



Dealing with the Enhanced Greenhouse Effect

Global warming has been in the news recently and covered extensively by the media. Scientists have proven that the average surface temperature of the earth has increased slightly in recent history. While the warming is real, the reason for the warming has not been definitively determined.

Much of the debate surrounding global warming is linked to the enhanced greenhouse effect. The enhanced greenhouse effect is precisely what the name implies: an *enhancement* of the already occurring natural greenhouse effect. With the advent of the industrial revolution in the last century, additional greenhouse gases were added into the atmosphere. The controversy lies in whether the additional greenhouse gases caused the warming or if the warming is part of the natural variability of the earth's climate.

Today, you will be members of Congress sitting on a special committee on the enhanced greenhouse effect. There are both democrats and republicans on your committee. The citizens of the United States are becoming very upset with the entire global warming issue and it is up to you to determine what to do about it. In the next 30 minutes, examine the list of eight possible solutions and identify three pros and cons of each. (You can write on the back of this paper or on an additional sheet.)

1. do nothing
2. impose special taxes on carbon dioxide emission to encourage energy conservation
3. increase funding for research on alternative energy sources, including solar power and safer nuclear reactors
4. provide developing countries with financial aid to build high-efficiency power plants
5. launch a worldwide tree planting program
6. develop techniques for recovering part of the methane given off by landfills
7. require all new cars worldwide to achieve an average of at least 40 miles per gallon of gasoline and to have catalytic converters for reducing tail pipe emissions
8. end all industrial production of chlorofluorocarbons