de tener una nueva y mejor... si es que llegamos a tenerla", dijo.

El presidente del Panel Intergubernamental para el Cambio Climático (IPCC) de Naciones Unidas, Rajendra Pachauri, subrayó la necesidad de reducir el calentamiento global a entre 2 y 2.4 grados. De lo contrario, las consecuencias pueden ser catastróficas. La temperatura global promedio ya aumentó en el siglo XX en 0.74 grados y el nivel del mar en 17 centímetros. Si se derrite el hielo de Groenlandia, podría aumentar en siete metros el nivel del mar. En África la falta de agua amenaza a entre 75 y 250 millones de personas hasta el año 2020, destacó.

La conferencia debate ayudas financieras para que los países en vías de desarrollo se puedan adaptar al cambio climático y las ayudas técnicas para que se desarrollen en armonía con el medio ambiente.

### **Un pastel de Navidad**

De Boer planteó la visión de un "pastel de Navidad ideal" con tres capas de masa, en el que al final de la conferencia podrán arder las velas. La base sería un acuerdo para actuar sin demora en la lucha contra el cambio climático y sus consecuencias. La segunda capa contendría ambiciosas metas para reducir la emisión de gases de efecto invernadero y confirmar ayudas financieras. De Boer reclamó expresamente que la asistencia sea a largo plazo, a lo que casi ningún país industrializado quiere comprometerse. La cobertura del pastel consistiría en una visión común para un futuro lejano.

El premier danés dijo que 110 jefes de Estado y gobierno llegarán para los últimos días de la conferencia. La decisión del presidente de EU, Barack Obama, de asistir cerca del final se interpretó como señal de que un acuerdo está cerca.

La conferencia arrancó con videos de niños de todo el mundo que instaban a los delegados a ayudarlos a crecer en un mundo exento de un calentamiento catastrófico. En las cercanías, activistas ambientales competían entre sí para promover sus campañas contra la deforestación, por la energía no contaminante o el crecimiento con poco consumo carbónico.

Está en juego un tratado que busque llevar al mundo a abandonar los combustibles fósiles y otros contaminantes para usar fuentes más limpias de energía y transferir cientos de miles de millones de dólares de países ricos a naciones pobres cada año y durante décadas para ayudarlos a adaptarse al cambio climático.

Cualquier acuerdo que emane de Copenhague sustituiría al protocolo de Kyoto de 1997, que expira en el 2012. Además, de Obama, a la cumbre asistirán el premier británico, Gordon Brown, el presidente francés, Nicolas Sarkozy, y el premier indio, Manmohan Singh, entre otros.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses U.S. measures against greenhouse gases.](#)

### **EU abre vía para introducir medidas contra los gases invernadero**

Periodico de Mexico, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009

Washington, (EFE).- El Gobierno de EU declaró hoy que las emisiones de gas invernadero representan un peligro para la salud, lo que permite a la Casa Blanca tomar medidas contra el calentamiento global sin necesidad de contar con el Congreso.

La administradora de la Agencia para la Protección del Medioambiente (EPA), Lisa Jackson, efectuó el anuncio hoy en una rueda de prensa.

Según explicó Jackson, las pruebas científicas reunidas por su agencia demuestran que los gases invernadero "amenazan la salud pública y el bienestar del pueblo estadounidense".

"Estas conclusiones, que ya debían haberse tomado hace tiempo, sitúan en la historia a 2009 como el año en el que el Gobierno de EU comenzó a atajar el desafío de los gases invernadero", sostuvo la alta funcionaria.

El anuncio coincide con la inauguración en Copenhague de la cumbre de la ONU contra el cambio climático, la mayor reunión mundial contra el cambio climático y que tiene como objeto conseguir un acuerdo que sustituya al protocolo de Kyoto, que expirará en 2012.

Con esta medida, la Casa Blanca quiere demostrar en Copenhague que toma iniciativas para recortar las emisiones del país más contaminante per cápita del mundo.

Jackson tiene previsto participar en la reunión este miércoles, mientras que el presidente de EU, Barack Obama, lo hará el próximo día 18, en la jornada de clausura.

Obama se reunirá hoy en la Casa Blanca con el ex vicepresidente estadounidense Al Gore, premio Nobel de la Paz por su defensa del medio ambiente, para preparar la cumbre. El miércoles tiene previsto celebrar un encuentro similar con líderes empresariales y medioambientales.

