

An answer for global-warming skeptics

Dennis Coday | Dec. 9, 2009 NCR Today

Don't believe in global-warming? *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman has a thought for you in a column titled: [Going Cheney on Climate](#) [1]. He writes:

This is not complicated. We know that our planet is enveloped in a blanket of greenhouse gases that keep the Earth at a comfortable temperature. As we pump more carbon-dioxide and other greenhouse gases into that blanket from cars, buildings, agriculture, forests and industry, more heat gets trapped.

What we don't know, because the climate system is so complex, is what other factors might over time compensate for that man-driven warming, or how rapidly temperatures might rise, melt more ice and raise sea levels. It's all a game of odds. We've never been here before. We just know two things: one, the CO₂ we put into the atmosphere stays there for many years, so it is "irreversible" in real-time (barring some feat of geo-engineering); and two, that CO₂ buildup has the potential to unleash "catastrophic" warming.

When I see a problem that has even a 1 percent probability of occurring and is "irreversible" and potentially "catastrophic," I buy insurance. That is what taking climate change seriously is all about.

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[1] <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/09/opinion/09friedman.html?em>