

CLIMATE CRISIS NEWSLETTER

A fortnightly newsletter brought to you by XR Gairloch

ISSUE 127

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Editorial

Review of 2022—3 steps forward and two steps back.....

It's that time of year again, when climate scientists report that the 12 months just passed are among the hottest in recorded history. If anything is surprising, it's that annual records on global warming get so much attention especially so when we have known this is going to happen for decades. In fact a recent study revealed that ExxonMobil's (major oil and gas company) own scientist had accurately predicted that the burning of fossil fuels would increase global temperatures by 0.2 degrees Celsius every decade way back in 1977.



ExxonMobil: Oil giant predicted climate change in 1970s - scientists. [Read article.](#)

The increased temperature results are somewhat predictable, and that's not just because the World Meteorological Organization previewed theirs in November it's due to us as a species not following what the science is telling us. We must therefore all ask ourselves is this the year that the world fully wakes up to what is happening and actually do something drastic about it or do we have to wait for another major climatic catastrophe to happen like a third of Pakistan under flood water. Do we leave it and let it slide and wait until the last minute until 'a disaster happens on our door step' before we do anything. Unfortunately that's not the way climate works and by that time it's going to be far too late. Is it not better being proactive rather than reactive and saving future generations an almost unsurmountable task. I think we owe them that.

So 2022 has been a year dominated by oil and gas. While millions of people have been experiencing the harm caused by fossil fuels through extreme weather events, oil and gas companies made billions in profits at the expense of households either freezing or being forced to pay huge bills. This should have speeded up political efforts to transition to cheaper cleaner renewables but instead the UK Government has tried to double down on producing even more oil and gas and even gave permission for the first deep coal mine for 30 years.

The damage caused by climate change over this past year was at times so immense it was hard to comprehend. In Pakistan alone, extreme summer flooding killed thousands, displaced millions and caused over \$40 billion in losses. Fall floods in Nigeria killed hundreds and displaced over 1 million people. Droughts in Europe, China and the US dried out once-unstoppable rivers and slowed the flows of commerce on major arteries like the Mississippi and the Rhine.

18 huge, billion-dollar disasters: Climate change helped make 2022 the 3rd most expensive year on record. [Read article.](#)

In the face of these extremes, the human response was uneven at best. Consumption of coal, the dirtiest fossil fuel, rebounded in 2022.

Temperature records were broken on land and in the oceans. With the UK, France and Spain sees their hottest year on record in 2022. European winter heat records were smashed all over continent.

The world's oceans, which have absorbed most of the excess heat caused by humanity's carbon pollution, continued to see record-breaking temperatures last year.

Scientists sound alarm as ocean temperatures hit new record. [Read article.](#)

Overshooting climate targets could significantly increase risk for tipping cascade. [Read article.](#)

The UN Climate Change Summit (COP27) in November in Egypt was a complete failure except from a very loose, watered down and with little detail, Loss and Damage agreement. After the summit even some of the politicians were losing faith in the COP process.

Democratic senators warn UN secretary general of eroding public trust in Cop. [Read article.](#)

Scotland's targets for 2022 were well of track. Scotland's emissions reduction targets are amongst the most stretching in the world and the Scottish Government has placed a focus on a fair and just transition but the recent Climate Change Committee review of Scotland's performance in achieving its emission target makes grim reading.

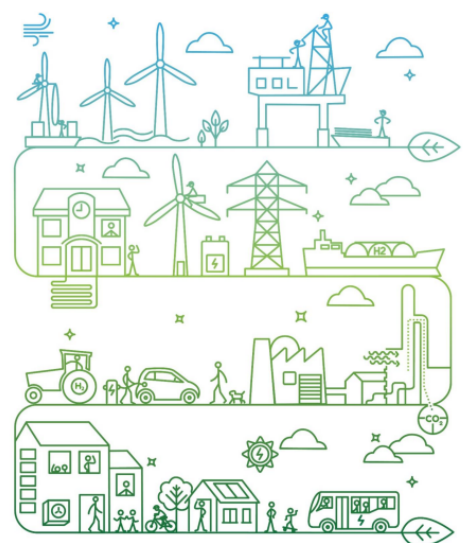
Scottish Emission Targets - first five-yearly review & Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland - 2022 Report to Parliament- Published: 7 December 2022. [See video.](#)

In response to Scotland's poor performance the Scottish Government has now unveiled its new Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan which targets 20GW of additional low-cost renewable energy generation by 2030, of which 12GW is to be onshore wind. The document is out for consultation until Tuesday 4 April 2023.