La medida anunciada hoy tiene su origen en una sentencia del Tribunal Supremo, que ordenó a la EPA determinar si los gases invernadero son perniciosos para la salud dentro de la Ley para un Aire Limpio.

Determinar la peligrosidad de esos gases permite al Gobierno aplicar una serie de reglamentos anticontaminantes contra los gases invernadero emitidos por las fábricas y los vehículos, entre otros.

El sector empresarial alega que imponer esa serie de reglamentos obligaría a muchas pequeñas empresas y pequeños comercios a adoptar una serie de medidas muy caras para cumplir con la ley.

La Administración tiene previsto eximir a las instalaciones que emitan menos de 25,000 toneladas de dióxido de carbono o su equivalente al año.

Los grandes contaminantes, aquellos que emiten más de 25,000 toneladas, representan el 70 por ciento de las emisiones de gases invernadero en EU.

La propuesta de la Casa Blanca para la cumbre de Copenhague prevé reducir las emisiones de su país en un 17 por ciento para el año 2020 frente a los niveles de 2005.

El esfuerzo será progresivo, de manera que para 2025 se habrá reducido en un 30 por ciento, para el año 2030 un 42 por ciento y para 2050 un 83 por ciento.

Inicialmente Obama había planeado desplazarse a la capital danesa este miércoles para pronunciar un discurso, de camino a Oslo, donde recibirá el premio Nobel de la Paz.

El viernes pasado anunció un cambio de planes e indicó que ahora se desplazará el día 18 con el objetivo de presionar para un acuerdo sustancial.

Más de un centenar de jefes de Estado y de Gobierno han confirmado su presencia en los últimos días de la cumbre.

Los países han renunciado por el momento a lograr un acuerdo legalmente vinculante, un objetivo que quedará para la reunión de México en diciembre de 2011, y se esfuerzan en lograr un acuerdo políticamente vinculante, que incluya compromisos para el recorte de emisiones y financiación para los países pobres.

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the climate summit. Thousands of cities will reduce their CO2 emissions. The number of cities that have joined an initiative that began in February with the objective to reduce up to 20 percent of CO2 emissions by 2020 has increased.

### **Cumbre sobre el cambio climático**

#### **Mil ciudades bajarán emisiones de CO2**

Univision, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009

BRUSELAS - El número de ciudades que se ha sumado al llamado "Pacto de los Alcaldes", una iniciativa puesta en marcha en febrero de este año con el objetivo de reducir en un 20 por ciento las emisiones de dióxido de carbono (CO2) para 2020, ha alcanzado hoy el millar, según ha anunciado la Comisión Europea (CE).

#### **Pacto de los Alcaldes**

El portavoz comunitario de Energía, Ferrán Tarradellas, ha recalcado que hoy, coincidiendo con la inauguración de la cumbre sobre cambio climático de Copenhague, la Unión Europea (UE) "ha dado muestra una vez más" de su compromiso con el medioambiente.

Desde que hace diez meses 372 ciudades participaran en la ceremonia inicial del pacto, las localidades que han decidido unirse a esta medida se ha triplicado.

La firmante número mil ha sido la localidad alemana de Rostock, una ciudad de 200 mil habitantes impulsora de una política de protección climática que ha permitido reducir las emisiones de dióxido de carbono de 7,5 toneladas por habitante y año en 1990 a 4,1 toneladas en la actualidad.

Además, Rostock se ha comprometido a extender su red de tranvías, mejorar su red de carriles-bici o suplir en la medida de lo posible sus necesidades energéticas con combustibles no fósiles producidos en la región.

Tarradellas ha subrayado que a este pacto impulsado por la CE se han adherido grandes capitales europeas como Roma, Madrid, Londres o París, pero también otras localidades de menor tamaño como Sufli (Almería), con tan sólo 288 vecinos.

Otras ciudades extracomunitarias como Lausana (Suiza), Oslo (Noruega) o Zagreb (Croacia) forman parte también de esta iniciativa.

"El número de localidades involucradas demuestra que luchar contra el cambio climático de manera coherente a nivel local recibe un gran apoyo", ha señalado el comisario europeo de Energía, Andris Piebalgs.

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the summit to save the planet. The objective is to reduce emissions.

### **Cumbre para salvar el planeta**

#### **El objetivo es reducir emisión de gases**

Univision, Monday, Dec. 7, 2009

COPENHAGUE - Líderes políticos, científicos, ecologistas, periodistas y decenas de ONG tomarán el pulso a la Tierra desde este lunes y hasta el 18 de diciembre para medir la temperatura del cambio climático y recetar soluciones que palién los efectos de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero.

