PeakTraffic.org

a legal strategy to cancel trillion dollar highway plans and prepare for post peak travel
Whether you focus on Peak Energy, Climate Chaos or what is euphemistically called the “Great Recession,” each of these aspects of reaching the limits to growth mandate an end to highway expansion. We cannot afford to build more roads when we cannot maintain what we already have. The transition from cheap, abundant oil to expensive, hard to get oil is reducing the amount that people drive and damaging the economic system that requires endless growth to function. Peak Energy is starting to reduce the physical ability to grow traffic levels, regardless of economic circumstances. Burning fossil fuels pollutes the thin film of the atmosphere, with health consequences and environmental impacts, including global warming. Ecology, energy and money are interconnected and inseparable, and each require a holistic integration with the others to address any of them. Energy depletion is not merely about personal transportation. Driving less will be uncomfortable, but eating less would be far more difficult. Most food eaten in the US crosses time zones, some travels across international borders. As fossil fuels decline we need to grow food where it is eaten. Relocalizing food production, growing food in cities, community gardens, suburban “food not lawn” efforts, and protection of farmland from asphalt and concrete are all needed to cope with oil depletion.

George H.W. Bush’s highway law - the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) - requires Federal aid highway plans to be designed for traffic conditions two decades in the future, not current traffic congestion. It’s anyone’s guess what energy (and therefore, traffic) levels will be in the 2030s, but under any physically possible scenario the flow rates of petroleum will be lower, since conventional fossil fuels have peaked globally. There will be oil extraction in the 2030s but less than current flow rates. Future fuels will be the dirtier, more expensive, difficult to extract “bottom of the barrel” supplies. Electric cars, public transit, car sharing, and relocalization could mitigate these impacts but not prevent them. It takes fossil fuels and minerals to make electric cars and repave roads.

Transportation planning needs to focus on maintaining the enormous road networks already built, not expanding them further for travel demand that will not materialize on the energy downslope. Investments euphemistically called “modernization” should be dedicated toward train service, not super wide highways.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) mandates a “Supplemental” Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared if there are “new circumstances” not anticipated when the scoping process was conducted. Surely reaching the global peak of petroleum production is relevant for a transportation project allegedly designed for travel long past the peak.

If the Federal Highway Administration included Peak Energy in environmental analyses, this would be a seismic shift in transportation planning across the United States. Plans need to consider energy depletion and the limits to growth on a finite planet.

There are several ways this shift could happen: a successful Federal lawsuit forces FHWA to include Peak Energy, the start of gasoline rationing (delayed by fracking and tar sands mining) forces transportation planners to consider alternatives, or a change in national policies.

Peak Energy and Peak Vehicle Miles Traveled are “new circumstances” relevant for proposed transportation projects.

Council on Environmental Quality regulations
40 CFR 1502.9:
Draft, final and supplemental statements.
(c) Agencies:
(1) Changes to the proposed action would result in significant environmental impacts that were not evaluated in the EIS; or
(2) There are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.

Federal Highway Administration regulations
23 CFR 771.130:
Supplemental environmental impact statements.
(a) A draft EIS, final EIS, or supplemental EIS may be supplemented at any time. An EIS shall be supplemented whenever the Administration determines that:
(1) Changes to the proposed action would result in significant environmental impacts that were not evaluated in the EIS; or
(2) New information or circumstances relevant to environmental concerns and bearings on the proposed action or its impacts would result in significant environmental impacts not evaluated in the EIS.

"These forty million [poor] people are invisible because America is so affluent, so rich; because our expressways carry us away from the ghetto, we don't see the poor."
— Martin Luther King, “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution,” March 31, 1968
Saving Oil in a Hurry is from an International Energy Agency conference in 2005. This chart shows a variety of policies that could quickly reduce oil consumption in the event of urgent need. The specific reason was left vague but could include depletion of oil fields, policies to address climate change and of course, war that disrupts production.

Some policies would be more effective in some places than others. Making public transit free would have more impact in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Europe than in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Conversely, car pooling would help more in the latter countries than in the former.