Scottish Government targets 20GW of additional low-cost renewable energy generation by 2030. [Read article.](#)

Energy Strategy Explainer. [Read article.](#)

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan –
delivering a fair and secure zero carbon
energy system for Scotland

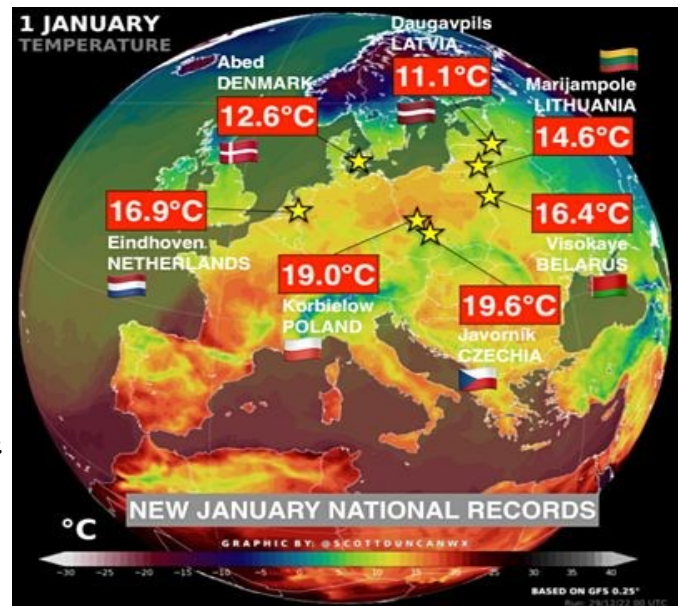


January 2023

 Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

So what to expect in 2023.....

We are only a couple of weeks into 2023 and it's a hot start to the year in Europe where at least eight countries saw their highest January temperatures on record with cities from Berlin to Warsaw recording their warmest ever start to the month. Temperatures in the German capital reached 16C (60.8F) on New Year's Day, a January record, according to the national forecaster. In Poland's biggest city, temperatures surpassed the previous record by more than 5 degrees. Europe's winter heat wave has curbed demand for natural gas, easing pressure on the continent's fragile energy systems and pushing prices down but has shown us that global warming is still increasing.



In the UK, the government has shown more interest in expanding oil, gas and even coal than in taking the urgent measures - insulation, insulation, insulation - that are the only way to cut energy use and emissions. The granting of new oil and gas licences in the North Sea, and the go-ahead for a new coalmine in Cumbria, will face legal challenge this year, and the government will encounter continued public pressure, despite draconian new anti-protest laws.

The UK government are continuing to throw away future generations legacy by licencing of areas of the North Sea for wind energy to major energy companies (nearly half of UK's offshore wind capacity is owned by state-owned foreign entities) like they did with oil and gas in the 1970's, unlike Norway who kept control of its oil and gas and generated the largest Sovereignty Wealth Fund in the world for the benefit of all the Norwegian people. The UK government is about to make the same mistake again with wind energy.

Unfortunately Norway still sees it's self as a major oil and gas producer and its oil and gas company Aker BP has just submitted ten plans for development and operation for oil and gas projects to the Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (MPE). These "major investments" on the Norwegian continental shelf (NCS) total more than \$20.4 billion. Aker BP highlighted that these oil and gas projects represent one of the largest private industrial developments in Europe.

Plans unveiled for investments of \$20.4 billion in ten oil & gas projects. [Read article.](#)

UN Climate Change Summit COP28. The United Arab Emirates, which will host this year's UN climate negotiations, just appointed the CEO of its national oil company as the president of COP28.

Climate campaigners are understandably alarmed, comparing the move to inviting "arm dealers to lead peace talks" and warning that it "risks jeopardising the entire UN climate process."

UAE Selects Fossil Fuel Exec to Lead COP28. [Read article.](#)

These are the Climate Indicators to Watch in 2023.....

By Eric Roston

The year 2022 saw the US enact an unprecedented climate bill and countries take bold steps at two United Nations conferences to aid disaster-stricken developing nations and preserve what's left of the natural world. Investment in renewables grew and so did the popularity of electric cars and heat pumps. When it comes to the Earth's vital statistics, however, the outlook remains less promising.

Here's where we stand at the start of 2023.

A Sizzling Start

In the next few weeks, major climate science research groups are expected to issue their conclusions about 2022's global average temperature — and it's likely to be hot. A first-draft estimate issued by the World Meteorological Organization in November predicted the year would rank as the fifth or sixth hottest on record, 1.15C above the 1850-1900 average. That would make the last eight years the hottest since global measurements began, according to the WMO's count.

If the first few days of 2023 are anything to go by, the warming trend looks set to continue. The year began with one of the most severe winter warm spells in European records, according to meteorologists. After the continent smashed summer heat records for the second consecutive year in 2022, new seasonal highs were registered in several European countries on New Year's Day.

Scientists say temperatures may breach the Paris Agreement's lower limit of 1.5C within a decade.

Emissions are Growing

Driving temperatures upward are record emissions of planet-warming greenhouse gases. Emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and cement production rose an estimated 1% last year over 2021, to 36.6 gigatons of carbon dioxide. That's even higher than 2019, the year before the pandemic caused an unprecedented — but temporary — drop in emissions, according to the Global Carbon Project, an international scientific collaboration that makes the estimates every year.

Oil use led the 2022 increase, specifically for aviation, as international travel rebounded toward pre-pandemic rates. Both oil and coal finished the year in higher demand than in 2021. And Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompted an energy crisis in Europe that's seen countries resort to a dirtier fossil fuel — coal. The energy shock reverberated around the world, so even China raised coal production to help satisfy markets.

