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Dear Reporter:

Since the mid-1980s, global climate change has emerged as an environmental and economic issue that is driving an astonishing array of potentially costly domestic and international policy moves. What's behind the apocalypse scenarios that are stirring so much activity? Not as much as one might think.

Global climate predictions are the products of complex mathematical equations processed by sophisticated computers. Unfortunately, the limitations of these computer simulations -- and their "predictions" -- have gone largely unacknowledged outside the immediate scientific community. Many modelers themselves warn against taking the model scenarios as predictions of the future. Yet, all too often, the scenarios are accepted as fact and become the subjects of frightening news reports, or worse, the basis of calls for radical policy measures.

Accepting the scenarios as forecasts has become so commonplace that the environmental magazine *Garbage* has mistakenly dubbed global warming "the theory that became fact."

The enclosed backgrounder on climate modeling is intended as an introduction to the rest of the story. It explores the most important questions that must be resolved to improve the reliability of climate models. The aim is not to discredit the models, but rather to ensure that they are properly understood. Indeed, when not taken out of context, they are a valuable research tool for exploring climate dynamics.

I hope you find the background information interesting and valuable as you write on climate change issues in the future. Please do not hesitate to contact GCC if you have any questions or would like any further information.

Sincerely,

John Shlaes  
Executive Director

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