The late activist Jan Lundberg, who left his family’s oil consultancy to campaign against car culture, said the New York Times once offered to publish an op-ed by him but only if he focused on increasing tire pressure to make cars more efficient. He declined their offer. Among Jan’s projects were the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium, Culture Change and the Sail Transport Network.

About a decade ago I shared this graphic with the Climate and Energy staffperson for the City of Eugene. He was literate about the risks Peak Oil poses to everything and said this graphic was extremely helpful. I asked what he planned to do with it, would he share it with his colleagues planning Eugene’s future? He replied that he would keep it to his files, waiting for a time when sharing it would be better received. Unfortunately, advance planning for crisis works better than waiting for chaos.

Being in less of a hurry would save oil in a hurry.
two responses to resource depletion

RATIONING imposed by military force
PERMACULTURE to shift society toward sustainability
Robert Moses's advice for Portland

Portland highway plan

Western Bypass

Mt Hood Fwy

Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality: LUTRAQ alternative stopped Western Bypass
Section 1c. Financing redevelopment and urban renewal projects. The Legislative Assembly may provide that the ad valorem taxes levied by any taxing unit, in which is located all or part of an area included in a redevelopment or urban renewal project, may be divided so that the taxes levied against any increase in the assessed value, as defined by law, of property in such area obtaining after the effective date of the ordinance or resolution approving the redevelopment or urban renewal plan for such area, may pay any indebtedness incurred for the redevelopment or urban renewal project. The legislature may enact such laws as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. [Created through S.B.R. 74, 1995, and adopted by the people Nov. 8, 1980. Amendment proposed by H.J.R. 35, 1997, and adopted by the people May 20, 1997.]

Section 2. Legislature to provide revenue to pay current state expenses and interstate highway projects. The legislature shall provide for raising revenue sufficiently to defray the expenses of the state for each fiscal year, and also a sufficient sum to pay the interest on the State debt, if there be any.


Section 3. Tax imposed only by law; statement of purpose. No tax shall be levied except in accordance with law. Every law imposing a tax shall state distinctly the purpose to which the revenue shall be applied. [Created through S.B.R. 7, 1979, and adopted by the people May 20, 1980 (this section and section 3a adopted in lieu of former section 3 of this Article).]

Section 3a. Use of revenue from taxes on motor vehicle use and fuel: legislative review of allocation of taxes between vehicle classes. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, revenue from the following shall be used exclusively for the construction, reconstruction, improvement, repair, maintenance, operation and use of public highways, roads, streets and roadside rest areas in this state:

(a) Any tax levied on, with respect to or measured by the extraction, production, storage, use, sale, distribution or receipt of oil or natural gas, or the ownership thereof, shall not be levied at a rate that is greater than six percent of the market value of all oil and natural gas produced or salvaged from the earth or water of this state as and when owned or produced. This section does not apply to any Oregon's Constitution prohibits using gas taxes for public transit. It has long been a goal of some transit advocates to use some gas tax funds, which would also benefit motorists by encouraging those some to take transit (which could reduce traffic congestion, especially for those would still drive). Increases in the price of petroleum make gas taxes even more difficult to enact. (a) May also be used for the cost of administration and any refunds or credits authorized by law.

(b) May also be used for the retirement of bonds for which such revenues have been pledged.

(c) If from levies under paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of this section on campers, motor homes, travel trailers, snowmobiles, or like vehicles, may also be used for the acquisition, development, maintenance or care of parks or recreation areas.

(d) If from levies under paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of this section on campers, motor homes, travel trailers, snowmobiles, or like vehicles, may also be used for the acquisition, development, maintenance or care of parks or recreation areas.

