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## LETTERS TO EDITOR

# We must rethink progress in 2024

Despite growing indications of the destructive consequences of urbanization, it is predominantly considered inevitable and immutable. Yet, if humans hope to enjoy healthy, fulfilling lives in future decades, our relationship with the natural world must be radically restructured. Indeed, our vital life-support systems depend upon it.

In our state alone, since 2000, some 37% of remaining tree-covered land has been clear-cut, much of it for massive industrial sites, commercial areas, and subdivisions. Meanwhile, population grew by more than 3.5 million and hundreds of thousands of jobs were created, yet poverty in Georgia remains over 15%. Water supply, wastewater and transportation infrastructure needs are creating ever-worsening financial and environmental challenges, and opinion surveys consistently report declining quality of life.

Globally, the cumulative impacts of humanity's resource-depleting patterns of urbanization are causing unprecedented and unsustainable harm to both land-based and marine food supplies that foreshadow the collapse of financial and trade markets, triggering famine and colossal suffering for billions.

Accordingly, resourceful efforts to transform civilization to comply with the limits of Earth's capacity to support human needs are receiving long-overdue attention. Local Futures explains that their "focus on 'going local' is a key strategy for restoring ecological, sociological and spiritual wellbeing." And the Civilization Research Institute "works to support the emergence of a mature global civilization ... capable of wisely stewarding the unprecedented power of (advanced) technologies."

Instead of recklessly pretending that there's no limit to human exploitation of the world's resources, it's imperative that our options and goals are responsibly explored in thoughtfully manifesting enlightened progress.

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