

# Greenhouse Effect Foreseen Straining U.S. Society, Resources

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## ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

The jarring dislocations spelled out by the conservative agency and its overall prediction of a "world that is different from the world that exists today" represent the fullest official acknowledgment of the problem and may foreshadow proposals to control the man-made gases, especially carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, which trap solar heat like a greenhouse and warm the Earth.

Some regions on the globe will benefit from the effects predicted in the report. In northern states, for example, yields of corn and soybeans could double with longer growing seasons assured by warmer temperatures, according to the study. Fish in the Great Lakes may prosper and migrate to new habitats in warmer waters. the overall impact for nature is expected to be negative as the climate changes faster than vegetation and wildlife can adapt. As soils dry up in Mississippi and Georgia, trees will die and their seedlings will not grow, said the report, predicting that forests in the Southeast could die back in 30 to 80 years.

## FULL TEXT

The United States could lose coastline equivalent in size to the state of Massachusetts and suffer crop losses of 25 percent in the Great Plains as the nation is warmed by the "greenhouse effect" in coming decades.

Demand for air conditioning could rise 15 percent in the South and that region could experience a battle between farmers and urban dwellers over scarce water supplies. San Francisco could become much smoggier and the groundwater of the Northeast more riddled with pesticides.

This dire forecast is contained in a draft Environmental Protection Agency report obtained yesterday. The analysis-based on the widely held prediction of a 3- to 9-degree rise in world temperature by the middle of the next century-is the most comprehensive effort to detail the impact for U.S. society and natural resources.

It was prepared for Congress and is being reviewed by the EPA's Science Advisory Board. A companion study nearing completion is supposed to examine options for dealing with the warming trend.

But the jarring dislocations spelled out by the conservative agency and its overall prediction of a "world that is different from the world that exists today" represent the fullest official acknowledgment of the problem and may foreshadow proposals to control the man-made gases, especially carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, which trap solar heat like a greenhouse and warm the Earth.

"Global climate change will have significant implications for natural ecosystems," said the report, "for when, where and how we farm; for the availability of water we drink and water to run our factories; for how we live in our cities; for the wetlands that spawn our fish; for the beaches we use for recreation, and for all levels of government and industry."

An obscure scientific theory for 90 years, the "greenhouse effect" has gained wide scientific acceptance recently as the world has become warmer than at any time in recorded history. The four hottest years of the past century all have fallen in this decade, and 1988 is expected to be the warmest yet.

The EPA report, two years in the making and drawing on the work of leading scientists, was designed to specify the national and regional consequences of drought, ice cap meltings and sea level changes generally predicted during

a period of global warming.

Some regions on the globe will benefit from the effects predicted in the report. In northern states, for example, yields of corn and soybeans could double with longer growing seasons assured by warmer temperatures, according to the study. Fish in the Great Lakes may prosper and migrate to new habitats in warmer waters. But the overall impact for nature is expected to be negative as the climate changes faster than vegetation and wildlife can adapt. As soils dry up in Mississippi and Georgia, trees will die and their seedlings will not grow, said the report, predicting that forests in the Southeast could die back in 30 to 80 years. Sea level rises due to thermal expansion of the water and melting of glaciers are expected to require spending of up to \$111 billion on coastal barriers and even so 7,000 square miles of dry land will be inundated. Higher temperatures could increase poisonous algae and increase the concentration of pollutants in rivers as the volume of water decreases. The report predicted conflicts over water use that would pit farmers wanting to irrigate their lands against consumers and urban industries. Agricultural losses could reach 80 percent of corn, wheat and soybeans in a drought-prone South, livestock diseases and pests typical of the South may move north and pesticide use could rise, increasing groundwater pollution. Electricity demands will increase for summer cooling, especially in the South and Southwest where additional generating capacity would grow up to 30 percent. Since ozone is produced by the mixture of auto exhausts and sun, hotter days for longer parts of the year would be expected to increase levels of the pollutant, which is the main ingredient of smog. In San Francisco, ozone concentrations could increase 20 percent even if auto emissions did not increase, the study said.

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