Climate scientists every year update the size of the "carbon budget," or the amount of CO₂ humanity can emit before letting go of even a 50-50 chance of keeping global warming below internationally agreed-upon targets. There's about nine years of emissions left at 2022 rates to have half a shot at the 1.5C goal and 30 years before chances of meeting the higher-end 2C limit diminish. For the world to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, countries would have to cut emissions every year at a rate "comparable to the decrease observed in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic," according to the Global Carbon.

Project.

There's a Boom in Renewables

Investment in renewables is expected to keep growing. BloombergNEF projects that 2023 will bring an 18% growth in carbon-free energy. That should add up to more than 500 gigawatts of wind, solar, electricity storage, nuclear and geothermal power in 2023, but clean electricity additions reach 1.4 terawatts per year by 2030 to get on track for a net-zero pathway.

At least 18 countries have seen emissions decrease for more than a decade, according to the most recent review by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. As global numbers blur into regional and national tallies, however, the picture becomes more complicated.

Progress on Climate Diplomacy

In November, the Climate Action Tracker, a research team that compares countries' emissions rates to both their own and global goals, found that while there had been almost no progress since the UN climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, there was phenomenal and under-acknowledged progress in the international climate diplomacy system since 2009.

"If you look at the system as a whole — the conferences since 2009 until now — they have definitely achieved something," Niklas Höhne, a climate policy scientist at Germany's New Climate Institute who contributes to Climate Action Tracker, said at the time. "Now we are in a different world."

The question is, when will that diplomacy translate into more positive readings for the planet's vital statistics?

Climate's "Catalogue of Ships"

Included in the Climate Action Tracker summary is a four-page catalogue of 39 countries' current climate policies, each nation denoted by a flag icon. Argentina is expediting a new gas pipeline and exploring offshore oil. Canada has a new climate plan but is nonetheless moving along "like it's a pleasant Sunday afternoon and not a climate crisis." Iran hasn't ratified the Paris Agreement. The UK, a global green leader, was called out for policies that cover only 40% of relevant emissions and "highly insufficient" climate finance.

Something about this list, best summarized as a tedious parade of underachievement, calls to mind a very famous passage from a very old book. Europe's original wartime epic, the Iliad, tries at the outset to impress on readers the naval prowess of the Greeks by exhaustively listing over several pages the military's leadership and wares. The so-called "Catalogue of Ships" established the epic list as a capable force in storytelling.

As a new year begins, it's harder to discern whether the climate "catalogue" amounts to an inspiring account of aggregated national ambitions or a satire of efforts falling short.

Hope and optimism in 2023 amid the climate chaos.....

Every one of us will love someone who will still be alive in 2100. That loved one will either face a world wrecked by climate change or a brave new world of green clean energy and restored biodiversity and it all depends on what we do in the next coming year.

It's a powerful reason for us to take action as we go forward with hope and optimism as not doing anything or failure are not feasible options.

Some glimmers of hope already exist this year, are a good start to this long and difficult journey ahead of us.

- A parliamentary select committee has pressed the UK government to set a clear date for ending new oil and gas licensing rounds in a bid to show international climate leadership.
- The UN has confirmed that it will convene a new 'Climate Action Summit' next September, recognising that commitments from nations do not yet align with the Paris Agreement and that a more joined-up approach to climate mitigation, adaptation and nature is needed. (COP27 and COP15)

UN schedules additional global climate summit for September 2023. [Read article.](#)

- The shining light of climate hope is the exponential growth of ever-cheaper renewable energy, which now delivers 75% of all new power.

Electric vehicle sales are also rising exponentially. Sales in China doubled year-on-year in August, to more than 500,000. 80% of new cars bought in Norway were electric and new cars are all to be electric by 2025.

Both of these green technologies have passed tipping points in many places - they are now simply so good and cheap that a runaway takeover is inevitable.

It also gives us renewed hope seeing the actions of those standing against tyrants - the brave citizens of Ukraine. those who were prepared to risk so much by protesting on the streets of China, Myanmar, and more recently, female students in Iran. We all need to step up to the plate a stand for what is right. As the Greek mathematician, physicist, engineer, astronomer, and inventor Archimedes said "give me a place to stand and I will move the world."



*Let us stand in solidarity
against climate change*

Scottish government too reliant on Carbon Capture and Hydrogen?.....

Friends of the Earth campaigned hard to end the Scottish Government's dangerous over-reliance on carbon capture and hydrogen as so-called 'negative emissions technologies.'

The oil industry has been hyping up these projects in a cynical bid to prolong the life of oil and gas. But this is little more than green-washing of their plans to keep on drilling for more fossil fuels.



Around the world we have seen mounting evidence that carbon capture cannot deliver the pollution cuts that are needed. Even the Scottish Government admitted that their time-lines for these projects happening in Scotland were wrong. This left a huge hole in efforts to meet our crucial climate targets.

