

# Watt's Happening? #159

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## Climate Myths

**O**K, let's make a few things very clear right up front about climate change:

- 1) We know that climate change is definitely happening;
- 2) It is definitely not good;
- 3) We know exactly what is causing it (us!);
- 4) We know exactly what we have to do to get it under control;
- 5) We know we have to hurry.

The debate whether climate change can happen, will happen or is happening is over now. You can safely set aside this "we're not sure" thing once and for all.

Reluctantly, the world is mobilizing to deal with climate change because we are now sure, with no shadow of a doubt, that the climate is changing, quickly and spectacularly, all around the world. This is not opinion. It is not theory or weird global

conspiracy. It is a fact and beginning to affect everyone.

Yet still I hear things on the street like: "*We don't know enough about the climate to really understand it. Heck, we can't tell what the weather will be like next week let alone 50 years from now!*"

### CLIMATE, NOT WEATHER

This is a common and understandable source of confusion. Weather is what we experience every day, locally, and we all know how accurate weather reports are!

Even with satellite monitoring and advanced computer systems, weather will always be unpredictable. That's because weather is strongly influenced by something called Chaos, which is the new science of very complex systems. In



*Those working in the energy sector right now, oil and gas included, are the talented, experienced workers we need to make the historic change that will stabilize our climate. Here Ron Moch, Moch Electric Ltd (left) and Greg Dueck, Peace Energy Co-op, install another solar power system in the Peace Region.*

Chaos, there is something called “the butterfly effect” – the flap of a butterfly wing in New Zealand can affect the weather in say, northern Ireland.

Sounds ridiculous, but it totally and actually happens. In the face of such complexity, weather forecasting more than a few weeks out is pretty well hopeless.

“Climate” is something completely different than weather. Climate looks at long term, sometimes very long term, trends, searching for global, long-term patterns.

Today, we have a pretty good idea of what the global climate was like hundreds, thousands, even hundreds of thousands of year ago. Global climate has now been studied to death, for decades, and the big picture is clear as a bell: the global climate is changing quickly, very quickly, many times faster than our little planet has experienced in a very long time. For such a dramatic change, something dramatic must be causing it.

### **IT’S BAD, IT’S US**

More floods, more wildfires, more droughts, more and bigger storms, melting ice caps and melting glaciers, rising sea levels, crop failures . . . these are not good things. Not good at all.

There are many gases that are disrupting our climate, but carbon dioxide is the big one. In 2018 the human race dumped 37 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, mostly from burning fossil fuels. That’s a new record, and it’s growing, not slowing down.

You absolutely cannot drop 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every day, year in and year out, without some big consequences. Climate change is the big consequence. No debate, no hoax.

### **THE GOOD NEWS**

The good news is that we know exactly what we have to do to get things under control. We must quickly cut back on how much carbon we release into the atmosphere, and that means switching to new ways of making energy and using it more wisely.

The other good thing is that we know how to do this. We can make more than enough energy from wind, solar and geothermal. No problem. Both wind and solar have reached “grid parity” meaning the electricity they create now costs equal to or less than conventional energy, and their costs continue to fall as their use ramps up.

Yes, we need to put a price on carbon pollution, and that money re-invested in clean energy and a massive job-training program. Those working in oil and gas now are the same talented, experienced workers we will need for this historic global energy transition. They are the new heroes of the coming years because they will make this

transition possible.

We can clean up the environment, create countless new energy jobs and untold wealth and opportunity, all while stabilizing our erratic climate.

What, exactly, are we waiting for?

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