

# The Climate Crisis

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For about ten years, I have been maintaining the website [ourneighborhoodearth.org](http://ourneighborhoodearth.org) dealing with all aspects of the environment. One of these categories is obviously Climate Change. This page gets updated more than any of the others as a result of the preponderance of news stories on that topic. In addition to the multitude of those stories, the page breaks down the following categories: **Of Possible Climate Change Interest**, featuring articles dealing with the subject, **Causes and Consequences** (listing eight categories), **Approaches** (the many actions we can take) and **Resources** (where our stories originate).

## Who Wins and Who Loses?

Is it just me, or did anyone else notice that when the subject of the Climate Crisis was brought up during the first Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates, not a word was uttered about the role the fossil fuel industry campaign contributions plays in shaping Climate policy?

It's time to address the question, "Whom do our elected officials really represent?" Certainly not future generations, unless they happen to be the grandchildren of shareholders of the largest Fossil Fuel interests.

The chart on the right is produced by *OpenSecrets.org*, an organization that covers contributions to elected (or would be) officials, lobbyists, or any group or individual who will agree to carry their ball.

Some of these "representatives of the people" will not even admit that Climate Change is a reality. That is especially true of the monster who won the Electoral College in 2016. And we shouldn't forget that the former and present Governor of the so-called Sunshine State\* would not allow their staffs to utter the shameful words "climate change."

Were President Trump, Senator and Former Florida Governor Rick Scott, current Governor Ron DeSantis influenced by campaign contributions?

You'll be shocked to learn that Trump tops the list of Gas and Oil contribution recipients with a total of \$1.6 million, as reported by *Open Secrets*.

Rick Scott didn't do too badly in his 2018 Senate run, collecting \$880,000, according to the Miami Herald.

And what about Governor DeSantis? Thought you'd never ask. According to *Food & Water Action*, **Florida Power & Light**, **Duke Energy**, **Gulf Power**, and **TECO** have given \$3 million this year to **Associated Industries of Florida's** (AIF)

### Top 20 Recipients

Rank	Candidate	Office	Amount
1	Trump, Donald (R)		\$1,642,808
2	Cornyn, John (R-TX)	Senate	\$713,985
3	Biden, Joe (D)		\$623,700
4	McCarthy, Kevin (R-CA)	House	\$486,336
5	Gardner, Cory (R-CO)	Senate	\$481,223
6	McConnell, Mitch (R-KY)	Senate	\$450,673
7	Scalise, Steve (R-LA)	House	\$392,054
8	Daines, Steven (R-MT)	Senate	\$369,583
9	Pfluger, August (R-TX)		\$332,304
10	Crenshaw, Dan (R-TX)	House	\$279,326
11	Collins, Susan M (R-ME)	Senate	\$265,658
12	Inhofe, James M (R-OK)	Senate	\$261,792
13	Sanders, Bernie (I-VT)	Senate	\$242,972
14	Cassidy, Bill (R-LA)	Senate	\$234,730
15	Hunt, Wesley (R-TX)		\$234,502
16	McSally, Martha (R-AZ)	Senate	\$233,605
17	Brady, Kevin (R-TX)	House	\$224,400
18	Sullivan, Dan (R-AK)	Senate	\$222,029
19	Tillis, Thom (R-NC)	Senate	\$215,854
20	Fletcher, Lizzie (D-TX)	House	\$194,929

controlled PACs and given \$9 million over the past 5 years. AIF, one of the most powerful lobby groups in Tallahassee, has endorsed Ron DeSantis for Governor and funneled millions of these dollars to the Florida Republican Party.

Don't get me wrong. Democratic Party elected officials have also accepted contributions (AKA bribes) from fossil fuel interests, but nowhere to the degree that their GOP counterparts have.

These activities led me to pose the question, "what's the difference between a politician and a whore?" Answer: "Spelling." Now that I've addressed that, let's move on to how do we get the public to support actions to combat the Climate Crisis?

Pennsylvania would be a good place to start. There are thousands of people employed in the fracking industry, oil and gas drilling and coal mining. The last of these mentioned is the dirtiest of all fossil fuels—not that any of the others are clean. Trump promised those workers, whose livelihoods depend on it, that he would bring back beautiful, clean coal. There were a few things wrong with that promise: Coal is not beautiful or clean (unless you think that black lung is a thing of beauty), and those jobs are not coming back for the same reason that whale blubber is no longer the fuel of choice. Other states have similar problems.

Just like we don't rub two sticks together to start a fire, certain enterprises become obsolete when better, safer, more efficient, and healthier ones emerge.

Instead of making false promises to coal workers, we should be offering them opportunities to learn the trades of the 21st century, instead of the 19th.

