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Warming's Costs to Top Its Benefits, Study Says

By *Juliet Eilperin*
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, October 17, 2007

The costs of climate change to the United States will outweigh its benefits, according to a new University of Maryland study.

The analysis, conducted by the university's Center for Integrative Environmental Research and funded in part by the advocacy group Environmental Defense, represents the first comprehensive economic analysis of global warming's impact on the nation in the years to come. But the study's authors declined to put an overall price tag on climate change's future impact, saying it is impossible to predict how it would affect the U.S. economy on a broad scale.

"Economic costs of climate change will occur throughout the country," said Matthias Ruth, the study's lead author, in a conference call with reporters. "We've connected the dots as far as the data would allow."

Global warming will strain public budgets and raise the costs of cooling American homes, the authors write, and it will provide only temporary benefits to the mid-Atlantic's agricultural sector. For example, a predicted rise in sea level would require Hawaii to spend nearly \$2 billion on upgrading its drinking water and wastewater facilities over the next 20 years.

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The report was deliberately less broad than the Stern report the British government released a year ago, which estimated that failing to address climate change could lead to environmental problems that would cost 5 to 20 percent of the world's annual gross domestic product.

Terry L. Anderson, executive director of the libertarian Property and Environment Research Center in Bozeman, Mont., said he found yesterday's study more believable,

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