

## Children and Adults on Climate Policy: Evidence that They “Get It”

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The bravery and insight of people in Washington and Oregon, as they oppose fossil fuel interests that threaten the future of young people, is exceptional and encouraging. On a trip to Oregon, before my talk to a general audience and meetings with college classes, a group of youngsters asked me really good questions. Then recently I received this message from Washington:

Plant-For-The-Planet children met with Seattle staff for Sen. Patty Murray and Sen. Maria Cantwell Wednesday after school... looking for commitments and publicity on climate action. The ambassadors for climate justice presented a short climate slideshow, featuring slides of your latest research "[...To Protect Young People, Future Generations, and Nature.](#)"

Then the students told the staff:

- Stop using "2°C goal/target" language in speeches. 2°C = catastrophic for 10-year-olds.
- Spell out the plan to keep warming close to 1.2°C in speeches (since most people who know and care about global warming now assume incorrectly we are on track for 4C+ and "locked in" at 2C).
- Introduce a resolution for protecting our children with 6% annual reductions and our fair share of 1 Trillion Trees.
- PLANT TREES!
- Put a price on carbon pollution
- Pledge "**No New Carbon Pollution**" to oppose more dirty energy infrastructure, exports, and exploration.
- 2 brothers sang "[Exploding Trains](#)"

Wow – that from kids. Meanwhile adults in most of the U.S., even scientists, say that it is o.k. to set a goal of 2°C, which means we can set a goal for reducing emissions sometime in the future, and meanwhile we can do fracking, and pipelining, and “all of the above” – an approach that, if continued, guarantees we will leave an unsolvable problem for young people.

There is partial good news about progress among adults in one place, [Australia](#). Maybe that can spread to Canada soon. However, the U. S. does not seem close to that – despite science advisers, AAAS, National Academy of Sciences – the President seems clueless about implications of a policy promoting tar shale, fracking, and exporting every fossil fuel that can be found.

Yet hope springs from our Great Northwest. What if Oregon and Washington would agree to try a policy that would provide the example capable of becoming a near-global policy, a carbon fee collected from fossil fuel companies with the money distributed uniformly to legal residents? I found such sentiment among people there. They would need to persuade California to join them for a big impact, but that may not be so difficult. When I described California’s cap-and-trade-with-offsets as half-baked and half-assed, Governor Brown took it with a smile. When we talked about it later he seemed more like an open-minded scientist than a politician. He just might be the kind of leader who could do what is actually needed rather than what lobbyists demand.

Anyhow, if you want to promote the possibility of something like that happening, here is what you can do: join [Citizens Climate Lobby](#). They will give you an opportunity to participate in a growing democratic movement that just may change the course of history.