



## CLIMATE FACT CHECK: MAY 2026 EDITION

Debunking claims of climate causing 'less healthy' food - Melting ice will NOT 'drown millions' - Droughts NOT caused by fossil fuels - Earth is NOT spinning slower due to climate change!

### April 30th: “Carbon pollution” isn’t making food less healthy

---



**Claim:** *The Washington Post's* Naema Ahmed and Sarah Kaplan claimed in a [recent article](#) that rising atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)

concentrations are making humanity's staple crops less nutritious by reducing essential minerals like zinc and iron. Citing a [Leiden University meta-analysis](#), the article warns of a 3.2% average decline in nutrient levels since the late 1980s, projecting worse outcomes by 2040 (e.g., chickpeas providing far less daily zinc). It predicts an epidemic of “hidden hunger,” additional deficiencies affecting billions, especially in poor countries, and frames CO<sub>2</sub> as the invisible culprit harming food quality despite increased yields.

**Fact-Check:** This is a gross exaggeration. The *Post's* framing exaggerates modest changes in nutrient density while ignoring the overwhelming benefits of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> for plant growth, global food abundance, and nutrition outcomes. First, CO<sub>2</sub> is not “pollution” for plants; it is the fundamental building block of photosynthesis and plant life. [Decades of experiments](#), including [Free-Air CO<sub>2</sub> Enrichment \(FACE\)](#), confirm that higher CO<sub>2</sub> levels act as a fertilizer: they boost photosynthesis, increase water-use efficiency (plants lose less water through stomata), and enhance growth, particularly in C3 crops like wheat, rice, and soybeans. Second, meta-analyses and field studies show yield [increases of 15–33%](#) or more. The article cites Leiden's meta-analysis, which reports an average ~3.2% nutrient decline since CO<sub>2</sub> levels reached 350 ppm. This small shift, often within natural variability from soil quality, varieties, irrigation, fertilizers, and management practices, is more than made up for by the increasing abundance of food.

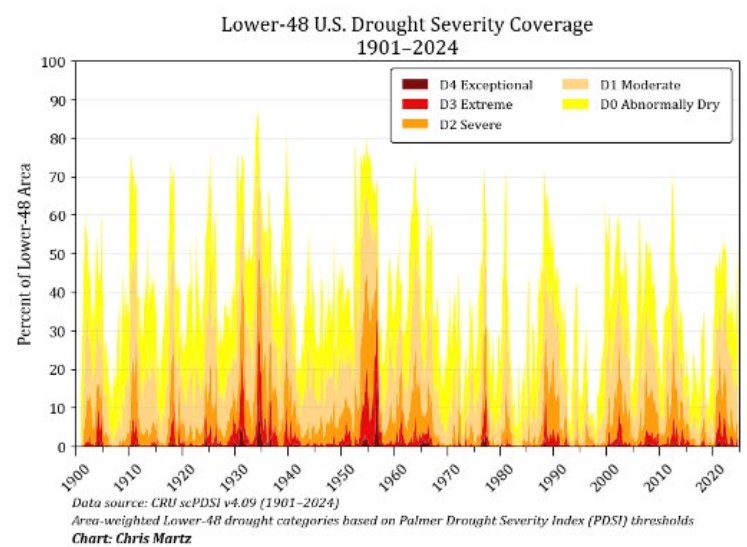
# May 3rd: Wrong, Senator Whitehouse, the U.S. drought is not caused by “fossil fuel pollution”



**Claim:** U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, [shared an animation](#) of weekly

drought conditions across the conterminous United States from the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#). Whitehouse attributed the drought to so-called “fossil fuel pollution,” writing, “*Amazing graphic of US drought crisis, reaching beyond ‘extreme’ into ‘exceptional.’ New levels of extreme weather from fossil fuel pollution.*”

**Fact-Check:** The U.S. Drought Monitor maps drought conditions across the United States and provides updates every Tuesday morning. Their “Exceptional Drought” designation is not a new category; it is their [long-established D4 classification](#), which has been in use since the program began in 1999. While large portions of the country are currently experiencing drought, droughts ranging from moderate to exceptional have occurred throughout the historical record, long before greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions became significant. Severe drought episodes during the 1930s and early- to mid-1950s are notable examples. Furthermore, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [defines climate](#) over periods of at least 30 years. A drought lasting months or even several years does not, by itself, demonstrate a long-term climatic trend or establish a causal link to fossil fuel emissions.