Also, in 2022 we released a big report that explored the role of hydrogen in Scotland's climate efforts. It showed that hydrogen was too inefficient and expensive for widespread use in transport and heating. The research said that 'green' hydrogen, whilst lower carbon than fossil fuel derived hydrogen has serious drawbacks including that it demands enormous amounts of renewable energy to produce.

Friends of the Earth have also started a campaign against the proposal from SSE and energy giant Equinor to build a new gas fired power station in Peterhead. This whole plan is built on the rotten foundations of carbon capture technology with a claim it will be added at some point in the future.

Fighting back against carbon capture and hydrogen greenwash. [Read article.](#)

Tidal energy

Scotland is a world leader in the development and deployment of wave and tidal energy technologies. It plays host to the world's leading wave and tidal energy test centre, the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) in Orkney, the world's largest tidal stream array and the world's most powerful tidal stream turbine. There are 3 tidal energy devices in operation in the Orkney Islands right now, but the most ambitious of them is the Orbital O2 from Orbital Marine, which has an output of 2 megawatts. Unlike solar and wind, wave and tidal are a 24 hour renewable energy, so why aren't we developing more.



MPs call for more tidal and marine—UK should aim to generate a 'significant proportion' of its power from these sources by mid-2030s, says EAC. [Read article.](#)

Are our local Councils failing us.....

There is the evidence that councils are not taking their climate commitments seriously as many continue to support high carbon infrastructure projects in their local areas. For instance on the 9th May 2019, Highland Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and pledged achieving carbon neutral CO2 emissions by 2025.

Since their declaration and pledge Highland Council have made very little progress and in fact in many cases approved decisions contradictory to them, so examples of these are:



- After 3½ years into a 6 year deadline, they have yet to approve their Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan and achieve it.
- Keeping Highland Council pension fund investments in fossil fuels.
- Approving peat extraction licenses/ permissions such as at Moy Moss, (Bogbain) and other sites. The Council are carrying out these policies while at the same time hypocritically promoting the Flow Country (large area of peat and wetland) as a world heritage site.
- Approving planning permission to the so called carbon neutral space base hub in Sutherland, on a site with large peat deposits.
- Allowing ecologically destructive muirburning which also increases the likelihood of wildfires.
- Poor implementation of electric vehicle charging.
- Poor rural public transport links.

Councils approve airport expansions, oil drilling and motorways despite pledges to hit net zero by 2030. [Read article.](#)

Good news, but why not Scotland, Council or community owned.....

Wind farms must benefit locals, campaigners say. [Read article.](#)

Plans for major Firth of Forth wind farm lodged by energy giant.
[Read article.](#)



Greenwash, misinformation, hypocrisy and deceit

Survey: 7 in 10 Brits don't believe environmental claims by businesses are credible.

[Read article.](#)

'Boys will be boys': why consumers don't punish big polluters for greenwashing lies. [Read article.](#)

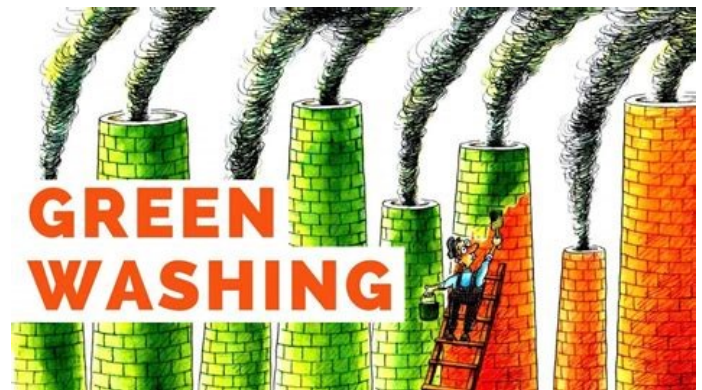
Sowing Doubt: How Big Ag is Delaying Sustainable Farming in Europe. [Read article.](#)

BP criticised over plan to spend billions more on fossil fuels than green energy. [Read article.](#)

Fossil fuel interests revealed to have sponsored more than 500 Australian community organisations. [Read article.](#)

Environmental Activists Fight Back as Companies Resort to 'Lawfare' to Quash Criticism. [Read article.](#)

England's new ban on single-use plastics sounds good – but it is a surrender to big business. [Read article.](#)



Corrupt Politicians and Climate Criminals.....

Drax Group CEO, Will Gardiner

Drax's renewable energy plant is UK's biggest CO2 emitter, analysis claims. [Read article.](#)

Why burning primary woody biomass is worse than fossil fuels for climate. [Read article.](#)

Drax Quietly Drops Sponsorship of Industry Conferences and Will Gardiner, who was due to appear at a Drax sponsored event at the Conservative Party conference withdrew at the "last minute" [Read article.](#)

Drax accused of driving 'environmental racism' after further pollution claims against wood pellet mills in US deep south. [Read article.](#)

Drax dropped from index of green energy firms amid biomass doubts. [Read article](#)

Drax fined £6.1 million (\$7.5 million) for breaching its license, after charging the grid operator excessive prices to reduce its generation. [Read article.](#)



Events/Actions/Education and Information

Action

21st APRIL 2023 LONDON - Surrounding the Houses of Parliament Action

100,000 people in London from various different organisations and groups with common aims and objectives.

