

Both these brief texts have been shown to increase (a) trust in *climate* scientists, (b) trust in scientists in general, and (c) acceptance/concern about human-caused *global warming* (from Senthilkumaran, Velautham, & Ranney, 2023):

1. “**Long**” text (just 483 words):

Why You Can Trust Global Warming Researchers

Scientists are fact-seeking researchers who want to accurately understand the universe.

But some people worry that some climatologists might be afraid to go against science’s majority opinion for fear of losing credibility or funding. These concerns about climate science’s validity have been promoted by people with financial interests in keeping society from slowing or stopping global warming—like the tobacco companies who suppressed evidence that smoking causes cancer.

However, scientists would much rather prove human-caused global warming to be false if they could: that is, if global warming were false, scientists would feel less worried about future generations and even about the quality of their own elderly years—but the evidence indicates that humans are truly causing global warming. One scientist, Professor Michael Ranney (of the University of California), tells audiences that he would be extremely happy to be convinced that he is mistaken about human-caused global warming. He even makes a pledge:

“I pledge that if someone could please actually convince me that global warming were not true, I would: (a) rent the most gas-guzzling SUV, (b) drive it to wherever that person is, (c) gladly shake his/her hand, (d) stop all my work on global warming, and (e) give back any dollar I ever got in climate-change-related funding. I would do this because I sincerely don’t want it to be true. Indeed, virtually all climate scientists absolutely wish that global warming were not happening—especially if they’re parents!”

Professor Ranney explains why people should trust that any real scientist would want to disprove global warming if it were possible:

“The idea that scientists accept global warming because they want research money related to climate change—or to get along with other scientists—is completely wrong. That is largely the opposite of how scientific rewards work. Scientists treasure any chance to show that the vast majority of their peers are incorrect: that’s how people like Einstein achieve fame. If I thought that I could disconfirm global warming, I’d do it in a heartbeat and I’d expect to become wildly rich and the most famous scientist ever. I mean, if you could show that global warming were a myth, you’d win a Nobel Prize—and the fossil-fuel companies would gleefully financially support your work to do it! Plus, you could go into almost any bar and you’d get free drinks because so many people currently fear the effects of our warming world.”

To sum up, anyone who could disconfirm a huge phenomenon like global warming would expect tremendous fame and fortune. The fact that virtually all climate scientists (about 98%) continue to accept that humans are causing global warming in spite of the fact that they wish it were false—and that they have incentives to work hard to show that it might be false—reflects a very high probability that climate change is truly happening.

2. **Short** text (just 253 words):

Why You Can Trust Global Warming Researchers

Professor Michael Ranney—a scientist at the University of California—tells audiences that scientists would be overjoyed to be mistaken about human-caused global warming. He offers a pledge:

“To show why scientists don’t accept global warming because they crave research money, I pledge that if someone could please convince me that global warming were false, I’d: (a) rent a huge gas-guzzling SUV, (b) drive to wherever that person is, (c) gladly shake his/her hand, (d) stop all my global warming work, and (e) give back any dollar I ever got in climate-change-related funding. Indeed, virtually all climate scientists absolutely wish that global warming were not happening—especially if they’re parents!”

Professor Ranney further explains: “Scientists also don’t accept global warming because they want to get along with other scientists. That’s mostly the opposite of how scientific rewards work. Scientists treasure any chance to show that the vast majority of their peers are incorrect: that’s how Einstein-types achieve fame. I would immediately disconfirm global warming if I could because I would expect to become wildly rich and the most famous scientist ever. I’d win a Nobel Prize—and fossil-fuel companies would lavish me with money! Plus, I could get free drinks anywhere because so many people now fear climate change’s effects.”

Summarizing Ranney’s comments: About 98% of climate scientists accept human-caused global warming even while wishing it were false—and having incentives to disprove it. This reflects the very high probability that climate change is truly happening.