



## SOME TRUTHS MAY BE TRUE, HOWEVER INCONVENIENT

North Coast Citizen \* 14 Dec 2006 © Tom Bender \* <[tbender@nehalemtnet.net](mailto:tbender@nehalemtnet.net)>

The consensus is firming. The earth is warming, glaciers are melting, arctic icecaps are vanishing. A ship could have sailed to the North Pole this summer. Species are dying. Temperatures have hit record heights. More violent Katrina-like storms are likely. Sea levels are beginning to rise, with flooding of low-lying areas, even whole countries like Bangladesh, expected. Oh, dear, something else to get worried about.

Scientific studies are unanimous. Great Britain has shown the economic costs are likely to destroy a quarter of the entire global economy. Britain, California, and New York City are banding together to take action. Virgin Airways' Richard Branson has pledged \$3 billion to fight climate change over the next decade. States are suing the EPA, and automakers, for not regulating CO2 emissions that are an important part. Our own secretary of state, Bill Bradbury, is going on the road with Al Gore's film "Inconvenient Truth" to let Oregonians know what is in store for us.

If you haven't seen the film, do so. When you do, look at the comparative photos of glaciers a hundred years ago and today. Many of the new ones were taken by Nehalem's own photographer, Gary Braasch, who has crisscrossed the globe for four years finding where the old photos were taken and doing comparisons. His book, *Earth Under Fire*, is due out in June (see <[www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org](http://www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org)>).

Guess what - us Coasties are likely to see some major impacts unless we make some big changes quickly. Sea level rises of 20 feet are projected, depending on time and what changes we do or don't make. Every 10 feet of water rise erodes the shoreline back 1000 to 4000 feet. Opps! We just lost a big hunk of Manzanita, Bayside Gardens, downtown Nehalem, the Wheeler waterfront, our sewage ponds, and a bunch of dairy farms. Speculation on new oceanfront lots around the Post Office in Manzanita won't make up for what we as property owners, businesses, and taxpayers; the insurance industry, and public agencies will be losing. Should we be approving big new developments on land that already floods on the Wheeler waterfront, or should we have a moratorium until we really know what's going to happen? Should we develop property to relocate the houses that will be flooded? Should we bury our heads or do something sensible?

So . . . we've lived in a way causing results we didn't expect. No guilt in that. The issue is to get out of the hole, not to sit there pointing fingers. We can do a lot at home. Andrew

Postman, detailed in the Oct 5, 2006 New York Times, how he reduced his family's CO<sub>2</sub> impact a thousand pounds a year in less than an hour. Easy things, like turning on his computer's "sleep" mode, replacing two lightbulbs with compact fluorescents, installing a motion sensor to turn off bathroom lights, putting electronic equipment on a powerstrip so they could be really turned off at night, canceling mail-order catalogs. Want to try? Take the "Calculate Your Impact" survey on the companion Web site for the Gore movie, <[www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator](http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator)>. Or try something really crazy - work less, spend less, play more. Remember, every dollar we spend consumes energy!

It's not hard, and doesn't make our lives worse, to dramatically lower use of fossil fuels. Twenty-eight states have already adopted climate action plans. See Oregon's at <[oregon.gov/ENERGY/GBLWRM/docs/GWReport-FInal.pdf](http://oregon.gov/ENERGY/GBLWRM/docs/GWReport-FInal.pdf)> Cars have been available for 15 years using half the gas as average. Replacing regional airplane travel with fast trains saves even more.

Electricity generation accounts for 30% of emissions. We're lucky – much of our electricity is hydropower, but replacing non-hydro electricity with solar photovoltaics, and inefficient use with passive solar heating, wood heat, and solar water heating can have major effect. Already, wind energy projects are being built at four times the expected rate. Buildings take a huge hunk of energy use, but we can now build competitively-priced houses with ZERO net energy use. They put more energy back into the grid than they take out. The solutions are known.

And there are big bonuses. Our energy dollars stay at home. We save billions in energy costs, and stimulate rural economic development. There are big health benefits. And avoided costs of damages from global warming are huge - from forest fires to salmon, storm severity, flooding, loss of snowpack, and energy production.

It's time to act. Each of us, and all together, can cause huge changes. Contact your local, state, and federal representatives, and urge them to join us!