

Environmental degradation

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Environmental degradation There are a number of serious threats facing the world today, but few are more serious than the problem of global warming, climate change, and environmental degradation. We desperately need our leaders to do something to slow down this negative process. President Barack Obama campaigned for his office saying he would be one of the greenest presidents in history and would work hard to create the green economy and green jobs of tomorrow. But now, almost two years since his election, little has changed. There is still no successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol and the United States isn't doing very much to combat climate change. The government needs to take a number of drastic steps in the coming years in order to reduce our dependence on hydrocarbons, plus change the culture of America to make it generally more green. Only then will we turn back the clock on our environmental problems.

So what is to be done about this serious problem? We need governments around the world to develop policies that when implemented will slow down or stop climate change. The best policy for all of this comes in two complementary forms. The first requires us to reduce our dependence on oil. The second involves a cap and trade system to reduce emissions from harming our atmosphere. I will begin by explaining the first aspect of this policy. Americans consume huge quantities of gasoline and oil every year. They drive big cars and they consume many products that are made with petroleum products. In normal times none of this would be a problem. But with so much evidence suggesting that carbon dioxide from the burning of carbon fuels is causing the temperature of the globe to rise dramatically, something must be done. Already we can see this policy moving forward. Car

companies are producing more and more fuel-efficient vehicles and many say an electric car is right around the corner.

Another positive aspect is that with the Great Recession in the last few years, one of America's largest car companies, General Motors, was largely taken over by the government. Hopefully that will mean that they will have more say in what kind of products the company makes and that they will push green technology. The government plainly needs to invest much more in this kind of thing if it hopes to stave off of the worst of climate change. It is very nice to hear that although electric cars are not yet available, many international car companies are heavily promoting what they call green cars.

If these promises can be realized and American consumers invest not only in their own convenience but also in the future of their country and its environment, with the help of government policy towards such green car companies—such as tax credits—things can be much better environmentally for tomorrow's generation than for today's. We can do this together.

The third and final thing to do is to change our personal habits. We need to use less water and more solar energy.

The world is changing. Our climate is changing. We need to take action now and work together to stop this. We need policies in place that will reshape our world. But it is going to be a difficult process. Nothing important ever came easily.