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### The Larger Scale of the Climate Issue

There are many views on global warming. Deniers, broadly, fit into two categories: those that say it isn't real and those that say it isn't human-caused. Many believers want to blame others and look at celebrities and the rich as the source of the problem. According to a YouTube video by Our Changing Climate titled "How the Rich REALLY Cause Climate Change," Taylor Swift is a big contributor to the climate problem. Then, it goes on to blame the real villains, construction materials executives, whose crimes are much greater than Swifts, according to the video. Even though celebrities and the rich may be big contributors to the problem, the global issue of climate change is larger than any celebrity and we should focus on the climate issue at a larger scale.

According to Our Changing Climate, a YouTube channel, in August of 2022 there was a record-breaking heatwave. During this, people on Twitter were posting hate comments about Taylor Swift and her contribution to the climate issue. These negative contributions being discussed were from her private jet's emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. Around this time a research organization made a report on celebrities and their carbon footprint due to flights. This report showed Taylor Swift as the number one contributor. This report however used flight logs that showed the planes total usage, including other people borrowing her jet. Her plane was estimated to have emitted

over 8,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in only 7 months (Our). The second half of the video makes an abrupt switch to talking about corporations and factories.

Why would a video placing the lion's share of the blame on others start off by discussing Swift? To get clicks, good for both money and exposure to their real message. All major YouTube channels get paid by YouTube for their videos' views (YouTube). Other than the obvious purpose of gaining views by starting the video essay with a discussion about Taylor Swift, a topic that would attract viewers that both love and hate her, this video offers a very questionable defense on Taylor Swift's behalf. This defense states "Taylor Swift isn't the worst person on the planet regarding climate change." While this sort of deflection offers a defense, it does not address the hypocrisy of Taylor Swift's jet usage.

Of course, a bad defense for Taylor Swift is not proof that she is in the wrong. The estimated amount of over 8,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from 7 months of flying may be over 800 US citizens worth for that timespan (US EPA), but Taylor Swift's *Eras Tour* sold over 4 million tickets in 2022 (AP News). If, instead of touring, Swift stayed in one place and everyone that went to the concerts had to drive, 1000 kilometers on average would be a low estimate. Even this low figure would make over 888,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> (US EPA). This is over 100 times worse. Taylor Swift is just doing her job, and that job is to entertain millions of people a year.

According to *Our Changing Climate*, there was also an Oxfam report discussing the correlation between household income and carbon emissions. This study showed that, worldwide, the richest 1% has double the carbon emissions than the poorest 50%. Also, according to *Our Changing Climate*, this is not what we should be worried about. Instead, we should be worried about the companies that sell products who's manufacturing emits large

amounts of carbon (Our). This argument doesn't make much sense. If those companies stopped selling those products, consumers would just buy from other companies. A real solution must change consumer behavior. One way to do this is for the government to step in and raise taxes on CO<sub>2</sub> emitting products and resources, however the US is already doing this (Peter G. Peterson Foundation). Another way to reduce carbon emissions is the people use less carbon emitting resources globally. This means everyone doing their part to help decrease global carbon emissions which can include carpooling more.

Per person, the one percent consume more, but overall the rest far exceed them. You must look at the climate issue at a national or even a global scale if you are to understand this issue. Just looking at the average of the two groups, the rich are to blame, but changing their ways will not fix this problem. The only way to make a lasting difference is to change the ways of the many, not the few.

Works Cited

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