A multi-day action starting on the 21st April that will see at least 100,000 people at the houses of Parliament, changing history. Be on the right side of history.



This will be peaceful and family-friendly. This is not about disrupting the public - this is about demanding better from our Government. The event has been designed with inclusion at its heart, prioritising attendance over arrest and relationships over roadblocks.

The Demands/aims of the action are:

END THE FOSSIL FUEL ERA: We must end all new licences and funding for fossil fuels.

REPAIR: Those who hid the science and projected impacts, worsening the situation for short-term profit, should be made to pay. Rich countries must support those already on the front line of climate impacts. The people will work together to address inequality and restore the living world through tackling the climate crisis.

ENTER AN AGE OF TRANSFORMATION: Mobilise a UK-wide effort, a mass movement to transform society using a participatory approach to politics at local, national and UK levels. Citizens assemblies, citizen-led politics are the transitional tools needed to achieve this.

But before you decide whether to go ask yourself:

1. Do you think the climate and energy crises are connected?
2. Is the government guilty of neglect?
3. Do you think the media and politicians would pay attention if 100,000 people turned up outside Parliament and refused to move?

The future holds not just energy but food shortages, droughts, floods, fires and mass displacement of people while fossil fuel companies make unprecedented profits.

The government has stopped listening to scientists and ordinary people: they're listening

to big corporations, lobbyists and billionaire newspaper owners.

Governments and international corporate power seems too big for individuals to take on, but power is fragile when enough people push together in the same place.

Millions of people care and want change but don't know what to do. This is what we do.

Civil disobedience works but only when a critical mass of people get involved.

The purpose of this action is not to get people arrested or targeting disruption at the public. The object is Parliament, nowhere else.

We have had 27 UN Climate Change Summits (COP27) and still emissions are rising every year which means governments are failing to protect the future for our children. The UN recently confirmed (Oct 2022) that there is 'no credible pathway to 1.5C in place', 1.5C being the Paris Agreement temperature increase target we must remain under to avoid climate catastrophe.

But imagine what 100,000 people working together could do. Imagine you are one of them.

On 4 November 1989 hundreds of thousands of people gathered peacefully in the **Alexanderplatz** in what was then East Berlin and refused to move. Five days later the Berlin Wall came down. There were no arrests.

In 2019 the UN released a stark warning. Around the world school children went on strike and 10,000 people came out on the streets of London. Shortly after, the UK Parliament declared an Environment and Climate Emergency.

Recent history is full of examples of the power of people power ... of your power.

All that's missing from the list is Parliament Square, London, April 2023. Gathering peacefully in such large numbers at the nation's seat of power will create a positive, irreversible, societal tipping point.

Surrounding the Houses of Parliament day after day in large numbers means we can leave the locks, glue and paint behind and instead demonstrate faith in a critical mass of people to create a moment that's impossible to ignore.

An invitation will go to all movements, all organisations to come together and stay for as long as they can. .

There is a threshold of numbers, human energy, above which people power cannot be stopped. That's what the target is. That's why you need to be there.

THE 100 DAYS CAMPAIGN is the campaign to achieve the target of 100,000 people for the 21st April. For more information and the opportunity to ask questions on this there is a zoom presentation on

Sun 15 Jan, 19.00-20.00

Register here: [Click link](#)

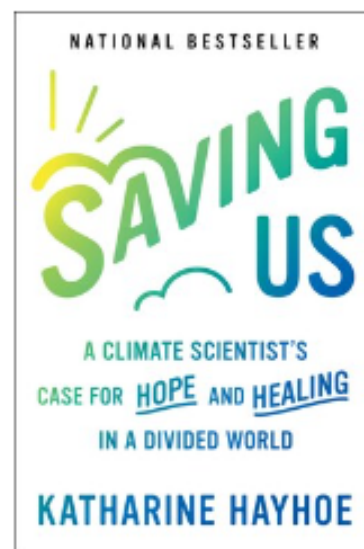
Events/Actions/Education and Information (continued)

Book

Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World, by Katharine Hayhoe

Katharine Hayhoe's latest book offers salvation or disappointment, depending on your perspective. On balance, I recommend it, but it's not all things to all rebels.

Dr. Hayhoe is an American climate scientist who has built her career in fine-grained modelling for community-level planning. She also speaks on the importance of climate action. As an evangelical Christian, she has cultural kinship with many climate sceptics, and she uses that kinship to reach out and communicate.



Saving Us is a practical how-to on finding kinship, on cutting through apathy and fear. Meet people where they are, use effective, research-based communication methods, and more people will jump on board—and maybe we can make real changes together.

That's the hope. What Dr. Hayhoe doesn't address is that systemic injustice is part of the picture. People with power who are actively hostile to climate action are part of the picture. The advice offered in *Saving Us* will not, all by itself, save us. That's the discouraging part.