Figure 31. Mt. Hood Freeway alternatives, Skidmore-Owings and Merrill Report, 1972

(Source: ODOT GF)
I-5 widening: 12 lane bridge up to 16 lanes in Vancouver legally approved but unfunded

In 2013, the Oregon House voted 45-11 in favor of $450 million toward the $4 billion CRC and the State Senate voted 18-11 in favor. Only two Democrats in the House and one in the Senate voted against. Washington legislators want the road but not the light rail to Vancouver, so they did not appropriate anything. The environmentalist lawsuit was unsuccessful. It discussed impacts to salmon in the river more than highway law violations.
Washington Commerce Corridor
NAFTA Superhighway: Vancouver to Vancouver would resemble Trans Texas Corridor proposal withdrawn for now, but shows long term thinking

Trans-Texas Corridor plan
This artist rendering released by TxDOT in 2002 showed the Trans-Texas Corridor as a 1,200-foot-wide mix of roads, railways and utilities. The image, as well as the intent behind it, stoked political opposition that has engulfed the transportation concept since shortly after Gov. Rick Perry introduced it. On Tuesday, Perry and TxDOT said that the name is no more and that the corridor width would be no more than 600 feet.

Source: Texas Department of Transportation
The 1991 federal transportation law “ISTEA” created a list of “Congressional High Priority Corridors” which are the projects that Congress loves the most (they are a small subset of overall highway plans). The numbers for the corridors are not route numbers, they are the numbering from the law’s list of projects.

Some of these projects are new interstate highways. Some are new limited access roads but not formally called “interstates” for bureaucratic reasons. Some are upgrades, converting arterials (rural or urban) to divided highways, not necessarily built to interstate standards.
Most people have now heard of the concept of Peak Oil, but there is still not much public awareness of the implication and virtually no official response to the crisis. Peak Oil does not mean that the oil has run out, it merely is the point where oil extraction rates can no longer be increased no matter how much effort is expended. The end of the growth of fossil fuel use has tremendous implications for every aspect of civilization - beyond the scope of this short presentation - but it is safe to say that how we manage the downslope of petroleum is the most critical task facing our species. How will we use the rest of the oil - to help prepare future generations for living without any oil, or to pretend that business as usual will remain possible. Technological changes for efficiency will be useful, but they will not be sufficient to cope with the scale of these problems.

The Peak Oil curve mirrors the rise of Vehicle Miles Travelled on our highways, even showing temporary decreases after the 1973 Saudi oil embargo and the 1979 Iranian revolution. But the current leveling off of traffic levels is a permanent condition, since on the downslope of oil production there will be less energy available for transportation, and a diminished economy capable of sustaining this level of activity. Even a more rapid introduction of hyper efficient cars or electric vehicles will merely change the slope of the Peak Traffic downslope, since it takes a long time to convert existing infrastructure, it takes a lot of energy to make the alternative technologies, and we should have done this decades ago for the transition to be painless.
USA VMT January 1970 - November 2021

USA Vehicle Miles Traveled: monthly

the real heartbeat of America
Covid closures caused a transport heart attack dress rehearsal for resource depletion

summertime driving is more than wintertime
data: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/travel_monitoring/tvt.cfm
chart: Mark Robinowitz PeakChoice.org PeakTraffic.org
Covid closures cut carbon more than climate activism.
Covid closures cut carbon more than climate activism.
monthly USA aviation passengers

peak airplane travel - January 2020 - 80.2 million

chart: PeakChoice.org

data: www.bts.dot.gov/newsroom/september-2021-us-airline-traffic-data
peak conventional domestic oil 1970

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration
fracked oil is two thirds of domestic oil production
fracked wells deplete faster than conventional wells

Sources: EIA derived from state administrative data collected by Enverus. Data are through November 2021 and represent EIA’s official tight oil estimates, but are not survey data. State abbreviations indicate primary state(s).
Note: Improvements to play identification methods have altered production volumes between various plays.
ALASKA PIPELINE: PEAK & DECLINE

nearing low flow shutdown threshold for Arctic winter operations
extraction is now less in summer to reserve capacity for winter

drilling “ANWR” might retrieve another billion barrels, maybe more,
to offset (temporarily) decline of Prudhoe Bay

chart: www.PeakChoice.org/peak-alaska-pipeline.html
data: www.alyeska-pipe.com/historic-throughput/
Nearly all petroleum products used in Oregon and Washington are processed at the five refineries in Puget Sound. If you drive a car, an SUV, ride a bus, train or plane, or shop in a grocery store that uses food delivery trucks, you are dependent on the Alaska Pipeline.

