



Kayford Mountain, or what was a mountain.

Fighting the Battles, Winning the War

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The battles to slow human-made climate change have been fought bravely by ad hoc groups of concerned citizens – trying to stop pipelines, coal mines, fracking, etc. Winning a battle helps, and fights are beginning to be won, including confrontations in courts and industry board rooms.

Winning the war requires governments to fight on the side of the people. It hasn't happened yet. Our governments have too many politicians who are well-oiled, coal-fired, and full of gas.

Instead, governments set goals for the future and heavily subsidize renewable energies. The fossil fuel industry is pleased. They smugly put windmills and solar panels on their websites.

We have lived with that situation for three decades, since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in 1992. Each year scientists who understand the delayed response of the climate system – and implications for young people, future generations and nature – become more and more frantic, but to no avail.

But today – for the first time – there is a good chance that we can get onto a path to win the war.

President Biden has the authority to impose a national carbon fee-and-dividend, as my attorney Dan Galpern and I point out in an [op-ed in the Boston Globe](#). Specifically, EPA has authority to collect a pollution fee. The Supreme Court in *Massachusetts vs EPA* ruled that fossil fuel CO₂ is a pollutant. The fossil fuel industry may squeal like a stuck pig and expect rescue by the Court, but the Court will realize its place in history, if it reverses the prior ruling of the Roberts Court.

Let's be clear: the frequent comparison of the fossil fuel and tobacco industries is nonsense. Fossil fuels are a valuable energy source that has done yeomen service for humankind. One gallon (3.7 liters) of gasoline (petrol) contains the equivalent of 400 hours of labor by a healthy

adult. Fossil fuels raised living standards in much of the world. But we now understand that fossil fuel use comes with an unacceptable cost for young people and future generations.

The fastest way to phase down fossil fuel use is via a steadily rising carbon fee collected from fossil fuel companies. If the funds are distributed uniformly to the public, the effect is anti-regressive; 70 percent of the public gets more in the dividend than they pay in increased prices.

Carbon fee-and-dividend can survive successive administrations, if the collected funds are distributed uniformly, because of its popularity. Also, almost all economists – conservative and liberal – agree that fee-and-dividend is the appropriate, economically-efficient energy policy.

Global solution of the climate problem requires cooperation of the United States and China. The United States is the nation most responsible for historic (cumulative) emissions and thus for climate change. However, China has the largest emissions today. Both nations have much to lose, if global emissions are not phased down during the next few decades.

If [China and the United States](#) agree to have rising carbon fees, they would surely also place border duties on products from countries without a carbon fee. This would be a strong incentive for other countries to have carbon fees, so they can collect the carbon fee themselves.

In absence of such a rising carbon fee/tax, nations will keep having annual COP (Conference of the Parties) meetings, politicians will clap each other on the back, and young people are screwed.

In my communication of 16 March 2021 ([Activists](#)) I mentioned two heroes in the battle against mountaintop removal (MTR): Larry Gibson and Judy Bonds. The photo in that communication actually showed Larry Gibson and [Lorelei Scarbro](#). I should have recognized Lorelei. I met her on 4 July 2010 ([Independence Day on Kayford Mountain](#)) at a picnic on Larry Gibson's property. That day I took the above photo of the land directly abutting Larry's property, which shows the effect of mountaintop removal. When I got home, I wrote [Activist](#).

Contrary to drivel from liberal media and 'big green' environmental organizations, the climate war is not being won. We have not even stopped mountaintop removal. For years, the U.S. Congress has failed to pass the Appalachian Communities Health Emergency Act, which asks for a halt in new or expanded coal mine permits until the Department of Health and Human Services does a study that concludes that there is no threat to public health. Somebody does not want that study conducted, somebody who has more sway over our politicians than does the public good.

Jeff Biggers has done more than anyone to draw attention to consequences of MTR and strip-mining. [Biggers strongly recommends](#) a new short documentary, [The Both of Me](#), which premiered over the Memorial Day weekend.

MTR is a small battle in the world war on pollution and climate change. MTR provides a small part of U.S. coal. U.S. coal is but a fraction of global coal. Coal is only one of the three big fossil fuels, the others being oil and gas. Fracking to get gas is as bad as coal mining.

Winning the climate war requires a rising carbon fee that covers all of these: oil, gas and coal.