But other tools exist, and we can and should use all of them. And if you find yourself in conversation with someone who seems sceptical, it will be good to have a manual on finding common ground.

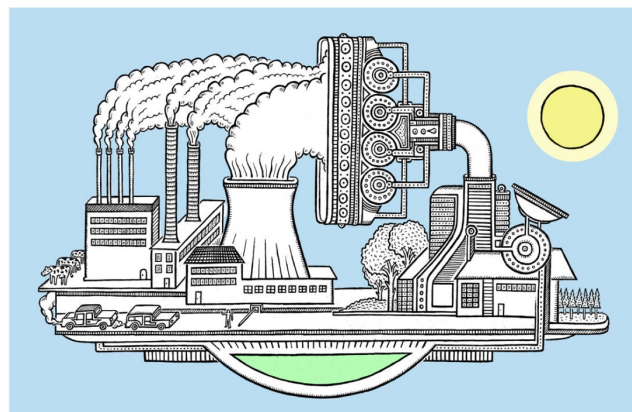
Avoid Amazon. Support local bookshops. Buy your books at Bookshop or Hive.

Technological Advances

A new wireless EV charging road is currently under construction in Germany. [Read article.](#)

Cheap, sustainable hydrogen: New catalyst is 10 times more efficient than previous sun-powered water-splitting devices. [Read article.](#)

Aeromine Rooftop Wind. Static. Silent. 50% more power than Solar PV. What's not to like? [See video.](#)



Sustainable Farming/Food

'A small but mighty role': local farms give low-cost access to healthy food. [Read article.](#)

New food technologies could release 80% of the world's farmland back to nature. [Read article.](#)

Ancient farming strategy holds promise for climate resilience. [Read article.](#)



The Scales of Justice

Proposed EU Nature Restoration Law Could be the First Big Step Toward Achieving COP15's Ambitious Plan to Staunch Biodiversity Loss. [Read article.](#)

Cumbria coal mine: UK Government to face legal challenge from Friends of the Earth. [Read article.](#)

Why environmental disaster victims are looking to European courts. [Read article.](#)

ClientEarth set to take Danone to court over its plastics footprint. [Read article.](#)



Eco'omic Recovery—Building Back Better

'A new industrial age': Clean energy manufacturing could be worth \$650bn annually by 2030. [Read article.](#)

Report: Green and just transition offers \$10trn opportunity for global economy. [Read article.](#)



The Fight Against Fossil Fuels

'It was a set-up, we were fooled': the coal mine that ate an Indian village. [Read article.](#)

Energy giant ExxonMobil sues EU to block energy windfall tax. [Read article.](#)

Colombia's Oil Industry Is An Environmental Disaster. [Read article.](#)

Guyana's Oil Boom Will Only Accelerate In 2023. [Read article.](#)



The Amazon Rainforest Is Still Burning

Brazilian Amazon deforestation up 150% in Bolsonaro's last month. [Read article.](#)

Lula revives \$1 billion Amazon Fund and environmental protections. [Read article.](#)

Amazon rainforest deforestation is influencing weather in Tibet. [Read article.](#)

Indigenous territories and protected areas are key to forest conservation in the Brazilian Amazon, study shows. [Read article.](#)



The Circular Economy

New 20p charge for bottles and cans will start in Scotland this year. [Read article.](#)



Green lending tops fossil fuel for first time

By Tim Quinson

For the first time, more money was raised in the debt markets for climate-friendly projects than for fossil-fuel companies.

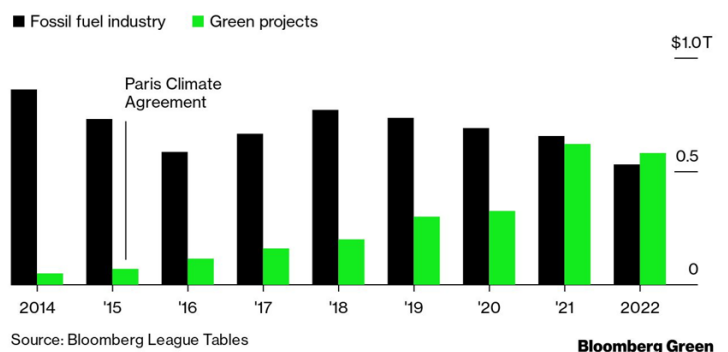
Roughly \$580 billion was arranged in 2022 for renewable energy and other environmentally responsible ventures, while the oil, gas and coal industries turned to lenders and underwriters for closer to \$530 billion, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

But it's not that green financing is finally winning out over fossil fuel lending. Rather, Big Oil looks to be getting more money from elsewhere. High oil prices over the past year have likely freed energy companies from their dependence on capital markets, said April Merleaux, research manager at the environmental non-profit Rainforest Action Network.

"We're also seeing fossil-fuel companies turn to less traditional sources of capital, such as private equity, which is much harder for us to track," Merleaux said. Given this backdrop, "it's difficult to say with confidence that there's a new trend in the lending markets that will extend into 2023."