Is there a “Plan B” when the Pipeline shuts down due to low flow? Are proposals for oil trains from North Dakota to Cascadia’s ports a cover story for using fracked oil and tar sands to prop up our regional economy after Alaska’s energy supplies are done? (Fracking is also a temporary, toxic fix since fracked wells deplete faster than conventional wells.) Oregon and Washington do not have ANY oil supplies since we have the wrong geology to make petroleum traps.
This sign showing $6 per gallon after Katrina was at a Georgia gas station.

Peak Oil is not a scam from the oil companies to raise prices, although they are certainly taking advantage of Peak Oil to transfer vast amounts of wealth into their greedy pockets. If the United States becomes an authentic democracy, we could nationalize the oil companies and use the profits to help the whole society prepare for Peak Oil. Oil profits could be redirected to public transit, insulating homes and renewable energy systems. This would not be “socialism” but changing what is produced, not just who owns the means of production.
Dick Cheney said the American Way of Life is not negotiable.
Tar Sands
eating the Earth for cars

Keystone XL
may be superfluous

Keystone mainline
opened in 2014
with little publicity
Table 7.1 Electricity Overview

Peak Electricity all 50 states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Billion Kilowatthours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2007 peak before fracking

2018 peak with fracked gas

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration
The North American Electric Reliability Council is a consortium of electric utilities that operate three major grids in the USA: west, east and Texas. No man is an island and no utility is an island, either. Electric grids balance generation and demand in real time, constantly, every day. A utility that has local hydropower is still interconnected with a broader grid and keeping all of the uses powered, non stop, requires careful attention to ensuring generation all over the country with a variety of energy sources.

The Pacific Northwest has had an electricity exchange with California for decades. California’s electric demand is greatest during summer heat waves (to power the air conditioners), Cascadia’s peak use has been the coldest times of winter (electric heaters). This coincides with excess generation capacities with the other region - when snowmelt in the warm months provides the most capacity for Columbia River dams that is when California needs the extra power. California has extra generation capacity in the winter when the air conditioners are not on so their utilities generate more to send north to Oregon and Washington heaters. Since California’s top energy source for generating electricity is natural gas, this further ensures that “electric only” uses in Cascadia are totally dependent on gas.

The largest energy source for the western grid is burning unnatural gas, as it is for the other two major grids.
Bonneville Power Administration is a federal agency that sells electricity from the Columbia River dams and the Columbia Generating Station nuclear power reactor at Hanford. This chart shows the first few days of fall in September 2019. A front passed through the region, generating lots of wind power. After it passed, the wind became calmer and the power was more intermittent - green line. In response, BPA increased water flows through the dams - blue line - to keep the total generation - red line - able to meet demand. The two flat lines represent nuclear in purple / blue and biomass (burning trees) in brown. BPA is a subset of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council western power grid, but is regionally significant in its role in keeping the grid balanced (too little generation and the network would have voltage drops and brown outs).

A problem with calls for “100% clean” electricity is the clean sources - solar and wind - are variable. Sometimes there is a lot of sunlight and sometimes there is a lot of wind, but not always. When I first learned how to use solar electric panels in 1990 the primary lesson was to adapt one’s demands to what was available. This lesson also applies at the societal level, but controlling our use is anathema in our culture. Digging up coal, uranium, natural gas forces Nature to provide on demand, non stop, without consideration of consequences.

Living with solar panels, especially in the winter, has been far more educational than reading technical reports and political polemics. Even powering small things like flashlights or radios solely with solar is a tremendous teaching tool.

Bottom line: using solar energy directly (electric, hot water) and indirectly (wind, firewood) is awesome but cannot sustain the unsustainable. The Earth is abundant and finite. Entropy is not a good idea, it’s the law.
In 2020 the Boardman, Oregon coal powered generator closed. No more coal is burned for electricity in Oregon, but we are connected electrically to coal burners on the rest of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council western power grid.

