

Climate change can't go on unchecked

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A recent letter writer's excellent oped urged us to heed the Pope on climate change. She quoted a passage of his encyclical - highlighting how politicians resist change so the public must push them on climate action. Meeker is optimistic that the public can move Congress to pass climate legislation. We need her optimism!

The Pope warned that some people only care about short term profits and ignore environmental needs. Their reasoning - that protecting the environment hurts the economy - is false: we learned last week that New England's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has been economically beneficial for all participating states, and has created tens of thousands of jobs in the last 5 or 6 years. Pessimistic politicians harp on renewable energy standards and carbon pricing hurting our economy and killing jobs because politicians just resist change. Optimists know that real life examples demonstrate that cutting emissions is good for our economy.

The Pope also urged us to create a society that gives people meaningful work. Another optimistic statement! Let's not just work as frackers, producing harmful fuels, dealing with wastewater, and disposing of radioactive sediment that come up in the process. Let's retrain frackers and miners for meaningful clean energy jobs.

The Pope said "What is the purpose of our life in this world? ... It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn."

By not hiding behind economics arguments, or justice to future generations arguments, or health arguments, the Pope offers a most optimistic reason for fighting climate change - we each need to know we used our time well and were mindful of the greater good.

Please contact Citizens' Climate Lobby for more information about how to be optimistic about citizens making government work for us, fight climate change, create meaningful work in a growing economy, and ensure none of us have regrets that, during our lives, we let climate change go unchecked.

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