

We do know why the globe is warming and how to stop it

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I was delighted to read that Wade Gilley supports action to cope with rising seas and to protect residents ("Global climate change is coming and it is time to start preparing," Jan. 18 commentary).

But I was sorry that he isn't sure what causes climate change, and isn't sure the U.S. can do anything about it even if scientists prove it's caused by carbon emissions.

Rising seas and rising temperatures with no known cause and no way to stop it. What an upsetting message for readers.

To make matters worse, I'll add that if it's caused by carbon emissions and we don't limit emissions soon, scientists are certain that warming won't stabilize at some warmer temperature. Feedback loops will kick in and warming will spin out of control, reaching levels humans cannot endure. Sea levels could rise more than 200 feet. How can Virginia cope with that?

As a rabbi, I object to Gilley's presentation of the facts and his fatalism. Scientists do know that our current warming is caused by humanity's use of fossil fuels. Scientists know global warming is caused by fossil fuel emissions with as much certainty as doctors know smoking causes cancer, lung disease and heart disease. Climate science passed the point of certainty, ethically requiring emissions reductions. It's important to maintain hope and refrain from fatalism: Of course we can do something about global carbon emissions; we're the U.S.

I urge Gilley and all readers to join Citizens' Climate Lobby, an organization of volunteers lobbying Congress for legislation to stabilize the climate. CCL knows the best policy for limiting emissions and preventing runaway global warming. We know it can be done without hardship. We know that once Congress has passed well-designed climate legislation, the world will follow our lead.

Imagine if today had arrived and scientists didn't know as much as they know. We wouldn't even know we are in hot water.

As the psalmist said, "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us exult and rejoice on it."

Give thanks that there is a way, and start helping.

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