

Year-End Statement and Solicitation

15 December 2017

James Hansen

Below is the statement that I sent recently to thank people who have supported our Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions program in the Columbia University Earth Institute.

Our paper [*Young People's Burden: Requirement of Negative CO₂ Emissions*](#) published this year makes clear how difficult it will be to stabilize climate. The battle must be fought on multiple fronts. On the other hand, as we also note, there is some basis for optimism.

Our most pressing need for support at this time is for our non-profit 501/C3 Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions, Inc. (CSAS Inc.). CSAS Inc is used to pay, without overhead, our computer and other office expenses, travel, and legal costs.

[Here](#) is one legal case (in New Zealand) in which some progress is being made. I will report on others in upcoming Communications. I believe that the legal approach will become increasingly important in the future, because the judiciary is relatively independent of fossil fuel interests. The Guardian did an [article on this](#).

Betsy Taylor is President of CSAS, Inc., I am the Chief Executive Officer, Bill McKibben, Jim Miller and Larry Travis are Board Members, and Jay Halfon is the Secretary and Treasurer.

Donations to CSAS, Inc. can be sent to Jay Halfon, 45 West 36th Street Floor 6, New York, NY 10018, attn. Geoff Boehm. Alternatively, donations can be made to the newly constructed [web page for CSAS, Inc.](#)

Of course we also welcome support of our Columbia University program, Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions, which is also 501/C3. Donations to the Columbia program should be sent to Gregory Fienhold, The Earth Institute, Hogan Hall, Room 108 2910 Broadway, MC 3277 New York, NY 10025 or made online at <http://csas.ei.columbia.edu/support/>.

In cooperation with Stuart Scott, Executive Director of United Planet Faith & Science Initiative, I had four press conferences in Bonn, each of them doubling as his half-hour TV program "Climate Matters." The videos of these are given below. He would like to translate them to different languages, via subtitles, e.g., *Young People's Burden* has been translated to German (click on the CC on the YouTube video). German and Spanish translations are underway. He, stuart.h.scott@gmail.com, would welcome volunteers to translate to other languages.

Note sent in late November to supporters of Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions

This week is a good time to thank everyone who has supported Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions. I also want to offer encouragement about the prospect that the world may soon turn toward solution of global climate change, despite sober analyses about the difficulty of the task.

On the sober side: Our paper *Young People's Burden: Requirement of Negative CO₂ Emissions*, completed this year and discussed at the COP-23 meeting in Bonn, shows that growth rates of the human-made factors driving climate change have not slowed – indeed, they have accelerated. The fundamental fact is: fossil fuels will continue to be burned at a high rate as long as the price of fossil fuels does not include costs to society (air pollution, water pollution, climate change).

Yet I believe the work we are doing is on the right course and may make an important difference. Our *Young People's Burden* paper also shows that emission reduction of 3% per year beginning in 2021 could keep global warming from exceeding 1.5°C. That is not quite as ambitious as the goal of getting CO₂ back to 350 ppm by 2100, the “target” that a group of leading researchers defined a decade ago¹. However, consequences of 1.5°C warming are surely much less severe than they would be with continued business-as-usual fossil fuel emissions.

We chose 2021 as the start date and a focus on the 3%/year emission reduction scenario, because such timing and rates are consistent with success in the actions outlined below. Legal actions including appeals require time; 2021 starts the next administration in the United States; 3%/year reduction is achievable globally with even a moderate carbon fee/tax. Three principal elements in our plan and reasons for optimism that we can turn the corner by 2021:

- (1) Citizens Climate Lobby steadfastly moves forward in support of carbon-fee-and-dividend. Now more than 400 chapters and 90,000 members in the U.S. and growing in other countries, they are beginning to be heard in the House and Senate. They could impact policies by 2021. We have promoted this approach since 2007 and are probably CCL's most successful recruiter.
- (2) Our Children's Trust lawsuit: the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments on 11 December re the Trump Administration's attempt to evade a trial. They have practically no chance, but the trial date scheduled for February is likely to be delayed a few months. Given Trump's energy policies, we have every expectation of winning and forcing a climate plan.
- (3) Dan Galpern and I went to COP-23 in Bonn for private discussions with representatives of several nations about possible lawsuits against the “Carbon Majors”, large fossil fuel companies. This approach may be more powerful than “divestment” in pressuring them to become energy companies. The discussions are sensitive, but we can report on them within several months.

Young People's Burden <https://youtu.be/shhcGeY1Ao>

Making the Carbon Majors Pay for Climate Action <https://youtu.be/vLuWNew3znU>

Nuclear Power? Are Renewables Enough? <https://youtu.be/v1f4BKsFrCA>

Scientific Reticence <https://youtu.be/S7z61UZoppM>

¹ Hansen, J., M. Sato, P. Kharecha, D. Beerling, R. Berner, V. Masson-Delmotte, M. Pagani, M. Raymo, D. Royer, and J.C. Zacher: [Target atmospheric CO₂: Where should humanity aim?](#) *Open Atmos. Sci. J.*, **2**, 217-231, 2008.