Green Turnabout

Green debt issuance exceeds oil, gas and coal-related financing for first time since the Paris climate announcement at the end of 2015



The big question for oil, gas and coal companies is how they plan to use their balance sheets to make the transition to clean energy, Merleaux said. Currently, many are saying they plan to expand fossil-fuel production now and decarbonize later, she said.

"This is false logic, and it isn't what the International Energy Agency (IEA) recommends," she said. As for the banks, "they know what needs to be done, but we don't yet see evidence that they're really ready to follow through on their emissions-reduction objectives."

Jamie Dimon, chairman and chief executive officer of JPMorgan Chase & Co. The bank's recent climate commitments have done "nothing to change" its support for the fossil-fuel industry, said environmental nonprofit Reclaim Finance. Photographer: Al Drago/Bloomberg



Bankers are generating considerably more revenue these days from selling green bonds and loans. In 2022, they pocketed an estimated \$3.3 billion of fees from these deals, exceeding the \$2.5 billion earned from lining up bonds and loans for the highest-polluting energy sectors, Bloomberg data show.

Credit Agricole SA, BNP Paribas SA and Bank of America Corp. ranked as the top arrangers

of green bonds and loans last year, according to Bloomberg data, while RBC Capital Markets, Wells Fargo & Co. and JPMorgan Chase & Co. were the leading providers to the fossil-fuel industry.

However, if one looks at the bigger picture, Wall Street and its brethren clearly remain dedicated to funding the companies most responsible for global warming. Since the Paris climate agreement was announced in 2015, banks have raised almost \$4.6 trillion for oil, gas and coal companies—double the \$2.3 trillion gathered from green loans and bond sales.

But those Big Oil banks—including JPMorgan—say they have climate ambitions, and they're expanding. Last month, the New York-based bank announced new emissions-reduction targets for airlines, cement manufacturers and iron ore and steel companies. That adds to JPMorgan's first set of goals, which focused on the oil and gas, electric power and auto manufacturing sectors.

JPMorgan said the six sectors now covered by its reduction goals account for the majority of global emissions. The new targets are intended to align with the IEA's net zero by 2050 scenario, according to the bank.

Climate activists have had a mixed reaction to JPMorgan's claims.

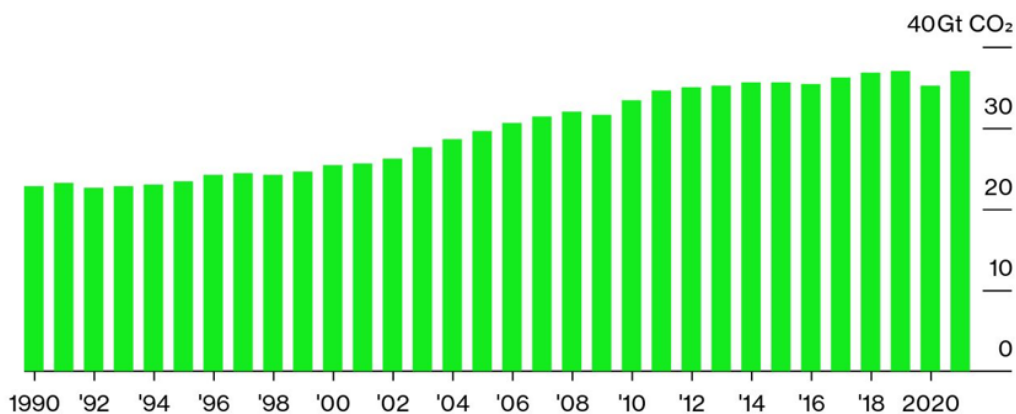
While the adoption of additional sectoral goals is "great to see," JPMorgan's oil and gas commitments have so far done "nothing to change its unwavering support" for the fossil-fuel industry, said Lucie Pinson, director of environmental nonprofit Reclaim Finance. "The jury is still out on the material impact of these new targets for cement and steel."

Merleaux and others also have questioned JPMorgan's decision to focus on reducing the carbon intensity of its financing portfolio rather than pledging to reduce absolute emissions. That jibes with a United Nations-appointed panel of experts that said companies and financial institutions should focus on cutting absolute emissions when setting net-zero goals.

JPMorgan has responded by saying that intensity-based metrics are the most "decision-useful way to evaluate clients progress against climate scenarios."

Global Emissions Since 1990

Emissions from fossil fuel-burning and industry rose 63% from 1990-2021



Source: Global Carbon Project

Bloomberg Green

Why Extinction Rebellion is giving up on disruption

By Archie Bland

Extinction Rebellion marked a sea change in climate protest in the UK, but what does the group's shift from public disruption mean for the movement's future?

Good morning. Extinction Rebellion was founded on a genuinely radical idea: disruptive civil disobedience that was much less concerned with the popularity of the perpetrators than cultivating a sense that the issue they were highlighting was an emergency. Their arrival marked a sea change in climate protest in the UK, drew massive public attention, and made waves around the world. Now, however, Extinction Rebellion has released a statement titled: "We quit".