The cost of solar energy has dropped sharply over the past several years, a trend that's likely to continue. Unlike how Trump downplayed solar as a viable energy source by saying it can only provide power during daylight hours, thanks to battery storage and salt-enhanced photovoltaics, we can continue to use solar energy, even after the stars come out.

### **Political Excuses**

Reverse or Net Metering—where your home or business earns credits when the sun provides more power than the energy you're using (you pocket the difference)—is the major incentive for residents and businesses to install solar roofs. But solar in the Sunshine State, thanks to carefully placed political contributions, does not have the best solar incentive plan in the country.

Florida does have a relatively decent net-metering reimbursement program, but unlike North Carolina and California, where renewable energy subscribers get back the retail value of energy saved, Florida returns only the wholesale amount. A full retail reimbursement program would lead to a much greater use of renewable energy, by reducing the cost of installation payback time. How many solar roofs do you see in your neighborhood? I can count the number in mine on one hand.

The power industry has been a formidable fighter in eliciting the government to support poor net-metering regulations because it eats into their profits. This is not true in most other countries, where power providers are government-owned or designated as non-profit.

Could political sway be the excuse for the most inefficient fuel-economy traffic rules that I've ever seen? In our neck of the woods, motor vehicles use more fuel, releasing more carbon mon-

oxide as they stop at some intersections, waiting extended times for a green light.

This map shows an example of what I'm groaning about. Traffic heading west on Clark Rd does not get a left-turn signal, while traffic heading east does. Since vehicles turning left would pose no problem for cars coming from the opposite direction to also turn left, why, then does one direction-traveling vehicle have to wait up to three minutes for that light to give them the go ahead? The same rule holds true for vehicles traveling north and south, reaching the same intersection. This is just one example of the many that pose the same turning restrictions.

Also, Sarasota county (or possibly the entire country) either has no awareness of *Smart Traffic Light Technology* (STLT)—or deliberately chooses to ignore it—giving fossil fuel supporters a bigger bang for their buck.

For those of you who don't understand the concept of STLT, Wikipedia defines it as "A technology for smart traffic signals that was developed at *Carnegie Mellon University* and is being used in a pilot project in Pittsburgh in an effort to reduce vehicle emissions in the city. Unlike other dynamic control signals that adjust the timing and phasing of lights according to limits that are set in controller programming, this system combines existing technology with artificial intelligence.

"The signals communicate with each other and adapt digitally to changing traffic conditions to reduce the amount of time that cars spend idling. Using fiber optic video receivers similar to those already employed in dynamic control systems, the new technology monitors vehicle numbers and makes changes in real time to avoid congestion wherever possible. Initial results from the pilot study are encouraging: the amount of time that motorists spent idling at lights was reduced by 40% and travel times across the city were reduced by 25% "



### What To Do About Climate Deniers

How do we make those climate doubters understand that this is real? Pretending it doesn't exist (or that it's a hoax propagated by those climate Communists) doesn't make the problem go away; if anything, it exacerbates it. The longer we ignore the Climate Crisis the more difficult



it will be to address it. Why? Because the longer we allow temperatures to rise unabated, the more our glaciers melt, causing irreversible sea-level rise (AKA The Tipping Point). The ice that formed those glaciers millions of years ago, serve to reflect sunlight, ultimately having a cooling effect. Without that reflectivity, continuing warming of the planet is inevitable.

### What Did You Say Your Name Was?

We have some name re-thinking to do. For example, Glacier National Park might soon be called *No-Glacier National Park*. Iceland could soon be named *Icelessland*. If you thought that militant group ISIS was a problem, it would pale in comparison. Greenland has already begun

to live up to its name.

Much of the information below comes from *The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO). Two of the greatest challenges brought by climate change—an increase in ocean temperatures and acidity levels—are creating severe knock-on effects, jeopardising the survival of coral reefs. Tropical sea surface temperatures have risen by 0.4–0.5 °C since the late 19th century, with rapid, human-induced climate change the greatest overall threat to the long-term future of the *Great Barrier Reef*. These dramatic changes in the Reef’s environment are making it increasingly challenging for it to recover and protect itself from the devastating effects of climate change. At the alarming rate at which this home to literally thousands of underwater species is disappearing: How about calling it *The Not-So-Great Barrier Reef*?

