

# Watt's Happening? #143

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## We need Facts, not Opinions.



*The road to solving climate change will provide many benefits along the way. These local folks have moved to zero/near-zero-pollution transportation, enjoying the high-performance thrill of the electric vehicle while greatly reducing their carbon footprint. (Shot at a recent Peace Energy Co-op EV rally and Solar Info Session in Fort St. John)*

Over the last few hundred years, science has shown us the clear difference between “facts” and “opinions.” By basing our actions on facts rather than opinions or beliefs, the human race has become the dominant life form on planet Earth, an amazing achievement.

Revealed through the rigor of the scientific method, where one fact builds on the next, we have created a massive, intimately interconnected global civilization, where, overall, poverty and disease

are on the run.

We have revealed both the mind-boggling vastness of interstellar space, the weird workings of the sub-atomic world, and many of the profound secrets of life itself.

OK, so as planetary rulers, how are we doing? Not great. To get where we are, it looks like we have been chipping away at the very life support systems that we rely on, without really knowing it.

Until now.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

If we put aside beliefs and opinions, the factual evidence is very strong that we are affecting the global climate in dramatic ways, none of them good. As our industrial civilization continues to release gigatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every day, it is building up in our atmosphere, causing temperatures to rise and disrupting the global climate in very dangerous ways.

Climate change is not a hoax

or conspiracy. It's really happening and we are, to a large extent, causing it. That's good news, because if we're causing it, that means we can fix it.

That's the main message of this column: yes we have a problem, but we know exactly how to fix it, and the fixing has begun.

PLUS, the fix comes with other benefits: job and innovation opportunities; a more efficient and competitive economy; a cleaner, healthier environment with lower health care costs; less impact on the other species that we share this planet with; and much, much more.

### ECO-ANXIETY

Anxiety can make us miserable and can severely affect our health. It can also be a call to action.

With mainstream media focusing almost entirely on problems rather than solutions, it's easy to feel like we are helpless passengers on a slow motion train wreck. Where is the leadership, the political will? What kind of world will my children be living in?

The "Good Grief Network" is an on-line support group that helps worried folk deal with eco-anxiety, a growing problem that many of us are feeling.

Two main pieces of advice are recommended to reduce the worry: learn, and take action. Although it may seem scary, read, watch videos, learn as much as you can about the problems, and, of course, the solutions. And take action in your own life, no matter how small.

As Canadians, we emit more carbon dioxide per person than any other G20 nation, so we have lots of room for improvement. Most of our impact comes from the way we use energy in our homes and the way we get around, so focus there. Increase the heat efficiency of your home (windows, insulation) and when you need a new appliance, choose the most energy efficient model you can afford. Switch to LED lights. Consider the switch to a hybrid or electric vehicle, but better, drive less, bicycle more.

Like most of the solutions, these are not hardships, but benefits: your home will be more comfortable; you'll be healthier; and utility bills, along with your anxiety, will go down.

### TOO SMALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A response I often hear: "I don't buy it! Anything I do cannot possibly help the entire planet. My contribution (my city's contribution, my country's) is so tiny that it cannot have the least affect on such a massive problem."

Really, really wrong. The sphere of influence that surrounds each of us is actually much broader and more profound that it would at first appear. Like a drop of water falling into a still

pond, the ripples of our influence spread out to infinity, affecting everything they touch.

Yes, we are just drops of water in a vast ocean, but without the drops, there is no ocean.

That's not an opinion. It's a fact.

As Canadians,  
we emit more  
carbon dioxide  
per person  
than any other  
G20 nation, so  
we have lots  
of room for  
improvement.



*Going solar is one excellent way to reduce your carbon footprint . . . and your electricity bills.*