

Celebrate Mother Earth today
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After a snowy winter Spring has arrived, much later than usual over the past decade. This year daffodils bloomed a month later than in the exceptionally warm spring of 2012.

In my garden spinach and lettuce overwintered under glass, and with the wet weather they are now growing fast. My peas are up. Remarkably a couple of spinach plants survived the winter, protected only by the snow cover. It is easy to love Mother Earth as spring blossoms with new life in Vermont — even on these cloudy rainy days that remind me of spring long ago in England.

The nearly stationary large-scale weather patterns have persisted across the continent. It has been wet in the east, with devastating floods in Alabama and the Florida panhandle. Meanwhile drought continues in the western United States, raising concerns for the coming fire season.

This year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, has issued a series of reports describing what is happening to the Earth's climate. Part of the story is daunting. We continue to get most of our energy from burning fossil fuels. We are slipping further behind in restructuring our energy system to be more efficient and more dependent on renewable energy. This means that the costs of adapting to climate change and increasing severe weather will continue to rise steeply.

Yet part of the report is encouraging. Technical advances in recent years, such as solar power, have made meeting the challenge feasible. In fact, the latest IPCC report concludes that the investment needed to transform our societies would reduce growth rates by less than one-tenth of a percent. Surely we could live with this!

Nonetheless it is clear from this recent report that time is running out to preserve the climate of the Earth for those who will come after us. We have the technology, we know where we should invest — and the cost is small compared to the cost of doing nothing. An investment of \$1 trillion now to slow the rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reduces our adaptation costs by \$60 trillion later this century.

The news media scanned these recent reports but paid scant attention. Some sources even said that they saw little that was new! And the well-funded propaganda machine continues to assert that we have the right in a free country to dump carbon dioxide into the air at no charge. But this claim is just made to cover up the truth that we must leave much of the remaining fossil fuel in the ground, if we want to preserve a tolerable climate for the future.

National politics exist in a child-like fantasy land. Many in power pretend that if they close their eyes, climate change will go away — or since they are old, they won't have to deal with it. But these political children in their self-centered fantasy world are simply dumping unimaginable costs on their children and grandchildren, and on the Earth itself.

Economically we know what we need to do: introduce a waste tax on burning fossil carbon. And we have most of the technical answers, so climate change has now become a moral problem. How long will we be content to sacrifice the wellbeing of future generations, while we persist in our historic wasteful lifestyle?

The climate of the Earth is complex. We don't know all the answers. From the political perspective our situation looks bleak. But human beings are extraordinarily creative, and we will have to change and adapt. Mother Nature is much more powerful than any of our technology.

So start with hope and connect with your fellow citizens. Invest in the society we need. And develop your relationship with the Earth. We must work with her — and it will never be too late. We are all in this together. Let us take joy in the transformation and ask: "Do we really treasure Mother Earth?"