

## COMMENTARY PAGE

## Make your voice heard for our future

Time for action: Global warming is caused by us and we must end our fossil fuel habit

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The People's Climate March, coming up Sunday, Sept. 21 in New York City and numerous other cities including Vancouver, promises to be the biggest day of protest in the history of the climate movement. Will Canadians turn out?

We behave as though we believe that climate change cannot be as bad as environmentalists say, because if it were that bad, our political leaders would take action. The actions of both our federal and provincial governments strongly support extraction and export of fossil fuels, thereby giving every indication that a fossil fuel-based economy is in the best interest of Canadians. Our political leaders have betrayed us.

Well-established science confirms that human-caused climate change is underway and gaining momentum. Meanwhile, the Harper and Clark governments actively disavow climate change. Subsidized oil-sands mining, "streamlined" environmental review of pipelines, rejigged park boundaries, the quiet approval of new coal mines and new coal ports for the export of U.S. coal to Asia, misleading propaganda about liquefied natural gas and fracking — Western Canada is rapidly becoming the world's biggest, dirtiest dealer of climate change. It is no accident that we do not have a national energy policy.

Whether our politicians have been blinded by ideology or by greed (or both), there is a clear failure to acknowledge the consequences of their policies. The science tells us that if we do all



the right things starting today, we might squeak by with 20 C of warming. Harper and Clark have us on track for 60. The less-than 10 C we have already experienced is causing extreme weather and the melting of ice caps. No one knows what a 60 C world would look like. What will it take to get us out

in the streets in numbers that will sway public opinion?

Like many others in the climate movement, my mobilization came in 2009 when the Copenhagen climate summit made clear that our world leadership was not going to act in the public interest. Others saw it coming, but I was devastated

by this realization. During the past five years, my sense of moral urgency has grown to the point where I find it difficult to be allied with those who are complicit by their silence.

The climate change movement is evolving quickly. We've written letters by the satchel, we've spoken up, we've

organized, we've participated in protests, and we've launched lawsuits. Yet still the approvals come and the construction begins — not always in that order. There is a mounting sense of desperation.

Unlike Copenhagen, no one has any expectations for the UN meetings in New York next

week; Harper isn't even attending. No one is coming to our rescue. Change is only going to come from the grassroots. That means you and me.

Transition away from a fossil fuel-based economy to a more just and clean society is going to be difficult, but the economic argument for inaction is fallacious: to accept that transition is impossible is absurd. We are all bystanders, and by virtue of our lifestyles, we are all complicit. This does not negate our ability to speak for change.

Being against pipelines and coal ports does not make me anti-development. Indeed, pipelines and coal ports are about as backward as one can get. I am pro-development, ready and waiting for forward progress. Please join me Sunday at the CBC plaza at 1 p.m. We need to come out in numbers that send a clear message to our federal and provincial politicians as well as the foreign interests like Kinder Morgan and Macquarie (owner of Fraser Surrey Docks): we have had enough.

We want no new infrastructure for fossil fuel extraction or export. We want policies that support the development of renewable energy sources. No more subsidies for fossil fuel "development." No more free rides for industries polluting our air, our water and our land. Instead, we want investment in transition to an economy based on renewable energy sources. We want plans to assist those currently working in fossil fuel industries so they can transition to healthier, well-paying jobs. We know that these things are possible.

See you Sunday. Bring your family. Bring your friends.

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