The Big Melt. Lesson From the Arctic Summer of 2007

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Severe climate change is likely to happen much faster than believed just a year or two ago. Some of the critical positive feedbacks that could cause a more rapid deterioration are either not in the climate models or are not well understood. The situation has a parallel in the ozone layer depletion problem. In the 1970s and early 1980s it was believed that ozone layer depletion would take hundreds of years. The chemical reactions would be between gases -- rather slow. Then the Antarctic Ozone Hole was discovered and scientists realized that liquids, solids and gases were interacting in ways to produce much faster and more severe depletion than had been thought possible. The models were changed. CFC phase-out discussions moved from 50 percent reductions over 10 or fifteen years to 100 percent elimination in the West in by 1995.

The Great Arctic Ice Melt of 2007 is like the Antarctic Ozone Hole discovery. The extent of the melting was more extreme than the worst case estimates, as the accompanying article shows. This should be a real wake up call. We need urgent action to eliminate fossil fuel use above all in the United States, which should be leading the way to a global economy anchored in renewable fuels. Arjun Makhijani

Carbonequity can be reached here (http://www.carbonequity.info).

The Big Melt (http://japanfocus.org/data/spratt.bigmelt_1241.pdf)