Nat. gas is the largest energy source for WECC, which includes B.C., Alberta, Pacific Northwest, California, Arizona, Tijuana, Great Basin, Rocky Mountains.

2020 wind power increased about a quarter more than 2019. Natural gas dipped slightly. Gas and wind have similar amounts of installed capacity but gas generates much more power because it is constant (baseload) and wind is variable.

In 2020, solar generated more megawatt hours than biomass for the first time.

Washington State generates more hydroelectricity than Oregon.

Chart: Mark Robinowitz PeakChoice.org

Data: https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/browser/#/topic/0?agg=2,0,1&fuel=vvvu&geo=000000000002&sec=g&req=A&start=2001&end=2019&ctype=linechart&type=pin&type=s&pin=&rse=0&maptype=0
The main increase in the use of unnatural gas in the US in recent decades has been baseload for electric grids. Nat. gas generators are easier to approve under the Clean Air Act than coal burners (and coal is in permanent geologic decline, a physical fact obscured by discussion of its more obvious pollution problems). However, gas supplies were never sized to both power electricity and heat cold cities in the winter. Conventional gas decline has been mitigated by the sudden, sharp increase in fracked gas since 2008, but fracked gas is not only more toxic than conventional gas wells, it’s also more expensive and fracked wells rise and fall faster than conventional drilling.

Campaigns to restrict nat. gas use in favor of more electricity ignore that gas is a primary power source for electricity. Here in Oregon, there has been a huge increase in nat. gas combustion east of the Cascades in Klamath Falls and Boardman, hard to notice in the liberal cities of Portland and Eugene, but gas is a key source of power. Burning that gas and sending the electrons over the Cascade mountains might be less efficient than just burning the fuel closer to where the energy is wanted. Using less energy, including less electricity, is usually belittled.
USA conventional unnatural gas peaked 1973
fracking postponed rationing

chart: PeakChoice.org
data: www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng_prod_sum_dc_NUS_mmcf_a.htm

fracked gas was 8% of supply in 2007, in 2020 it was 70%
2017 fracked gas (19.927 trillion) surpassed 1973 conventional gas peak (19.371 trillion)
2017 conventional gas and from oil wells combined (12.873 trillion), 1957 level (12.9 trillion)
Grading on a Curve

Enviro 'champs' ignoring the biggest issues

ARTICLE | FEBRUARY 13, 2014 | BY MARK ROBINOWITZ

On Nov. 27, EW's Slant profiled the "Environmental Scorecard" of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. EW drew attention to "the relatively high scores racked up by state reps and senators in our part of the valley." Unfortunately, OLCV was grading on a curve to make Democrats in Salem look better than they are.

One of the most important votes of the 2013 session, not included in OLCV's scorecard, was to appropriate $450 million toward the Columbia River Crossing (CRC), a $3 billion to $4 billion dollar boondoggle that would widen I-5 to 16 lanes north of the bridge. The Oregon House voted 45-11 in favor and the Senate voted 18-11 in favor. Only two Democrats in the House and one in the Senate voted "no."

EW highlighted Rep. John Lively's 94 percent OLCV rating, but did not mention his vote for the CRC nor his previous promotion of bigger roads while working for ODOT.

OLCV's website cites 10 state reps as environmental champions, but only one of those 10 voted against the CRC. Designating highway expansion supporters as "environmental leaders" suggests political partisanship has become more important than environmental protection.

The only legislator representing Lane County who was against CRC was Rep. Bruce Hanna of Roseburg, a Republican. Some Republicans expressed dislike of the CRC, but none of them voted against the CRC. Designating highway expansion supporters as "environmental leaders" suggests political partisanship has become more important than environmental protection.

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The most important question facing humanity is how we respond to the interconnected crises of Peaked Energy, Climate Chaos, overpopulation, overconsumption and resource conflicts as we pass the limits to growth on a round, finite planet.

