



## Conference on Global Warming

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Boise, Idaho -- Ten thousand people gathered to hear Al Gore's keynote address on Monday night. His speech was part of the 23rd Annual Frank Church Conference, which brought together numerous experts to discuss the policies that must be put in place to slow global warming.

Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and the lectures he's delivered nationwide have helped spur the very recent surge of public interest in global climate change.

John Freemuth is a Boise State professor of public policy and says finally people seem ready to debate climate change.

"This seems to be getting, as public policy issues often do, to some sort of critical mass where people are now willing to talk about doing things differently."

As part of the former vice president's address, scientists from all over the country gathered in BSU's Jordan Ballroom throughout the day Monday to delve into even more detail on the policies needed to combat global warming and some, like Harvard professor James McCarthy, say solutions don't have to hurt the economy.

"There are enormous business opportunities in getting this problem right. There is opportunity for innovation, and opportunity to develop the technology that will be widely used throughout the world," said McCarthy.

Most of the visiting experts agree that changing daily consumption habits can be helpful, but to meet the current environmental mandate, policy makers have to get on board.

McCarthy says Boise is a city where officials are leading the charge.

"There are over 300 mayors, like your mayor here in Boise, who have shown leadership on this. And it is a really an impressive statement of how the governmental organizational construct is important to move this mission ahead," he said.

The tangible effects of global warming have been seen in the last 20 years, making for a generation McCarthy says are informed on how serious the environmental problem is.

"There's a new awakening in this generation of college and high school age students, and an opportunity is here, and arguably a responsibility that their parents didn't have, because the knowledge wasn't as secure," he said.

But, as University of Oregon Environmental Law Professor Mary Christina Wood added, you can gather all the scientists in a room you want, you still need to do something about it.

"Every citizen today ought to be calling their congressmen, their state legislators, their agency officials, the United States EPA," said Wood. "These numbers are all available on the web, and just say one thing -- demand legislation and action to control runaway greenhouse gas emissions."

Freemuth says it was Abraham Lincoln who coined the phrase, "If you mold public sentiment, anything is possible, and says that's just what he, Gore, and all the visiting scientists are trying to accomplish.

"Once the public is convinced, and wants something done, the politicians will follow," said Freemuth.