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### Global Warming Study Draws Debate

A study recently released by Environment Michigan that "proves" the state has been affected by global warming, may be just a small flake in the debate on whether global warming actually exists and, if it does, whether humans cause it.

Environment Michigan released a new report called, "Feeling the Heat: Global Warming and Rising Temperatures in the United States." The report analysis data from 255 major weather stations in all 50 states and Washington D.C. for the years 2000-2006 and the first six months of 2006.

The group compared temperatures from 2000-2005 and part of 2006 to recorded temperatures from 1971-2000. For the sake of this study, the temperatures logged during the three decades between the 1970s and 2000, were considered "normal" temperatures.

According to that study, the state's average temperature is 3.9 degrees Fahrenheit higher than the 20th century average, making this past January-July the warmest on record.

Nationally, 95 percent of the locations indicated widespread warming between 2000 and 2005, according to the study.

"Two or three degrees may not seem like much, but just like in people, a small, relatively rapid temperature rise can have serious consequences," said Abby **RUBLEY**, field organizer for Environment Michigan.

Russ **HARDING**, with the free-market think tank Mackinac Center for Public Policy, didn't deny that global warming could be harmful, but he's dubious as to whether it actually exists.

"Studies that are done in short periods like in a decade or two, are meaningless," Harding argued. "The weather we're seeing now is similar to the dust period in the '30s. After that period we saw a period of cooling."

Temperatures are cyclical and fluctuate over long periods of time, Harding said. Because the ebb and flow of temperatures takes so long, it's unfair to look at a study that only analyses 30 years, rather than hundreds of years, and conclude that temperatures have increased because of global warming, he said.

The remaining question is if global warming exists, did man cause it?

"We won't have this answer for many years," Harding said. "The more important discussion is, what's the response?"

The study also found the following:

- In Sault Ste. Marie, between 2000-2005, the average minimum nighttime low temperature was 2.9 degrees above normal. During the first six months of 2006, the average minimum temperature was 6 degrees above normal, ranking the city second in the country for the highest above-normal nighttime temperature between January and June of 2006.

"To protect future generations, Environment Michigan strongly urges our Representatives in Congress, Rep. Bart **STUPAK** (D-Menominee) to co-sponsor the Safe Climate Act, the long-term solution to global warming," Rubley said.

The Safe Climate Act would reduce U.S. global warming emissions by 15 percent by 2020 and by 80 percent by 2050.