

Global Warming Podcast Report

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### Introduction:

The accelerating usage of fossil fuels over the decades has led to an intensifying concentration of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere. CO<sub>2</sub> is currently classified as a greenhouse gas by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), meaning that it absorbs infrared radiation released from the Earth and remits it back. Remission of infrared radiation back to Earth leads to global warming. Global warming is a long term rise in the average temperature of the earth caused by greenhouse gases. Numerous climates will continue to rise in temperature, leading to a variety of consequences that could contribute to the downfall of mankind.

The “Climate change ninjas that don’t leave a (carbon) footprint” group recently produced a scientific podcast that addressed global warming. Each member researched a topic that interested them, to introduce on to the podcast. Data was a major component that all members had to bring into the conversation to bring credibility and background to their arguments. The subjects ranged from the general population’s opinion on global warming all the way to renewable energy. It was a major success as the wide range of topics and information maintained a fresh and informed dialogue.

This report analyzes the diverse topics related to global warming covered in the podcast. It will additionally focus on the carbon tax more thoroughly to ensure that the largest segment of the podcast is examined comprehensively. Evaluating these components leads to a profound knowledge about global warming in the overall process of the breakdown.

### Methods:

The podcast dealt with distinct subtopics that contribute/affect global warming. The topics chosen went through a rigorous selection process in order to ensure that the subjects were all related and could transition properly. The final selection of the topics are listed below in the order addressed in the podcast.

1. People's opinion on global warming— This topic was researched by Olivia as she was specifically curious as to why there is little being done to address global warming. Discussion of the public's perception on global warming and its effect on a solution was the focus. The impact of global warming on people's lives was minor, meaning that support for an answer is negatively impacted as it is not seen as an immediate danger (Hagmann, Ho, Lowenstein, 2019). The Paris Agreement was used as an example to highlight the general population's view on global warming as the United States withdraw from the deal due to it being unpopular (Barbier, 2019).
2. Health— Emily was curious about how global warming affects human health. Higher pollutants in the air released by companies was linked with an increased risk of diseases in humans. This is a major subject as raising awareness of the health implications can be a way to boost support to combat global warming.
3. Carbon Tax— I specifically covered this section as I was intrigued by a potential solution to global warming. Placing taxes on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions has both pros and cons but it was still not a popular solution to the problem. Taxes on companies have a negative effect on support as most of the companies usually push the cost onto the consumer. This leads to a

backlash as it is a direct impact on people's lives and they don't see a long term benefit from it (Hagmann, Ho, Lowenstein, 2019).

4. Renewable Energy– Kareena was focused on an alternative solution to global warming than a carbon tax. A significant reason for the consumption of fossil fuels deals with energy production in order to meet the demands of consumers. Renewable energy offers a solution to cut back on CO<sub>2</sub>, harvesting energy in a clean manner can bring down emissions drastically (Barbier, 2019). Recently, 50% of the United States' energy demands are fulfilled by renewable sources. This indicates that renewable energy is quite popular with the public and is a possible solution to global warming.
5. Cost/Economics– This subject was covered by Elizatbeth as she was attentive to the implications of global warming on the economy. Studies show that if global warming is not solved soon than it would cost trillions of dollars on the worldwide economy later down the road (Goulder, Hafstead, Kim, Long, 2019). She compelled the public to act fast and treat global warming as more of an immediate danger than an “unfortunate event.”

There were certain limitations produced by the podcast format instead of a traditional essay. The time constraint prevented each topic from being equally discussed as the discussion was continuously moving forward. Integrating data/quotes and stretching that out over a dialogue proved to be quite difficult and required quick decision making.

## Research:

Carbon taxes was one of the topics that proved to be difficult to discuss equally with the other subjects. Most of the information required to give insight was only usable as quotes and unable to be transferred into a natural conversation. The disservice on this topic will be rectified as a more thorough explanation and narrative is given to carbon taxes.

The definition of a carbon tax as briefly aforementioned is a charge placed on the total amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that a company/entity has released. This cost can be applied per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> however one of the benefits of a carbon tax is that it is very flexible. Countries that have enforced a carbon tax are all able to integrate it to fit within their special circumstances. An example of this is seen with Canada as they charge \$20 per tonne however Australia is set at \$10 per tonne. The difference in prices shows how countries that emit a larger share of emissions have to set their tax higher to combat it more effectively. Another application is being able to incorporate it slowly into the country. China is a perfect illustration of this as a carbon tax would have a drastic impact on their economy due to their reliance on fossil fuels however they are still committed to it (Zhang, Xue, Feng, Liang, 2019). They plan to strategically raise the price of a carbon tax over time in order to give the economy the ability to adapt.

This “solution” however still has plentiful cons associated with it, leading to it being quite unpopular with the general. The direct cost on to the consumer is one of the downsides as it diminishes support (Goulder, Hafstead, Kim, Long, 2019). The new tax raises prices on products as companies themselves do not want to cover the cost of the tax and would rather push it onto the consumers, this keeps their profit margins safe but the tax is now directly affecting the consumer instead. The consumer is having to spend a larger amount of money for the same

product than previously, this contributes to a backlash from the general public as they only see the negatives of the carbon tax (Goulder, Hafstead, Kim, Long, 2019). A solution to this problem was recently seen in a study conducted in China on carbon taxes affecting provinces. It was noted that using the revenue generated from a carbon tax and placing it back into the public can help relieve the negative response (Zhang, Xue, Feng, Liang, 2019).

Opposition for carbon taxes is rising in a few countries that have implemented them over the years. The most notable is Australia as the new carbon pricing implemented on July 1st, 2012 was repealed only two years later. The main factor leading up to this was scaremongering, the act of terrifying the public about a subject with false information. The prime minister Tony Abbot used this tactic to falsely state that the public's cost of living would raise even though countermeasures were already in place to prevent this (Cornwall, 2019). This attempt however proved successful as the Liberal-National coalition achieved enough votes to eradicate the policy, and gain control of the government in the process. Public opinion was shown to be the biggest obstacle as opponents of the policy can use false information to easily sway the public to its side. The public is influenced drastically by fear similarly with the Red Scare in the United States. Critics of this event in Australia have stated that the supporting party should use terms with a more positive connotation such as "carbon pricing". This would alleviate some of the worry as people are mostly concerned with taxes affecting them and nothing is more direct about that than a carbon tax.

Conclusion:

A carbon tax by itself is not able to completely solve global warming as the problem has gotten too massive. Combining carbon taxes and other policies is the only way to combat this obstacle. Emissions have been decreasing all over the world but it is nowhere near the rate that is needed to even make a dent in the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Mankind has to act now in order to ensure that we as people leave a planet that is thriving to our descendants.

## References

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