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OSU ecologist warns of irreversible global warming

The Associated Press

Global warming may increase rapidly and become irreversible if the atmospheric greenhouse effect reaches a certain level, researchers say.

"Scientists who study the geo-

logical record have found periods during the past in which climate has changed with surprising speed, with relatively large jumps in temperature occurring over a few years," said David Perry, an Oregon State University ecologist.

Perry was the lead author of a report on the global climate by 10 scientists published recently in the Northwest Environmental Journal.

He said environmental changes create biological feedback to the greenhouse effect,

possibly pushing it past a threshold that could prevent recovery.

"It's controversial, but more and more scientists are agreeing we can't afford to wait and see what happens," Perry said. "An attitude of inaction assumes that we'll be able to patch everything

up later, that the same options will always be there. The real world doesn't work that way."

Perry said that deforestation of the tropics, massive fires and the replacement of dying trees by weeds may inject carbon into the atmosphere and speed global

warming.

He urged a massive worldwide reforestation campaign, radical changes in land-use practices, strong measures to control population growth and a major reduction of energy use by industrialized nations.