Este es el postulado de los organizadores de la Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático en Copenhague (COP15), a la que tienen previsto asistir unas 15 mil personas de 192 países, y donde se quiere dar una respuesta categórica a la amenaza global del cambio climático para encauzar a la humanidad hacia un crecimiento sostenible para todos.

### **El mundo en peligro**

Una de las resoluciones pedirá a las naciones desarrolladas recortar hasta 2020 sus emisiones entre el 25% y 40%, por debajo de los niveles de 1990, para limitar el aumento de la temperatura a dos grados centígrados por encima de los valores de la era preindustrial. \

A fines de noviembre, Obama dijo que Estados Unidos se compromete a bajar en 17% las emisiones de CO2 frente a los niveles de 2005.

Con la industrialización ha aumentado el volumen de gases de efecto invernadero en la atmósfera, sobre todo de dióxido de carbono, metano y óxido nitroso, fundamentales para la vida en la Tierra, y que impiden que parte del calor solar regrese al espacio.

Además, el nivel del mar subió una media entre 10 y 20 centímetros en el siglo XX, y para 2100 se prevé que aumente de 9 a 88 centímetros más por la subida de las temperaturas, con lo que se expandirá el volumen del océano, aparte de que la fusión de los glaciares y casquetes polares incrementará el volumen de agua.

### **Presionan a delegados**

Para presionar a los delegados, numerosas ONG ya están batallando en la capital danesa: mientras sus expertos están en el Bella Center, sede de la conferencia, sus militantes están listos para llevar a cabo espectaculares acciones que atraigan sobre Copenhague la atención del mundo.

El barco de Greenpeace "Arctic Sunrise" estaba anclado el domingo ante el parlamento danés, con una banderola: "Our climate, our future, your decision" (Nuestro clima, nuestro futuro, vuestra decisión).

Paralelamente a la cumbre, se celebrará un foro alternativo de unos 10 mil participantes cerca de la estación central de tren, donde las actuales víctimas del cambio climático, en Bangladesh, Nigeria o Groenlandia, darán testimonios sobre sus vidas, ya afectadas por un alza de 0,8°C registrada en un siglo.

### **Causas y efectos**

En el peor caso, el mar podría invadir los litorales fuertemente poblados de países como Bangladesh, provocar la desaparición total de algunas naciones, como las islas Maldivas, contaminar las reservas de agua dulce de miles de millones de personas y provocar migraciones en masa, considera la comunidad científica.

Sobre las causas del calentamiento global hay diversas opiniones, pero muchos expertos aducen que la razón principal de la subida de la temperatura es la industrialización iniciada hace siglo y medio y, en particular, la combustión de cantidades cada vez mayores de petróleo y carbón, la tala de bosques tropicales y métodos poco ortodoxos de explotación agrícola.

Pese al optimismo que se intentaba insuflar a última hora, el jefe de la conferencia, Yvo de Boer, ya situaba la fecha para un acuerdo jurídicamente vinculante en junio de 2010.

### **Reclaman justicia y voluntad**

Esto significa que en Copenhague sólo se podrán aunar voluntades políticas hacia un documento sucesor del Protocolo de Kioto de 1997, vigente para 37 países industrializados hasta 2012.

Para que Copenhague sea un éxito, movimientos ecologistas como Greenpeace piden "un acuerdo justo, vinculante y ambicioso con el compromiso de que los países industrializados recorten las emisiones en un 40% hasta 2020 frente al nivel de 1990", además de poner fin a la deforestación tropical hasta esa fecha.

La enorme brecha entre los países industrializados y en desarrollo para frenar el calentamiento global y negociar una reducción de las emisiones de CO2 en la atmósfera es el principal escollo de este encuentro.

### **"Momento decisivo"**

El ministro británico de Cambio Climático, Ed Miliband, advirtió hoy de que la cumbre de Copenhague, que comienza mañana, lunes, y durará hasta el 18 de diciembre, representa un "momento decisivo para el planeta".

En declaraciones a la cadena pública BBC, Miliband subrayó que el Gobierno británico buscará un acuerdo ambicioso en la reunión, convocada por la ONU y a la que asistirán más de cien jefes de Estado y de Gobierno, como el presidente Barack Obama.

La conferencia se celebra con el fin de alcanzar un acuerdo para recortar de la emisión de gases causantes del "efecto invernadero", y facilitar ayuda financiera a los países más pobres para ayudarles a combatir los efectos del cambio climático.

