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Scientists Monitor CO2 Levels on Big Island

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MAUNA LOA, Big Island (KHNL) -- A conference going on this week in Kona is helping to shape the future of the world as we know it.

It's the *International Carbon Dioxide Symposium*, and it's bringing together some of the smartest minds across the globe.

And they all share a common goal: to address the emissions of carbon dioxide, and other greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. Scientists describe it as a trace gas, making up only a very small part of the atmosphere.

But even the smallest changes in carbon dioxide, or CO2 levels, can have a huge and profound effect on planet earth," said Dr. Richard Spinrad of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. "The CO2 record indicates one of the most prominent indicators of a number of environmental changes in global climate change".

This past June, the NOAA Observatory on Mauna Loa marked its 50th anniversary as the premier atmospheric monitoring facility in the world.

This week scientists from around the world are meeting atop, and in the shadow of the volcano, to gain a better understanding of how the gas is affecting our world.

"So by monitoring CO2 in the atmosphere were also getting an idea of how we as human beings are influencing the climate of the globe," said Dr. Spinrad.

Spinrad says the greenhouse gas, which has increased consistently over the past 50 years, has proven to have extraordinary effects on the earth's ability to heat up, and cool down.

"So by monitoring that we will see it's affect on global climate change and we can also put the information into a model so we can forecast and predict what sort of changes we might have in the future," Dr. Spinrad said.



Dr. Richard Spinrad



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