

Judy Weiss: Climate change -- Early warning system may be too late

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It is terrific that CU Professor James White's committee issued a report explaining the abrupt changes that can happen when climate change crosses tipping point thresholds causing climate change to accelerate and move beyond points of no return (Daily Camera, Dec. 4).

Here is an example: Climate warms, ice sheets and glaciers melt, sea slowly rises. Suddenly, we reach a point where the ice has retreated so much that enough of the sun's rays are not being reflected out to space. Instead the oceans and land absorb those rays and heat further. This is a feedback loop that accelerates global warming and causes a jump in sea level.

White's committee recommended an early warning system for these changes. But we already see the ice melting. We have had climate scientists warn us for decades that without ice sheets, feedback loops will accelerate the warming. What we need now is immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The best system for reducing emissions is a revenue-neutral carbon tax to encourage investment in alternative energies instead of more fossil fuels. Let's discuss extra warning systems after a carbon tax is in place. Otherwise we will have systems set up to watch us drown.

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