These crises resemble the parable of the blind men touching an elephant. Each observer correctly describes a part of the elephant, but none have a holistic understanding. Peaked Energy and Climate Change are two facets of ecological overshoot, and neither can be mitigated without the other.

Peaked and Climate are interconnected

Focusing on energy shortage while ignoring ecology led to the false solutions of offshore drilling, fracking, tar sands, liquid natural gas, biomass electricity, mountaintop removal, and nuclear power. Focusing only on “carbon” while ignoring energy limits is one of the reasons for the political backlash against climate change awareness. Environmental groups frame these concerns as we should reduce energy consumption instead of we will reduce use because we cannot burn fuel that does not exist.

Framing the question as how we will use the remaining fossil fuels could bypass climate denial. We will reduce our “carbon footprint” whether we want to or not, since the oil, coal and unnatural gas will be mostly depleted before 2050, when our footprints are supposed to be much smaller. Reducing use by 2050 is code for depletion by 2050. Our exponential growth economy has hit the end of growth of resource consumption, imposed by nature. Building lots of wind turbines, railroads and relocating agriculture would require reallocating resources used for endless warfare and wasteful consumerism. After Peak Everything there will be fewer resources available for “transition.” We need triage on a planetary scale for the remaining fossil fuels and minerals.

David Holmgren, co-originator of permaculture, is author of “Future Scenarios: How Communities can adapt to Peak Oil and Climate Change.”

www.futurescenarios.org

“Economic recession is the only proven mechanism for a rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions ... most of the proposals for mitigation from Kyoto to the feverish efforts to construct post Kyoto solutions have been framed in ignorance of Peak Oil. As Richard Heinberg has argued recently, proposals to cap carbon emissions annually, and allowing them to be traded, rely on the rights to pollute being scarce relative to the availability of the fuel. Actual scarcity of fuel may make such schemes irrelevant.”

Living on our current solar budget would power a smaller, steady state economy. We will live on our solar budget as the oil, unnatural gas and coal deplete. Future generations need us to choose wisely and use remaining fossil fuels for relocation and power down.

MARK ROBINOWITZ • PEAK CHOICE: COOPERATION OR COLLAPSE • WWW.PEEKCHOICE.ORG
1. climate and peak denial: blaming environmentalists for fossil energy decline

The Republican Party is the epicenter of denial that human caused climate change is happening. A potential antidote could be energy literacy — awareness that fossil fuels are finite and depleted.

Climate denial is partly rooted in the fact that most people like the benefits of fossil fuels, including unprecedented transport of ourselves, moving stuff out of the world (i.e. heating in cold climates, high tech communication, advanced medicine, and other concentrated energy dependent activities. These are easier done with scarce relative to the availability of the fuel. Sometimes people don’t realize this even though there is no way to detoxify nuclear waste.

We are approaching the cliff of energy descent, temporarily postponed by fracking, tar sands, offshore drilling and other extreme extraction. As conventional oil and gas contracts out or runs dry we will enter the era of permanent shortages, which could trigger energy rationing. These consequences may be intensely unpopular. Mitigating the likely backlash will probably require practical responses more than protest of energy companies.

Societies unable to meet basic needs seek scapegoats to blame — Germany after the Great Depression is a sobering example.

2. governments quietly consider climate & peak a permanent state of emergency

Climate movements are calling for governments to declare “climate emergency.” These demands fail to recognize that elites have been preparing for disaster but not in compassionate ways. In private, governments, corporate leaders, military consider climate chaos, peak everything and other aspects of ecological overshoot to be a permanent state of emergency. The US military and G8 have studied the implications for decades: resource wars and refugee emergencies.

One empirical study in Syria has many causes, including extreme drought that disrupted food production, a domestic peak oil which reduced governmental budgets that paid for social programs. These stressed worsened existing problems.

