

ARE THERE POSITIVE BENEFITS FROM GLOBAL WARMING?

Yes, there will probably be some short-term and long-term benefits from global warming. For example, the flip side of increased mortality from heat waves may be decreased mortality from cold waves.

In the short term, farmers in some regions may benefit from the earlier onset of spring and from a longer warm season that is suitable for growing crops. Also, studies show that, up to a certain point, crops and other plants grow better in the presence of higher carbon dioxide levels and seem to be more drought-tolerant. [1] But this benefit is a two-edged sword: weeds, many invasive plant species, and insect pests will also thrive in a warmer world. Water availability will be impacted in drier agricultural areas that need irrigation. At some point, the benefits to crops of increased carbon dioxide will likely be overwhelmed by the negative impacts of heat stress and drought.

In the long term, shipping commerce will benefit from the opening of the Northwest Passage for longer periods of the year due to the loss of Arctic sea ice. However, in the long run, if a "business as usual" approach to emitting heat-trapping gases is maintained at the present rate, or faster, then the negative costs and impacts of global warming are very likely to far outweigh the benefits over the course of this century, with increased potential for catastrophic impacts from more extreme events. [17] In part, this is because any substantial change, whether warmer or colder, would challenge the societal infrastructure that has developed under the current climate.

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