

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

August 17, 2018

### **All responsible for the future**

Too often we hear people shrug off human problems as if they are inevitable and beyond resolve. Yet, as sentient beings, we have the ability and moral obligation to identify and correct major threats, no matter how dire or monumental.

Put another way, the future is in our hands and it will only get worse if we irresponsibly rationalize inaction and apathy.

Foremost among these profound human problems is climate change. The evidence has never been more conclusive – record-breaking wildfires, temperatures, heat-related deaths, flooding, storm damage, crop-loss, and species extinctions are well-documented and frequently reported in the media.

Opinion surveys indicate that, despite well-funded propaganda attempting to mislead the public, the majority is now convinced by the vast preponderance of scientific opinion that these impacts are caused by greenhouse gases, emitted primarily by human activities – above all the combustion of fossil fuels.

Unfortunately, official predictions about the hazardous consequences of climate change are often only presented for dates far into the future. For instance, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) typically forecasts the amount of sea-level rise by 2100.

Seldom clarified is that (1) the amount of predicted sea-level and other hazardous impacts grow more dangerous with each cycle of forecasting, as verified by more current data – IPCC's sea-level predictions for 2100 have gone from 8 inches 15 years ago to over six feet in recent reports. This means impacts are getting worse much faster than previously thought, and – therefore – (2) there will be, and already are, costly climate-change consequences many decades prior to 2100.

The lack of more information about nearer-term climate impacts has added to widespread, politically-convenient indifference. However, it's clear that in the absence of concerted efforts to get well-known climate-wrecking activities under control, many people alive today will experience a rapidly worsening, desolate world of extreme heat, intense storms, drought, early deaths, and unprecedented famine – not to mention mass migrations and regional conflicts over resource shortages.

Proven technology currently exists to curtail the catastrophic trend toward runaway climate disruption. Even now, after decades of discussion, calculated diversions, and indecisiveness, as climate overheating has significantly worsened, the most destructive outcomes can still be avoided – but time remaining for taking corrective action is quickly running out.

Converting from fossil fuels to clean energy must be given the utmost priority if we hope to protect earth's remaining quality of life.

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