# May 7th: Wrong, Daily Mail, Future Melting Antarctic Ice Isn't Going to Drown Millions



**Claim:** The *Daily Mail* [reported](#) that rapidly melting Antarctic ice shelves could cause sea levels to rise faster than expected, putting millions of people at risk of being submerged. The article cites a [Norwegian study](#) examining the East Antarctic Fimbulisen Ice Shelf, where researchers found deep channels beneath the ice that trap relatively warm ocean water and accelerate melting from below. The *Daily Mail* presents these findings as evidence that major ice shelf collapse and dramatic sea-level rise may be approaching.

**Fact-Check:** This is hyperbolic alarmism that turns a single study on localized basal melt processes into an unrealistic doomsday prediction. While the discovery of warm-water channels improving our scientific understanding of ice-ocean interactions is noteworthy, the researchers stress that there are deep uncertainties and only that they “cannot rule out” extreme long-term scenarios, which is different from forecasting them. Antarctica is a complex system that has shown both losses in West Antarctica and stability or even [gains in East Antarctica](#). The most recent [projections from IPCC AR6](#) show modest sea level rise to continue this century (0.5–1 meter tops), with centuries for societal adaptation through engineering and infrastructure investments. The *Daily Mail's* leap to millions being submerged beneath rising waters ignores adaptation potential and the long history of revised projections that will inevitably come.

US Edition | Privacy Policy | Feedback | Follow 23.1M | Friday, May 15th 2026 10AM 67°F | 1PM 73°F | 5-Day Forecast

# Daily Mail

## Science & Tech

Home | US Showbiz | TV | Sports | US Politics | Royals | News | Crime Desk | Lifestyle | Money | U.K. | Buyline | Games | M+

Latest Headlines | Login

ADVERTISEMENT

**Rapidly melting Antarctic ice shelves may cause global sea levels to rise even FASTER than expected – leaving millions at risk of being plunged underwater, study warns**

Enter your search | Search

## May 19th: No, RCP8.5 / SSP5-8.5 were never plausible.



**Claim:** The scientific committee responsible for producing the GHG emission scenarios in the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP) suite used in the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports has declared high-end scenarios (SSP5-8.5 and its precursor, RCP8.5) to be [implausible](#). In layman's terms, this means that the worst-case climate change scenarios are not going to materialize. Outlets like the [Washington Post](#) and [The New Republic](#) attribute the retirement of these scenarios to emergent "climate policy" such as emission trends since 2015 and deployment of renewables, claiming that these measures have made a once plausible scenario now implausible.

**Fact-Check:** This framing is false; in fact, it is gaslighting. The RCP8.5 / SSP5-8.5 scenarios were [never plausible](#), not even possible, from the get-go. First, they assumed an eight-fold increase in coal consumption by 2100 ([Ritchie & Dowlatabadi, 2017](#)). Second, the scenario required coal burning, requiring [five times the amount of proven reserves](#). These two assumptions alone refute claims that RCP8.5 / SSP5-8.5 was ever possible.

### GLOBAL PRIMARY ENERGY · COAL SHARE

#### RCP8.5 Projected vs. Observed Coal Consumption

Coal as % of global primary energy, 2000–2025. RCP8.5 assumed coal would keep growing. It hasn't.



Notes: Includes hard coal, lignite, coal-derived fuels. Observed: BP/EI Statistical Review; IEA. RCP8.5: AR5 database, MESSAGE (Riahi et al. 2011). Coal peaked as share of primary energy 2013–14. 2024–25 preliminary. pp = percentage points.

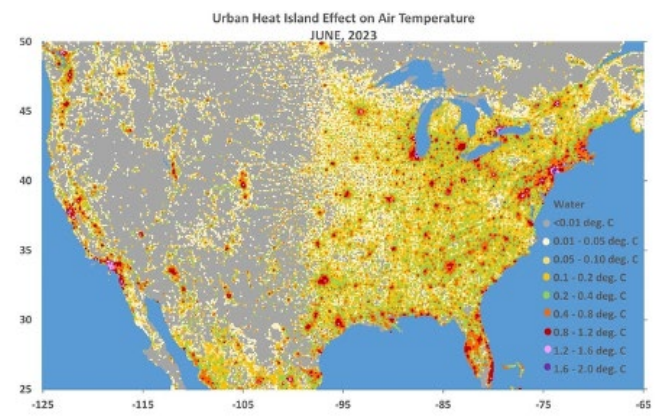
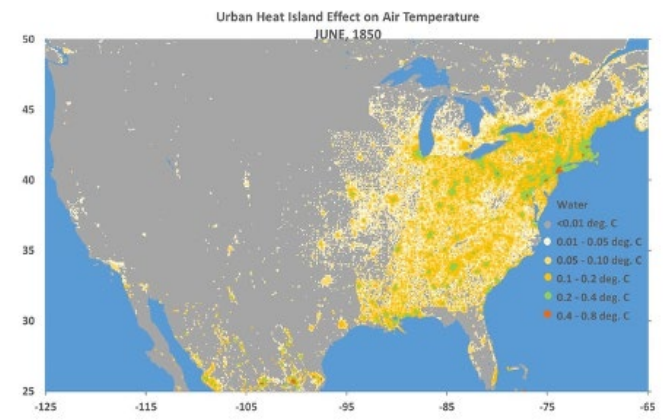
# May 20th: No, Climate Central, Summer Warming Isn't Due to Climate Change