Climate, peak, overconsumption and overpopulation threaten every aspect of industrialized societies, including growth based fiat money and food supplies. The billionaire class and governments encourage distractions and division while building leaky lifeboats for themselves. We could have converted militarism to global cooperation decades ago but ignored the warnings. Brace for impact and help your neighbors.

recommended reads:

Peak Fascism: Peak Energy, Climate Chaos, Civil Liberties www.olemprire.us/peak-fascism.html

Peak Pentagon bracing for public dissent over climate and energy shocks: NSA Prism is motivated in part by fears that environmentally-linked disasters could spur anti-government activism by Nathez Ahmed, Friday 14 June 2013

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/earth-insight/2013/jun/14/climate-change-energy-shocks-nsa-prism

climate change is real

The Democratic Party admits climate change is real and wants a techno-fix approach to power more “green.” I voluntarily scaling back the American Way of Life (AWOL) is not considered.

Rep. Ocasio-Cortez says the “Green New Deal” should provide new nuclear power reactors. Gee, Inoke, briefly the “climate” candidate for President, also wants more nukes. Data For Progress (working with 350.org and Sunrise Movement) says nuclear is “clean” even though there is no way to detoxify nuclear waste.

Radioactive decay can take a very long time to subside. Demands promote electric cars while pushing plans for a trillion dollars worth of expanded highways. Making electric cars and building roads requires fossil fuels which are essential for ore and road building. Electric cars and public transit and trains gets only token mention. Relocalization producing and living locally would prevent pollution.

1. techno-fixes: electric cars, carbon credits, nuclear powered green growth

Peak Money: a permanent change

Most official “climate plans” include carbon offsets and credits to supposedly achieve net zero. These are three resources that refute this greenwashing:

“Cheat Neutral” (hilarious parody)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pA6FSy6EKrM

“The Story of Cap and Trade”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=viP4gFLY6EHM

“FutureScenario: How Communities Can Adapt to Peak Oil & Climate Change” by David Holmgren, permaculture co-originator: propose to cap carbon emissions annually, and allowing them to be traded, rely on the rights to pollute being scarce resources that make the availability of fossil fuels the true cap.

Actual scarcity of fuel may make such schemes irrelevant. “FutureScenarios.org

100% solar & wind instead of fossil fuels

Grassroots Democrats and most environmental groups want “solar and wind” instead of fossil fuels. They claim this is a political choice that could be achieved with protests, elections, lawsuits, investments. The reason these fossil fuels is not corporate greed.

Fossil fuels are more concentrated than living on our solar budget, with a much greater Energy Return on Energy Investment (EROEI) than the alternatives.

The goal of “decarbonization by 2050” is a sly way to hint that fossil fuels will be mostly depleted by then. We will need much less whether we want to or not.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently warned we have 12 years to fix the climate, which emitted 990 UN Environmental Program warning that the 1990s were the decade of decision and Al Gore’s 2006 warning we had a decade.

Just because someone says they are concerned about climate does not mean they are telling the truth.

Climate and peak are interconnected crises that cannot be addressed isolated from the others. Each makes the other harder to solve.

Focus on climate while ignoring peak enabled official greenwashing and the backlash of climate denial. Focus on climate while ignoring peak led to unconventional extraction (fracking, tar sands), nuclear power, GMO corn ethanol and other toxic practices.

Confronting climate concerns with the math of fossil fuel depletion and density, we might better understand the crises. Seeking to sustain the unsustainable makes it less likely we will avert the worst case scenarios. A solar powered society could be ecological and sustainable, smaller, steady state economy — not net energy growth on an abundant, round, finite planet.

I have used solar panels since 1990 — they are great but can’t replace our “current” consumption.

Our challenge is not whether to phase out fossil fuels, but how we can adapt to inevitable energy depletion with minimal social chaos.

details:

www.peakchoice.org/peak-money.html

Peak Money: a permanent change
we are past limits to growth, not a cyclical recession

Some of the media, government elites, and the financial world knew the 2008 financial crash was imminent but feigned surprise in public while planning their exit strategies and wargaming how to manage and manipulate the crisis to protect their power (not just more profits). The financial meltdown is not a cyclical recession, it is a permanent economic shift. The End of Growth transcends ideologies and partisan politics.