### **Un enorme desafío**

Miliband admitió que los políticos afrontan un "enorme desafío" para convencer a la gente de la necesidad de tomar medidas contra el calentamiento global.

"En esto, hay una montaña que escalar a nivel global y nacional", dijo el titular del ramo, al precisar que existe un amplio "consenso científico" acerca de la contribución humana al calentamiento del planeta.

Desde la sección británica del grupo ecologista WWF, el director de cambio climático, Keith Allot, señaló que "Copenhague es el momento apropiado y la mejor oportunidad para que el mundo alcance un acuerdo climático que podría salvar nuestro planeta de un cambio climático catastrófico".

"Los líderes deben hallar la forma de estar a la altura de las expectativas de millones de personas", recalcó Allot, al avisar de que "puede no presentarse otra oportunidad como ésta".

### **Compromiso económico**

Las cantidades multimillonarias anuales que deberían aportar las naciones ricas a las pobres para paliar las devastadoras consecuencias del calentamiento global, cuyos efectos ya son visibles, han sido rebajadas por de Boer y otros expertos a 10 mil millones al año.

Esta propuesta es una cifra "modesta" pero es un inicio y es importante como "señal de confianza" hacia los países emergentes que no han causado los problemas del cambio climático, comentó a Efe Kandeh Yumkella, director general de la ONUDI, la organización de ayuda industrial de la ONU.

A su vez, las naciones en desarrollo y emergentes, como China, exigen unos de 400.000 millones de dólares hasta el año 2020 para adaptarse al cambio climático y serán clave en esta cumbre, dado su creciente apetito por la energía en las próximas décadas.

### **Modesto compromiso de EU**

La asistencia de un centenar de jefes de Estado y de Gobierno, incluidos los de la Unión Europea, a la clausura de la cumbre debe servir para dar el espaldarazo final a un tratado legalmente vinculante en 2010.

En este contexto, el gobierno anfitrión danés, consideraba como muy positivo que el presidente Barack Obama vaya a la clausura de la cumbre, el 18 de diciembre, en vez de al comienzo.

Sin embargo, la aportación del segundo país contaminante del mundo, por detrás de China, es modesta ya que Washington se ha comprometido, en término reales, a rebajar tan solo en un 4% sus emisiones hasta 2020, frente al nivel de 1990, según las mediciones aplicadas a los demás países industrializados.

Ofreciendo un baremo distinto, Pekín ha propuesto reducir "la intensidad de la emisión de CO2" entre un 40 y 50% hasta el año 2020, frente al nivel de 2005. China y EU contribuyen al 40% de las emisiones globales de CO2.

### **Datos manipulados**

El responsable de asuntos climáticos de la ONU admitió el domingo que la difusión de mensajes de correo electrónico de varios científicos, obtenidos de forma ilegal, ha dañado la credibilidad de la investigación en torno al cambio climático.

Yvo de Boer dijo durante una entrevista con The Associated Press que los correos de científicos de una universidad británica a los que accedió un saboteador informático generaron una ola de escepticismo entre aquellos que creen que la ciencia se manipula para exagerar los efectos del calentamiento.

"Creo que mucha gente es de todos modos escéptica respecto este tema", dijo de Boer. "Y luego cuando creen que hay científicos manipulando información en cierta dirección, entonces por supuesto genera preocupación en gente que dice '¿Lo ves? Te lo dije'".

### **Pruebas sólidas**

De Boer señaló, sin embargo, que las pruebas que indican que la Tierra se está calentando son sólidas. El experto habló un día antes del inicio de una cumbre internacional en Copenhague para acordar un plan de combate al calentamiento y ayudar a sus víctimas.

Los mensajes de correo electrónico de una unidad de estudio del clima de la Universidad de East Anglia mostraban como científicos prominentes discutían maneras de esconder datos al público en general y suprimir el trabajo de otros. Aquellos que se oponen a la idea de un cambio climático provocado por el hombre están usando los mensajes para acusar a los científicos de esconder pruebas sobre el supuesto calentamiento.

"Estos mensajes tienen muy mala pinta", dijo De Boer. "Pero creo que la universidad está investigando esto y que existe una investigación policial para ver si los mensajes fueron infiltrados o robados".

### **Defienden proceso**

De Boer defendió el riguroso proceso de revisión de algunos de los 2,500 científicos de cambio climático y lo describió como sólido y detallado.

