

Opinion Editorial: Global Action Needed to Address Climate Change

Submitted by Mindi Grieve, Environmental Law & Policy Center, Jamestown

December 7th marked the start of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, Denmark, and there's a lot at stake for North Dakota, the United States and the world.

Here in our state, the North Dakota Climate Solutions Partnership also announced this week that a number of members of the North Dakota scientific community agree that our climate is changing and our earth is warming, a belief they share with the overwhelming majority of scientists around the world.

We've already begun to experience the effects of these changes here in North Dakota. Scientists have found that in the Great Plains, climate change could cause increased flash flooding and more severe droughts, stress on waterfowl and increased pressure on crops yields. To protect our health, our economy and our environment, we must take action – globally and here in the United States – to reduce the carbon pollution that causes climate change.

At the global climate conference in Denmark, world leaders plan to create the framework for an international agreement that will reduce greenhouse gas pollution and combat climate change. Despite the US Senate's lack of action on a climate bill, nations around the world are working together to find solutions to climate change. And if Congress doesn't act, the Supreme Court has ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse gases.

The politics may be complicated, but the science is clear. Greenhouse gas pollution is changing our climate and creating serious problems in North Dakota and around the globe. To reduce this pollution, we need to create cleaner energy and use energy more efficiently. We can't afford to do nothing, and North Dakota has a great potential to benefit from renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Scientists, not politicians, are telling us that the problem of man-made climate change is real and must be dealt with. Now is the time to act.

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Grieve, a Government Relations Specialist with the Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC), Jamestown, ND, is a member of the North Dakota Climate Solutions Partnership.

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