

## Rain-Making and Benefunder

20 October 2014

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The essential spur required to phase down fossil fuel emissions is a rising carbon fee. Only a few major nations must agree, e.g., China and the United States. Most of the world would follow, induced by the desire to avoid border duties and modernize energy infrastructure.

Other things are needed, especially technology development, but those things will be hastened by a rising carbon fee.

So why is an agreement on a carbon fee at Paris in December 2015 not a foregone conclusion?<sup>1</sup>

The old excuse, that it would be costly, has been shot down. A steadily rising carbon fee, if it is revenue neutral via 100% dispersal of the funds to the public, stimulates the economy, increasing jobs and the GDP (see [REMI study commissioned by Citizens Climate Lobby](#)).

The problem is a combination of (1) widespread ignorance of what is needed, and (2) the power (money) of special interests who prefer the status quo. Overcoming such formidable obstacles requires a multi-prong strategy, as we have discussed, e.g., in [The Wheels of Justice](#).

The organization that I now direct, [Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions](#) (CSAS), aims to contribute to that strategy. We want to (1) help advance the climate science, because uncertainty remains about the nature and speed of human-made climate effects, as well as the best ways to minimize climate change and climate impacts, (2) describe research progress with a clarity that helps achieve broader public awareness, and (3) “connect the dots” all the way from the basic climate science to the implications for policy solutions.

CSAS was launched after I retired from the government last year with support from individuals and foundations. Their funding allowed me to support the core members of my team: my deputy, Pushker Kharecha, who is a geophysicist expert in carbon cycle, Earth system modeling and climate analyses, Makiko Sato, a senior physicist who works with me in climate research and analysis and is also responsible for our climate data and its presentation, and Nicole Crescimanno, our CSAS program coordinator.

This year we submitted proposals for longer-term support jointly with Our Children’s Trust (OCT) and Citizen’s Climate Lobby (CCL). This “rain-making” attempt for these organizations yielded zero rain. The philanthropies we approached rated our proposals very highly, but indicated that our work did not fit their priorities or declined the proposals without explanation.

I am concerned that such joint proposals may actually hurt funding chances for CCL and OCT, if, for example, conclusions we have drawn at CSAS about policy implications of our climate and energy research are at odds with philanthropic preferences. For this reason, I do not plan to submit more unsolicited joint proposals with CCL and/or OCT.

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<sup>1</sup> I do not imply that the Paris meeting is necessarily the best place to achieve such an agreement. United Nations meetings, involving about 180 nations, are not conducive to agreements with the needed simplicity. A carbon fee agreement – which at some point will be recognized as essential – likely will be initiated by the major powers. However, the United Nations will need to help with independent supplementary agreements on forestry and agricultural policies that reduce atmospheric carbon and actions that reduce other atmospheric greenhouse gases.

Citizens Climate Lobby is likely the organization with the best chance to make a major difference. Given their dedication and focus, as they continue to grow their efforts may pass a tipping point where the logic of their prescription cannot be denied. I hope that people and organizations able to provide support will consider direct donations to CCL, which can be made at [CitizensClimateLobby.org](http://CitizensClimateLobby.org) (or contact Lynate Pettengill [Lynate@citizensclimatelobby.org](mailto:Lynate@citizensclimatelobby.org)).

Our Children's Trust has a critical role to play in putting pressure on the government to support the rights of young people and future generations. They are making progress in several cases, but they need support to continue that work. I hope that people and organizations able to provide support will consider direct donations to OCT, which can be made at [OurChildrensTrust.org](http://OurChildrensTrust.org) (or contact Julia Olson, [Julia@OurClildrensTrust.org](mailto:Julia@OurClildrensTrust.org) ).

As for Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions, our program was initiated with the help of several supporters, listed, e.g., on the first page of [our signature paper](#), and with recent support from Dennis Pence. We are continuing to seek longer-term support, and have just joined the [Benefunder program](#). Benefunder is a nonprofit public benefit corporation that aims to help match potential charitable donors with researchers.

I am especially eager to find support to add Dan Galpern to our program as CSAS's general counsel. Dan has experience in advocacy and litigation at state and federal levels, and an aptitude for clear communication of climate science to decision makers. He recently wrote the Amicus Brief to the District of Columbia Federal Circuit Court on behalf of me and several other climate scientists, and he is presently preparing a brief to the Supreme Court. Galpern's work with us to date has been supported on a piecemeal basis, but our program could be more effective if he were with us full-time. This would allow him to engage more comprehensively, on our behalf, in climate science communication, interaction with key policymakers, strategic efforts challenging government inaction, and as a second CSAS conduit to the philanthropic community. Our entire mission would be advanced, because the core team would be able to focus more fully on advancement of the science.

There are other ways in which our scientific research can contribute to improving the prospects for young people. In the past I organized two workshops, supported largely by private funding, on "Air Pollution as a Climate Forcing" at the East-West Center in Hawaii, which was an effective venue for obtaining participation of scientists from China and India. Now, as China and India are giving high priority to reducing local air pollution, it is important to help define pathways that simultaneously are as effective as possible in reducing global climate forcings. If the Benefunder program or future proposals provide sufficient resources, our next priority after support for a counsel position will probably be for such a workshop.

The [Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions](#) website now includes a link by which financial contributions can be made to our program. However, for most people of limited means I believe that the most effective action is to join Citizens Climate Lobby. It provides an opportunity to participate in the democratic process the way it was intended to work – and just possibly make a difference affecting our planet's and our children's future.