"Creo que ésta es una de las piezas de la ciencia más creíbles que existen ahí fuera", explicó.

Los negociadores de 192 países que participarán de la cumbre están intentado fijar objetivos para controlar las emisiones de dióxido de carbono y otros gases contaminantes.

"Es una cita bastante única para la historia de la humanidad", opina el ministro francés del Medio Ambiente, Jean-Louis Borloo. "Será difícil, pero creo que es posible: tenemos las condiciones para que el mundo se pueda poner en movimiento".

### **El precio a pagar**

El precio a pagar sería un derrumbe de las producciones de cereales, masivas extinciones de especies, elevación de los océanos, y la migración forzada de centenares de millones de personas, expulsadas de sus hogares por las inundaciones, las sequías o la escasez.

Para evitarlo, el acuerdo de Copenhague debe optar por una reducción drástica de los gases contaminantes provocados por la combustión de energías fósiles (petróleo, gas, carbón), y dividirlos por dos respecto a 1990 de aquí a 2050, según científicos del IPCC, un panel de expertos creado por la ONU.

Estos expertos recomiendan que desde 2020 los países industrializados reduzcan sus emisiones de 25 a 40%. Sin embargo, las propuestas oscilan solamente entre -12% y -16%.

### **Miles protestan**

Miles de personas se manifestaron el sábado por el centro de Londres para pedir un acuerdo sobre el cambio climático en la cumbre mundial de la próxima semana en Copenhague.

La Policía Metropolitana londinense dijo que unas 20 mil personas participaron en la marcha organizada por la Coalición para Detener el Caos Climático, la cual comenzó en la plaza Grosvenor Square y avanzó hasta el Parlamento, junto al río Támesis. Los organizadores dijeron que fueron 40 mil.

El primer ministro Gordon Brown dijo el sábado que "las pruebas científicas (relativas al calentamiento global) son sólidas" y que es esencial lograr un acuerdo en Copenhague para contener las emisiones de gases causantes del efecto invernadero.

### **La tierra plana**

Agregó que los que se oponen son grupos "anti-cambio, anti-ciencia, anti-reforma, casi de los que creen que la Tierra es plana".

Posteriormente, un grupo de activistas levantó varias carpas en la céntrica plaza londinense de Trafalgar para llamar la atención sobre la cumbre en la capital danesa, donde se buscará un acuerdo para combatir el problema. La policía dijo que estaba en contacto con el Campo para la Acción Climática, y sus integrantes indicaron que pensaban quedarse unas 48 horas.

La coalición, integrada por grupos como Oxfam, Greenpeace, Amigos de la Tierra y la WWF, llamaron a la protesta "La Ola", y los organizadores pidieron a los participantes que se vistieran de azul. Indicaron que la manifestación culminará con una gran ola humana frente al parlamento. Acontecimientos similares tendrán lugar en Glasgow, Belfast y la capital irlandesa de Dublín.

### **Acuerdo vinculante**

"El gobierno de Gran Bretaña debe esforzarse por lograr un acuerdo amplio, justo y vinculante en Copenhague. Esa es hoy nuestra demanda y esperamos que sea cumplida", dijo la directora general de Oxfam en Gran Bretaña, Barbara Stocking, en una declaración. "Deben volver con un acuerdo sólido y efectivo sobre el cambio climático tanto por nuestro bien en Gran Bretaña como por los millones de pobres que sufren ya los efectos del cambio climático en todo el mundo".

Igualmente el sábado, la oficina de meteorología de Gran Bretaña indicó que publicará parte de las estadísticas que utilizó para analizar el cambio climático, después que miles de correos electrónicos entre los científicos más destacados del mundo en el tema del cambio climático fueron robados de la Universidad de Anglia del Este y publicados en internet.

Quienes se oponen a la noción de que el cambio climático es causado por las acciones humanas sostienen que esa correspondencia demuestra que los eruditos conspiraron para ocultar pruebas que contradicen sus tesis.

### **Extrema vigilancia**

También se anuncia histórico el acontecimiento para la policía danesa: mas de las mitad -al menos 6,000- de sus efectivos ya están movilizados y podrían aumentar hasta 85%.

El objetivo de la cumbre -limitar el alza de temperaturas a +2°C -ya parece muy poco realista, teniendo en cuenta los compromisos de los principales actores de la negociación.

Un estudio publicado el sábado por la ONG científica alemana Climate Analytics, afirma que en el estado actual de las negociaciones, el aumento podría ser de +3,5°C de aquí a fines del presente siglo.