### Are You Wise to the Rise?

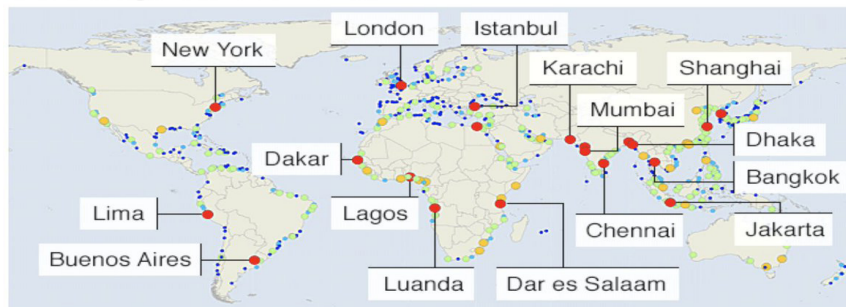
Interestingly, the rise in sea-levels, the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution (which helps trap CO<sub>2</sub> and other GHG), affects everyone, but especially the disenfranchised. Those who profit most from fossil fuels suffer the least. Does the *Supreme Being* take notice and punish those threatening the health of our planet? If so, we haven’t seen any evidence to support that idea.

### Endangered Cities

Cities have been the lifeblood of our planet, generating most of the income. And yet, they are the places at most risk as sea-levels rise.

#### Cities at risk from sea-level rise

Under a high emissions scenario



#### Urban populations at risk by the 2050s

● 10million + ● 5m - 10m ● 1m - 5m ● 0.5 - 1m ● 0.1m - 0.5m

Source: C40 cities

BBC

by rising sea levels, especially in the Netherlands, Spain and Italy, similarly. Africa is highly threatened, due to rapid urbanization in coastal cities and the crowding of poor populations into informal settlements along the coast. The coming decades will be marked by the rise of ex-cities and climate migrants.

Forecasts vary as to when some of the world’s most important cities will become at least partially submerged. There is no accurate way to predict that. Some countries seem to take this threat more seriously than others. If Mr. Trump wants to build a wall, it should not be for the purpose of keeping Mexicans out, but to safeguard our threatened cities. According to the *National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration* (NOAA), 40% of the U.S. population lives in coastal areas that are particularly vulnerable. Trump will probably fire the crew that wrote that

From the *World Economic Forum*: “About four out of every five people impacted by sea-level rise by 2050 will live in East or South East Asia. US cities, especially those on the East and Gulf coasts, are similarly vulnerable. More than 90 US coastal cities are already experiencing chronic flooding – a number that is expected to double by 2030. Meanwhile, about three-quarters of all European cities will be affected

report once he takes time out from watching *Fox and Fiends* (not a misspelling).

The two graphs depict cities under threat. You may have heard of some of these. The one on the left lists coastal cities worldwide, while the graph on the right focuses on U.S. cities (some quite close to where we live).

### Cities Most Vulnerable to Coastal Flooding by 2050

Top 25 cities and their populations at risk (thousands) within FEMA's 100-year coastal floodplain as augmented by projected sea level rise

1.	New York	426	14.	Hollywood, Fla.	76
2.	Hiialeah, Fla.	204	15.	Miami Gardens, Fla.	72
3.	Miami	154	16.	Norfolk, Va.	66
4.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	127	17.	Lauderhill, Fla.	66
5.	Pembroke Pines, Fla.	120	18.	Cape Coral, Fla.	66
6.	Coral Springs, Fla.	119	19.	Boston	62
7.	Miramar, Fla.	100	20.	Tamarac, Fla.	60
8.	St. Petersburg, Fla.	91	21.	Virginia Beach, Va.	58
9.	Davie, Fla.	90	22.	Tampa, Fla.	57
10.	Miami Beach, Fla.	87	23.	Fountainebleau, Fla.	56
11.	Charleston, S.C.	83	24.	Margate, Fla.	53
12.	Pompano Beach, Fla.	80	25.	Kendale Lakes, Fla.	51
13.	Sunrise, Fla.	79			

CLIMATE  CENTRAL

So, it's not just a domestic danger, but a world one. You'll notice that New York City stands out among the world's most endangered. Hey, isn't that where Wall Street is located?

And speaking of Wall Street, many institutions throughout the globe have divested themselves of

fossil fuel enterprises. My website has a page dedicated to that subject, entitled [Green Investing](#). You can make an impact by following some of the guidelines on that page.

### Summing It All Up

Although the climate has been changing since prehistoric times, back then humankind played no role in those changes. As time moved along, populations increased slowly, as industrialization had not yet evolved.

Skip ahead to the mid-19th century where populations increased dramatically, and the industrial revolution begins. For this to happen, great amounts of energy were required, at levels heretofore unseen. Whale oil was not going to provide that energy. Renewable energy was not even a glimmer in the eyes of the era's great scientists. Fossil fuel burning was the only answer.

Since that time, an ever-expanding human population has been greatly responsible for the changes, particularly the warming of Mother Earth. We are now in an epoch called the anthropocene, where humankind is clearly responsible for the earth's condition

To add to the planet's woes, fossil fuel interests had to enlist the support of government, to carry out their agenda. The health of the planet and its population played second fiddle. And that is what led to a crisis that would pale any epidemic by comparison.

There is no vaccine to fight climate change. And this is why the scientific community is calling a crisis.