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Arctic Warning

A new report says the Arctic is experiencing some of the most severe climate change on Earth. The report says average winter temperatures there have risen at almost two times the rate of that in other areas in the past fifty years. (27) ____

About three hundred scientists prepared the report after a four-year study. Scientists say human activities are responsible for increasing amounts of heat-trapping gases in Earth's atmosphere. (28) ____

The report was presented to an organization called the Arctic Council. (29) ____ Six groups representing native peoples also are members. The Council considered the report last week during a meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland. Robert Correll of the American Meteorological Society led the committee that wrote the report. (30) ____ As a result, native peoples who hunt for these animals will experience food shortages and economic problems.

The report also warns of possible health risks to people. As new kinds of wildlife move into the Arctic, animal diseases that can infect people may spread. And, northern freshwater fisheries that supply the native people with food could suffer. The report says melting ice would add more freshwater to the Arctic Ocean. (31) ____ As the frozen ground warms, many existing buildings in the Arctic, roads, and industrial areas could be damaged.

The report notes some possible improvements as a result of rising temperatures. For example, the melting ice will increase the ability of fish and other sea creatures to use Arctic resources. (32) ____ And, reduced ice is likely to extend the period when ships can travel in the area.

- a. Activists say this is often caused by excessive melting.
- b. He says climate changes will have a major effect on the Arctic. Polar bears and some kinds of seals may disappear.
- c. It also says computer programs estimate an additional increase of four to seven degrees Celsius during the next century.
- d. This will escalate the situation.
- e. Its members include the United States and the seven other countries with territory in the Arctic.
- f. The melting is likely to permit increased exploration for oil and gas.
- g. This could cause sea levels to rise around the world.
- h. Other studies have linked recent climate changes to such activities.