**Claim:** Climate Central, a nonprofit climate advocacy organization, [published a report](#) claiming that summers in the United States have warmed immensely due to climate change.

They analyzed 243 cities and found that summertime temperatures have warmed in 97% of them. Climate Central argues that human-caused climate change is the leading driver of said warming in 221 (91% of) those cities based on summer temperature trends and model attribution.

**Fact-Check:** This is misleading at best. Climate Central's findings are based on changes in average summer temperature, calculated from daily highs and lows. That matters because when one examines how urban heat island (UHI) effects typically manifest, the strongest signal is not in daytime highs, but rather nighttime low temperatures. UHI is a well-documented physical process observed and mapped worldwide. Dr. Roy Spencer, a principal research scientist at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), [globally mapped UHI](#), including the United States, and published a [peer-reviewed paper](#) on the subject. You can clearly see the UHI in major cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. UHI is a primary factor in urban warming trends; Spencer's paper estimated that UHI effects account for 64% and 67% of the warming trend at suburban and urban stations, respectively. Climate Central has illegitimately conflated the UHI impact from asphalt and artificial heat sources in urban areas with CO<sub>2</sub>-induced warming.



## May 24th: No, climate change is not slowing Earth's spin

---

**BBC  
NEWS**

**Claim:** The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) claims that man-made climate change is causing an [“unprecedented” slowing](#)

of Earth's rotation by 1.33 milliseconds per century, something not seen in 3.6 million years. They cite a [new study](#) published in the academic journal *JGR Solid Earth*, which claims that water from melting landlocked ice sheets (e.g., Greenland and Antarctica) and glaciers spreads toward the equator, shifting mass away from the poles and slowing the Earth's rate of rotation.

**Fact-Check:** The BBC compares this to a pinning skater extending his or her arms. This analogy is correct in principle, however, the Earth's rotation has never been constant. In fact, it has been gradually slowing for billions of years because of [frictional effects](#) between the moon and Earth. What's more, interannual climate variability (e.g., the [El Niño–Southern Oscillation](#)) contributes an additional  $\pm 0.3$ – $0.5$  milliseconds. None of these processes are new, much less evidence of planetary instability. For the planet's rotation speed to slow by one second, it would take more than 75,000 years. This is biologically insignificant.

## Until next month, enjoy these and other great climate fact checks at:

### [ClimateRealism.com](#)

- [Sorry, Health 'Experts' and The Guardian, Climate Change Isn't Causing a 'Public Health Emergency'](#)
- [The Media is Wrong, Tornadoes Are Not Getting More Frequent or Extreme](#)
- [Wrong, Guardian, Climate Change Hasn't Taken New Orleans Beyond the 'Point of No Return'](#)

### [ClimateDepot.com](#)

- [POLITICO: 'Climate hushing' – 'The sound of \(climate\) silence' – 'As Trump unravels U.S. climate policy, Dems & enviro groups have grown strangely quiet'](#)
- [Meet the new Greta...Eva Lighthiser! The 20-year-old airplane flying climate activist suing Trump for 'violating constitutional rights'](#)
- [New Study: 'LGB individuals live in warmer places.' – Study 'tests whether lesbian, gay, & bisexual \(LGB\) individuals inhabit systematically warmer locations than their heterosexual peers'](#)

### [Wattsupwiththat.com](#)

- [Climate Change Weekly # 581— It's Hurricane Season, and Nothing Is New](#)
- [Ocean "Acidification" – Another Fake Scare That Won't Go Away](#)
- [SSP5-8.5: Garbage In, Doomcasting Out](#)