

WASHINGTON, D.C. , Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) spoke on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Olver noted "the looming crisis that human life faces if we continue to produce the energy needed by our nation."

"Planet earth is warming," Olver said. "Since 1850, the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, has caused the earth to warm."

Olver made the statements on the House floor on May 18 during the House's consideration of the Interior Department's budget.

Olver added, "The scientists who do climate research understand that much of the ever increasing concern about global warming is due to the burning of fossil fuels."

Climate scientists agree that the average surface temperature of the earth has risen by about 2 degrees Fahrenheit since 1850.

Olver noted the example of China to show how urgent is the need to address global warming.

"We all know that China is industrializing at a growth rate of 8 to 10 percent per year," Olver said. "China's rapid industrialization is a major contributor to global warming."

The 6.3 billion people on earth produce on average 4 tons of CO2 per person, which amounts to over 25 billion tons of CO2 per year.

If China alone industrialized to the U.S. level, that would amount to 22.5 billion tons of CO2 added to the atmosphere each year.

Olver said, "That simple example tells why climate scientists are so concerned about the lack of effective action to address global warming."

As a scientist, Olver believes that climate change is the most critical environmental issue of the 21st century.

Last week, Olver successfully included a study of the health impacts related to global warming on the U.S. House of Representatives' agenda.

Olver's amendment would require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to study the health impacts of global warming.

"We need to be much better prepared for increases in air pollution, the spread of pest-borne and other diseases, and the effects of sea level rise," Olver said.

Last month, Olver took his message on climate change to audiences in the 1st Congressional District.

In the 109th Congress, Olver introduced the Climate Stewardship Act, a bipartisan bill to fight global warming.

Olver is co-chair the Climate Change Caucus, a clearinghouse for information and a forum to build support for climate change legislation.

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