Even if we convert transnational corporations into democratic, locally owned cooperatives, we are in overshoot, beyond Earth's carrying capacity. Can we move beyond Peak Denial and Blame to equitably share the shrinking economic pie?

“This is not so much financial bad weather as financial climate change” — James Howard Kunstler

“Communism forgets that life is individual. Capitalism forgets that life is social, and the kingdom of brotherhood is found neither in the thesis of communism nor the antithesis of capitalism but in a higher synthesis that combines the truths of both. Now, when I say question the whole society, it means ultimately coming to see that the problems of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together.” — Martin Luther King, “Where do we go from here?” August 16, 1967  www.jfkmlkrfk.com

energy and money

- “the recession that will not end in our lifetime”
  www.PeakChoice.org/peak-money.html
  peakchoice.org/audiointerview-mark-robinowitz.mp3
- Richard Heinberg, Post Carbon Institute
  *The End of Growth* www.postcarbon.org
- Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy www.steadystate.org
- Gail Tverberg, OurFiniteWorld.com

steady state economics for an ecological society

The dominant paradigm teaches money is the most important value, energy conservation and ecological sanity are nice if we can afford them.

Most of the environmental movement has embraced the concept of the Triple Bottom Line, which suggests that the economy needs to consider ecology and social justice issues. While it is good to factor these into economic decisions, the deeper truth is the environment makes the economy possible. Energy creates money, not the other way around. There are no jobs on a dead planet.

It is probably not a coincidence that many of the political voices calling attention to the problems of fiat currency, the Federal Reserve and other structural problems rarely mention the underlying ecological limits. Worse, some of them seem fixated on Jewish bankers who allegedly run the world.

We need to weave together social justice advocacy with understanding of how fiat money is created now that we have reached the limits to growth on a round, abundant, finite planet.

“This awareness of Climate Change by the media and general public is obviously running well ahead of awareness about Peak Oil, but there are interesting differences in this general pattern when we look more closely at those involved in the money and energy industries. Many of those involved in money and markets have begun to rally around Climate Change as an urgent problem that can be turned into another opportunity for economic growth (of a green economy). These same people have tended to resist even using the term Peak Oil, let alone acknowledging its imminent occurrence. Perhaps this denial comes from an intuitive understanding that once markets understand that future growth is not possible, then it’s game over for our fiat system of debt-based money.” — David Holmgren, co-originator of permaculture

“Money vs. Fossil energy: the battle to control the world” www.holmgren.com.au
David Holmgren, co-originator of permaculture, is author of *Future Scenarios: How Communities can adapt to Peak Oil and Climate Change*. [www.FutureScenarios.org](http://www.FutureScenarios.org)

“The simultaneous onset of climate change and the peaking of global oil supply represent unprecedented challenges for human civilization.

“Global oil peak has the potential to shake if not destroy the foundations of global industrial economy and culture. Climate change has the potential to rearrange the biosphere more radically than the last ice age. Each limits the effective options for responses to the other.

“The strategies for mitigating the adverse effects and/or adapting to the consequences of Climate Change have mostly been considered and discussed in isolation from those relevant to Peak Oil. While awareness of Peak Oil, or at least energy crisis, is increasing, understanding of how these two problems might interact to generate quite different futures, is still at an early state.

“FutureScenarios.org presents an integrated approach to understanding the potential interaction between Climate Change and Peak Oil using a scenario planning model. In the process I introduce permaculture as a design system specifically evolved over the last 30 years to creatively respond to futures that involve progressively less and less available energy.”

“Economic recession is the only proven mechanism for a rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions... most of the proposals for mitigation from Kyoto to the feverish efforts to construct post Kyoto solutions have been framed in ignorance of Peak Oil. As Richard Heinberg has argued recently, proposals to cap carbon emissions annually, and allowing them to be traded, rely on the rights to pollute being scarce relative to the availability of the fuel. Actual scarcity of fuel may make such schemes irrelevant.”

— Future Scenarios, May 2008

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Limits to Growth - 1972
Study predicted permanent resource crisis after the turn of the century, with peak pollution coming after peak resource use. Fracking and tar sands confirm this.