

Video: The Arctic Is Melting! Devastating Environmental Crisis

A Golden Opportunity for Profit, according to Pompeo

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Region: [USA](#)

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It's officially summer. Time for a swim, a cold beer, and a new slew of catastrophic climate changes...

- Temperatures in Greenland were 40 degrees above normal in June, causing 2 billion tons of ice to melt away in a single day. That's the [equivalent](#) of 800,000 Olympic swimming pools.
- Scientists observed that the Arctic permafrost has [begun to thaw](#) a full 70 years before they expected it to—indicating the climate is warmer than it has been in at least 5,000 years—and potentially unearthing vast quantities of greenhouse gases trapped underground.
- Arctic sea ice coverage neared [record lows](#) this spring. Loss of arctic ice threatens [plant](#) and [animal](#) life, indigenous communities, and leads to [extreme weather](#) in other parts of the world.

It's all alarming. But to officials in the Trump administration, it represents just another golden opportunity to profit. In April, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke to the Arctic Council—that's the governmental group that gathers countries with territory in the Arctic region and indigenous peoples to cooperate on "issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic." Pompeo didn't seem concerned about sticking to the council's formal mission statement; he could barely contain his excitement about the new waterways and resources opening up due to the accelerating sea ice melt.

"The Secretary is looking at this with blinders on," says Ray Pierrehumbert, Halley Professor of Physics at the University of Oxford and lead author of the IPCC Third Assessment Report. For the latest installment of *Say WHAT?*—the Bulletin's [video series](#) that casts a wry eye at wrongheaded policy—we watched the Arctic Council speech with Pierrehumbert and captured his reaction to some of Pompeo's most flabbergasting statements.

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