

Floor Statement of Rep. Peter DeFazio
Safe Climate Caucus
May 22, 2013

Last month, two scientists from Oregon State University, Shaun Marcott and Alan Mix, published a peer-reviewed study in collaboration with scientists at Harvard reviewing 11,300 years of global temperatures. They found that the range of temperature change in the last 100 years is equivalent to the temperature change over the previous 100 centuries.

Climate change is real, it's devastating, and it's accelerating.

Most focus is on the terrestrial effects, but other research points to rapid and devastating changes in our oceans. Again, a study done by Oregon State University, Burke Hales, an OSU chemical oceanographer, co-authored with Alan Barton, who works at the Whiskey Creek shellfish hatchery, looked into the fact that oysters were failing, at an incredible rate, to spawn and reproduce. Their study linked the production failure to the CO₂ levels in the water, and that has incredible implications for the future, not only for the shellfish industry – an important industry in the Northwest and other parts of the country, but also for the whole ocean food chain.

The ocean chemistry is also threatening something called pteropods, tiny sea snails, and they're very much at risk. They happen to be a food source for dual plankton, whales, and, of course, our salmon, which already have a host of problems in terms of their future.

Then, from the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, the Arctic seas are becoming rapidly more acidified. It turns out that cold water is especially susceptible and as the sea ice in the summer recedes, more and more of the Arctic Ocean is exposed to increased levels of carbon dioxide, and it's rapidly acidifying. In addition to which, the melting of the ice in Greenland and elsewhere is adding freshwater,

which further degrades the capabilities of the oceans to deal with the carbon dioxide.

Finally, research in the Northeast shows that the surface temperatures in the Northeast Continental Shelf for 2012 were the highest recorded in 150 years of record keeping. They found that over the last four decades, many species of fish stocks are moving north to escape the warming waters, but there are many species that cannot move or evolve that rapidly, which portends more disaster.

Back in 1973 there was a science fiction movie called *Soylent Green*. It was a mystery movie, but it was about an overpopulated and polluted world. And the final, devastating blow was that the oceans were dying. And now we have evidence that our oceans are very, very much at risk from CO₂ and climate change.

The House Republicans are using their leadership here to stymie efforts to even research and document climate change, let alone totally deny that it's a problem. Time and time again, they voted to know nothing, do nothing about climate change. They voted to block action on climate change no less than 50 times in the last Congress.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to listen to the scientists and get serious about climate change. The evidence is in. The only question now is whether Congress will listen and act.