North Dakota Senate Mulls Climate Change Study

JAMES MacPHERSON,Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Taxpayer money would be better spent buying snow removal equipment in wintry North Dakota than studying what impact global warming may be having on the state, a construction worker told lawmakers Thursday.

The Senate Natural Resources Committee is mulling a resolution that would direct the committee of North Dakota legislative leaders, called Legislative Management, to study the effects of climate change. But Jeff Magrum of Hazelton told lawmakers enough studies have been done and a lot of money already has been spent worldwide looking into the issue.

Magrum, who also is an Emmons County commissioner, said if the state wants to spend money, it should buy more plows to help clear North Dakota's snow-filled roads. The snowplows could be fitted with enhanced devices to capture carbon dioxide emissions that are blamed for global warming, "if climate change is a concern," he said.

Sharon Buhr, a health care worker and farmer from Valley City, urged lawmakers to a study the effects of climate change and provide funding for it.

"We need to understand what climate change is doing to us in North Dakota," she said.

Verle Reinicke, a retired Lutheran pastor from Bismarck, also supported a state-funded study.

"I want my state to deal with reality, and I think that is what climate change is," he said.

Charles Bullinger, an engineer from Bismarck, much research already has been done and for North Dakota to spend time on money on a study would be "ill-advised."

Michael McEnroe, a spokesman for The Wildlife Society spokesman and a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologist, spoke in favor of the study, which he said would only be done to determine the effects of climate change in the state.

"It does not study the cause or assess blame," he said.

Magrum, who owns an excavating business south central North Dakota, said he has to work outside during the state's notoriously brutal winters. He said global warming isn't a bad thing for him.

"A little bit warmer weather wouldn't matter to me," Magrum said. "I'm in the construction business."

The Senate committee took no action on the resolution Thursday.

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