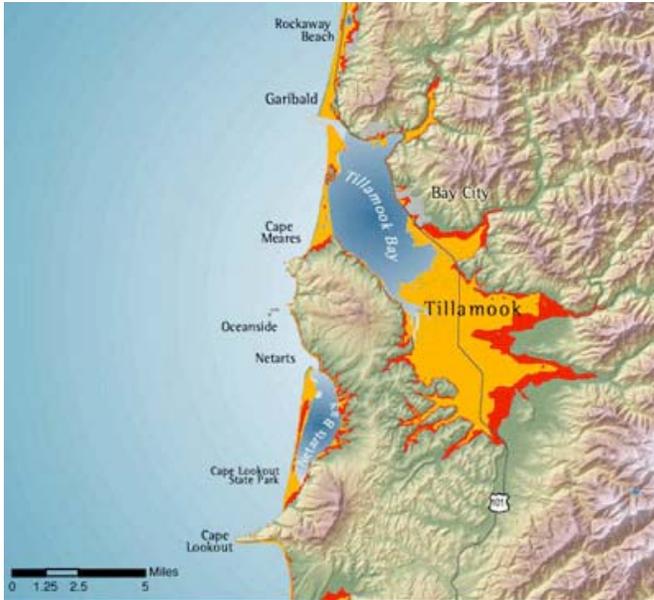


# GLOBAL WARMING: TAKING REAL ACTION

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The picture with global warming has changed. The timeline has shrunk, the magnitude of impacts grown. The political climate has altered dramatically. Impacts have already begun.

Over 25% of arctic sea ice has melted away over the last 2 years. Rivers of meltwater are pouring off of glaciers, and huge ice shelves in Antarctica have broken off. The Oregon Coast has suffered three "500 year" storms in the last 10

years. Tornadoes and hurricanes are appearing in unprecedented strength. The insured and uninsured property loss and loss of work from the December 4, 2007 storm on the Oregon and Washington coasts was over \$300 million.

Sea level areas are potentially the hardest hit – from storms, erosion, and inundation. The expected impacts on the Oregon coast – if we don't act strongly and quickly – are staggering. 380,000 acres inundated, including 50-80% of the area of coastal cities. Billions of dollars of homes and businesses destroyed. Loss of a third of the entire Coast Highway, plus over 2500 miles of other roads. Loss of 500 miles of railroads, plus utilities, infrastructure, agricultural land, state parks, family livelihoods. (Go to [www.tombender.org/societyworthlivingfor/articles/ORglobalwarming.pdf](http://www.tombender.org/societyworthlivingfor/articles/ORglobalwarming.pdf) if you want more details.)



That's just us. It doesn't even consider the devastating impacts on Pacific island nations, lowland areas like Bangladesh, Myanmar, or the Netherlands, or even major seaport cities like New York, London, or New Orleans. There is a moral imperative as well as self-interest in

taking quick and substantive action.

Oregon's response is lagging far behind both the changing realities and the changing politics. A leader on energy issues in the 70s, Oregon now is still in "appoint another committee" mode while other nations like Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Germany are already taking major action. Actions that are saving money, creating market expertise, and positioning themselves for the benefits of leadership.

It may feel overwhelming that we are being hit with so many major problems at the same time. But "Peak Oil", "Global Warming", the Diving Dollar, and other problems are just different sides of the same issue. Peak Oil focuses on the spiraling financial and environmental costs of wastefully squandering our limited fossil fuel reserves. Global Warming deals with the environmental impacts of the release of that energy.

The shrinking dollar is the trade imbalance tilted by those flows of oil and payments. Oil producers are moving off of the U.S. dollar for their sales. The dollar has dropped in value compared to the Euro and other currencies. That alone accounts for much of the increased dollar price of oil.

The good news is that the right solutions have multiple benefits and a solution to one is a solution to all. The answers that reduce greenhouse gasses also reduce our demands for the more expensive remaining fossil fuels and the bills to pay for them. It's time to deal with the roots of problems, not just the symptoms. And not needing more wars to steal other people's oil is a rather big side benefit of moving quickly to efficiency and renewables.

The centerpiece of Oregon's planned approach to global warming has been "cap and trade". Don't ask me to explain it, as I can barely understand it, and anyone on the street I've talked to is totally clueless. That's a warning right there. It's too technical for people to understand. Even many advocates are unaware that the proposed cap and trade doesn't affect autos, agriculture, forestry, or natural gas - 50% of emission sources. A successful proposal needs to be understandable, or it can't be monitored or trusted.

Cap and Trade has failed in some trials, possibly succeeded in others. It depends on the details, and if we've learned anything from the Bush administration, that's something to be very leery about. It only deals with one piece of the PeakOil/GlobalWarming/DivingDollar, so it's not likely a very good answer.

Like many, I don't trust programs developed by the Bush administrations, that "monetize" emissions and depend on "market" implementation. Historically, that seems to have always ended up with profiteering, not progress. C&T requires we trust the government not to screw up or modify implementation to become another ineffective/destructive corporate profit center. Such trust seems unjustified.

Cap and Trade has no direct public involvement, education, or push for people to change. If, in contrast, we tax gas for more efficient vehicles, people get it - see the connection. It's absolutely vital that we can understand, take part, and know in our hearts that we are doing the absolute best we can to make the changes needed.

C&T also lacks fairness. Whatever mechanisms we use should not allow unwarranted windfall profits - especially by historic emitters - and must provide a fair and equitable distribution of the economic burdens of meeting emissions-reduction goals.

Proposed action levels and timelines are based on old politics and old science and are far too inadequate and too slow for what we can do and need to do. And the proposal has no teeth. It's time to take more aggressive action.

These issues are not ones we can resolve through conventional processes. Academic, or market answers won't work. I'll say it bluntly. These problems require changing our lives. The unexpected good news is that the changes in our lives are for the better, not back to the cave. We're at a hinge-point in history, and totally different values, relationships, patterns of work and living, and rewards come into play. It's an exciting time, an exciting future – if we're on the wave, not being swept into the undertow.

We stand to benefit greatly by acting quickly and decisively. The sooner we act, and get others to act, the more we lessen the direct impacts on our communities. We also get the economic and social benefits sooner, without being at the end of the line when everyone else decides to get windmills or solar panels or hybrid cars. We'll be in way ahead when things get tighter. Let's look at some exciting possibilities.

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