

# Voters, lawmakers must put climate first

Re: [“Climate change poses ethical and justice problems”](#) (Rabble Rouser, May 2)

The writer focused on a narrow group of ethical and justice issues underlying our obligation to deal with climate change (mostly centered on developed nations versus undeveloped nations). He offered little discussion of intergenerational justice, our responsibility to protect other species and even the ethical-justice issues between different business sectors and different regions.

For example, utility companies and oil and gas producers care only about their short-term profits. Yet continuing reliance on coal, oil and methane-based natural gas causes long-term harm to tourist industries (like winter sports industries), fishing businesses, coastal real estate and even New England’s iconic maple syrup production.

Furthermore, we’re obligated to protect public health from the harmful effects of emissions — asthma, other lung diseases, cancers and cardiac complications. Estimates from a Massachusetts Institute of Technology study suggest that every dollar spent on a market-based emissions program (like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) recoups 10 times its cost in medical savings.

The writer also skipped the ethical responsibility of members of Congress to set aside personal concerns (whether fundraising, job tenure, local pet issues or party pressure), and instead heed our best American professional scientific organizations rather than favor advice from individual outliers.

When the vast majority of scientists agree that the risk of extreme harm is too high, ethics require heeding their warnings.

Until Congress addresses climate change, voters have an ethical obligation to make climate their top voting priority. Vote climate for ethical reasons and, who knows, the life you save may be your own.

Rabbi Judy Weiss  
Brookline, Massachusetts

[LINK](#)