

The Earth's Climates are Changing Rapidly...We Must Avoid Catastrophe



What Should We Demand?

We are in a desperate situation, with awful climate news coming nearly every week and with just a decade or so to drastically cut exhausts of carbon in the air. At the same time climate chaos deniers are at the helm in the U.S. and other major governments. The fossil fuel companies are causing trillions of dollars of damage to the world. They've known the perils for decades, but just didn't care.

Yet it would be a mistake if protests just demanded that those in power come up with a solution. The power brokers at best would tinker with the system at a time when we need fundamental, radical change.

Here are some of what needs to be done to cut the output of carbon dioxide in at least half before 2030 and completely before 2050:

- End exploration for fossil fuels.
- Radically suppress fossil fuel consumption in the industrialized nations.
- Produce things that are durable, rebuildable, recyclable, and shareable—instead of disposable. Minimize resource consumption.
- Start to go plastic-free
- Steer investments into things society does need, like renewable energy, organic farming, public transportation, bicycles, public water systems, clean-ups of polluted sites, brownfields and abandoned factories.
- Devise a rational and thorough approach to handling and eliminating waste and toxics.
- Cut back sharply on the amount of land used to raise food animals.
- Re-wild a large percentage of the earth
- Bring the world's poorest up to a decent level of living
- Provide better jobs and benefits to workers and displaced by the shutting down of harmful industries.

Is there a ghost of a chance that neoliberal capitalist system can make these vital changes? How would the competing corporations, billionaires and financial operatives come together, fight their every instinct and renounce the Almighty Gods of Profit and Unlimited Expansion? We see what they prefer, to deny the whole thing as a “Chinese hoax” and go full steam ahead into climate hell or push dangerous techno-fixes like new nuclear power and "engineering" the planet.

Yes, there are ideas for carbon trading, rapidly rising fuel taxes, green capitalism, and “fee and dividend”. If we had a century maybe we could see if any of them had merit, but we have less than a dozen years.

We need an emergency mobilization to get off our fossil fuel addiction. We need a planned economy, a guaranteed good job for anyone who wants one, and rationing of fossil fuel.

We also need to de-grow the economy (with a big side benefit of a shorter workweek).

All this requires a community and worker takeover of the fossil fuel industry with the purpose of rapidly and justly transitioning to 100% renewables.

Rational planning requires democracy and transparency and not just in politics, but at work, too. We have to figure out how to do this, to combine worker co-ops, and workers on company boards and working people on regional and national planning boards. We need to figure out how to coordinate that with the powers given to people chosen in general state and national elections. We have to learn from the Mondragon co-ops in Spain, the work of the Zapatistas in Mexico, and Cooperation Jackson's (Mississippi) and Cincinnati's green co-ops.

Takeover the Fossil Fuel Industries

Plan a Smokestack-Free Economy

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