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CLIMATE Hand in
SCIENTIST
DR ROBBINS -

Talk to Calif. Air Resources Board on Global Warming Solutions Plan, San Diego 8/15/08

I'm Dr. Eleanora Robbins. I'm adjunct faculty in the geology department at San Diego State University. I'm a geologist and palynologist.

I'm also a climate scientist, having worked on climate in the Pennsylvanian, Triassic, Cretaceous, and Pleistocene. Now I'm looking at data for the Recent, which is the last 10,000 years, and I see how scary it is.

I want you to know that the Cretaceous—which was the time of the dinosaurs—was 17 degrees F warmer than now. It was perfect for dinosaurs, they flourished at 17 degrees warmer mean surface temperature.

As for us humans, we are children of the Ice Age—our species emerged when the mean surface temperature was 10 degrees F colder than today. We have no real idea how humans are going to survive hotter temperatures. The prediction is that it isn't going to be fun.

You've read and heard data from more than 2000 scientists working on climate change. These are people who ordinarily would never have been talking to each other, much less to you. They started to talk to each other because NASA was funding a variety of studies about the earth. The Director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, James Hansen, who's a physicist, started to be briefed by geologists, biologists, atmospheric chemists and physicists. He came to realize there was big trouble ahead and was in a position that he could brief Congress and warn them.

I do think he screwed up royally. I don't think he has kids—if he did, he would have known that people do not like to be told: "there's a problem and it's your fault." The universal answer to "it's your fault" is "no it's not." He should've said "there's a serious problem and we've got to solve it."

We're all needed to solve it—all of us, adults, kids, homeowners, car drivers, students, teachers, business owners, industry, multinational corporations, government, and even politicians and teenagers. All of us are needed to cut down on the amount of greenhouse gases that are raising the mean surface temperature. Our lives, our food, and our water depend on doing this.

You people are the leading edge of the leading edge. Those of us who live in or migrate to California, we tend to think about the large scale. In the large scale, the best solution, the fastest solution is to get everyone into renewable energy as fast as humanly possible. This means my house, my car, my office, my utility company, my telephone company—this means your house, your car, your office, your utility company, etc. This means we all pay. The utility companies must be required to use renewable forms of energy, I must be required to use renewables, you must be required to use renewables.

Greenhouse gases are the enemy. All those gases going up in the atmosphere, they are produced by all of us. We need to stop their production, here in California and all over the world. The biggest polluters need the biggest kick, the biggest incentives, the biggest regulations. Nobody does anything unless they have to. The smartest people who think about large scale issues have to lead. That's you. Limit offsets, do feebates, force 33% renewables. Thank you.

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