

## The Road Report & More

Health, Science, & Climate Action

Dr. Shahir Masri



### Happy New Year!

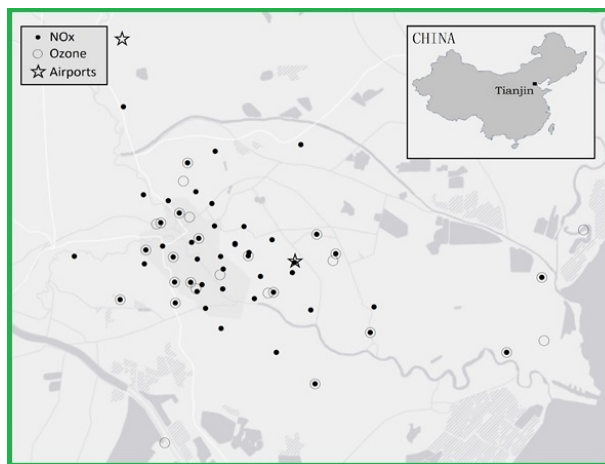
I hope everyone is off to a great start to 2020! Athina and I were fortunate enough to spend the holiday break on the ski slopes of Mammoth Mountain, CA. Despite the photo, the weather was actually quite nice for winter. On another note, I'd like to thank all of you for a great last year. If you've

been reading this newsletter each month, I'd like to say thank you. If you're someone who has purchased my book or donated to my climate outreach work, I'd like to say thank you. If you've volunteered in any way to help rescue our world from the climate crisis, I'd like to say thank you. For it is our collective work toward great causes that ultimately translates to great action. And we're all necessary pieces in this effort. It's not always easy to take the time to educate yourself, attend a climate rally, or volunteer for a local outreach group, but it's critical. Cheers to all we've accomplished. Now let us continue the terrific work and build upon our progress in 2020!

### Science Publications

As we close out 2019, I thought I'd share the two scientific studies that I authored this year with colleagues, both of which were published in peer-reviewed

journals. In the first study, we collected measurements of two important air pollutants (ozone & oxides of nitrogen) in the city of Tianjin, China. We used these measurements to better understand the types of factors that contribute to air pollution in the city, and to develop models that can predict air pollution where measurements do not exist (based on the factors we identified). Such information is important to understanding personal air pollution exposure and to inform future environmental policy in the city. In the second study, we looked at Zika virus cases that occurred in the U.S. during the 2016 epidemic and developed models utilizing Twitter data to predict disease cases 1 week in advance of CDC reporting. Thus, we were able to develop a tool to improve national disease surveillance. Both studies are available on my website. Just [click here](#)!



## Cement: A Carbon Intensive Resource

[Click here](#) to check out this article by one of my volunteers who attends high school in LA. He discusses the carbon-intensive nature of cement production, while also highlighting some exciting developments in the

world of sustainable construction! Should such technologies be scaled up and employed globally, we'd be in much better shape with respect to the climate crisis. Have an article you'd like to submit to my newsletter? Great! Simply reply to this newsletter and let's see if we can get it out to the public!

## Send Science to Washington!

In my last newsletter, I

officially announced my "Gift to Congress" campaign through which I'm fundraising to send science to Washington. Want to help? Just [click here](#), leave a small donation, and I'll do the rest!

Thus far, we've got 2 Senators and 3 House Reps on the map. Four of the five are Democrats, which means we've got to target more Republicans. Thank you to those who have donated! If you haven't donated yet, please consider participating. [Click here](#) to learn how!



## Avocados & Corruption

It's probably not surprising that the avocado industry has grown rapidly in recent decades, as we've all come to eat more guacamole. More surprising is the story that has come to accompany the rise of this fruit. Sadly, it's one of corruption in areas such as Mexico and South America. In Mexico, drug cartels have moved to capture avocado-related profits by kidnapping farmers for ransom, stealing farmland, and demanding payouts by civilians and government. In some towns where police forces have been inadequate, this has even birthed citizen security forces. Another story of corruption involves Chile, where water rights have been privatized. This privatization of what we'd normally consider a "public resource" has enabled big industry to enter the avocado market where they are running rivers dry and squeezing out small farmers who have tilled the land for generations. Such acts have led many farmers and consumers to call for an international ban on Chilean avocados in the name of human rights. [Here is an article](#) that dives into this issue in the context of the U.K. You may also [click here](#)

to see a preview of an interesting documentary called "Avocado Wars" which is available on Netflix as part of a regular series called "Rotten." I don't claim to be an expert on this issue, and only came to learn of it recently. Nonetheless, I thought I'd share this info so that we can all learn more together.

**Happy New Year,  
Dr. Shahir Masri**

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