XR is not quitting climate activism: instead, in a statement released on New Year's Day said, the group said they were giving up on massive disruption, aiming to build a mass movement, instead. But in some ways, they have already made that shift - and a new generation of radical protesters have taken up the mantle. Another news story yesterday evidenced the urgency of the case they are all seeking to make, one way or another: Monday was the warmest January day ever recorded in at least eight European countries.

While Extinction Rebellion's statement is summarised in the headline-grabbing phrase "we quit", the long version is less a resignation than a reorientation. XR is promising a "temporary shift away from public disruption as a primary tactic", but they also say that they will now "prioritise attendance over arrest and relationships over roadblocks, as we stand together and become impossible to ignore".

XR links this new focus to a bet that tumult in the wider political climate means that people may now be more receptive to the message: "The conditions for change in the UK have never been more favourable - it's time to seize the moment. The confluence of multiple crises presents us with a unique opportunity to mobilise and move beyond traditional divides."

To that end, they are planning a protest outside the Houses of Parliament on 21 April which they hope will attract 100,000 people. "Their view is that it can be alienating towards an everyday trade unionist to have disruptive protests that are stopping people getting to work, getting criticised on talk radio, and so on," Damien Gayle said. The new approach is meant to make that 21 April protest more palatable to those people.

One crucial question when interpreting the XR statement is who it is speaking for. "XR says it operates according to a decentralised model," Damien said. "So there will have been a group responsible for this statement, but there's nothing stopping individual XR groups from taking more radical action, and no overarching discipline if they do."

A casual observer might view this news as a sudden break with the past, but debates over whether to stick to a radical approach or seek to broaden the movement have been part of XR's evolution from very early on. "This is more a reflection of what's already been happening than something new," Damien said.



In this excellent long read from 2020, Matthew Taylor lays out the internal debates that began soon after the first successful April 2019 "rebellion": one side believed that "a relatively small group of people" could bring "an escalation in provocative direct action to keep the momentum going". The other thought that "the good will and moral high ground achieved in April should be used to build a broader movement".

That debate was tied to a sense that leading figures had failed to recognise the narrowness of their own perspective as older, middle-class, mostly white activists. A proposed shutdown of Heathrow airport was abandoned, but taken on by a new group led by XR co-founder Roger Hallam, without much success.

Later "rebellions" charted a similar course to the initial April action but drew less attention as direct action became a more familiar approach. "When XR first appeared, we were completely gobsmacked by the idea they could blockade Waterloo Bridge for days at a time with hundreds of arrests," Damien said. "But now those sort of actions look almost tame. We're used to them."

Has direct action already fallen off the agenda?

No. In October 2021, a new group called Insulate Britain made a dramatic impact by blocking busy roads during a five-week campaign - and while they drew the apoplexy of Boris Johnson's government and parts of the media, they also had success with their prescient demand to get home insulation on to the political agenda.

Last year, a new round of protests by Insulate Britain were accompanied by direct action from the group Just Stop Oil, the most infamous of which saw the group throw tomato soup at Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. (No damage was caused to the painting.) Both groups were co-founded by Roger Hallam, who split from XR before the Heathrow protests. "Those radical elements that would have once been attracted to XR are already bypassing it, and going straight to the likes of Just Stop Oil," Damien said.

What are the arguments about the best way forward?

One of the most interesting and persuasive cases for the emergence of a less abrasive strategy in the climate protest movement is also much misunderstood: its proponents insist they are not repudiating what has already happened, but building on it.

In a recent episode of the *Accidental Gods* podcast, Rupert Read, who helped to launch XR and who is now one of the most prominent voices of the wider "moderate flank", put it like this: "The greatest compliment we can pay now to what we accomplished in Extinction Rebellion and the other parts of the radical flank in 2019 ... is to exploit it fully, to

encourage and enable a far larger group of people to march through the widened Overton window."

This argument might be seen as suggesting a future where radical and moderate approaches can be symbiotic rather than opposed, with one approach inculcating a sense of urgency, and the other helping a critical mass of people to see what they can do about it. "One theory is that the radical flank can actually make the more moderate groups more popular because they don't look extreme in comparison," Damien said.

But Read does seem to see diminishing returns in the continuation of disruptive protests, and implies that they are largely a spent force. In this fascinating YouTube conversation from last January with Roger Hallam, he says that XR's successes were "quite a thin achievement that have not come to dominate everyday politics. We have not moved into emergency mode."

Others disagree that a more moderate approach will help solve this. In this October piece answering another from Read, Just Stop Oil's Indigo Rumbelow argues that disruption is "an electric shock that calls upon people to see the horror of what's unfolding before us". In that YouTube video, Roger Hallam suggested that a different approach could be actively counterproductive: "If you present a moderate flank proposition, you're sort of letting people off the hook."

So does XR's decision mean the end of direct action?

That is very unlikely: those within XR who believe in continuing the disruptive approach are likely to align themselves with other groups that intend to do exactly that. And last night Damien reported that Insulate Britain and Just Stop Oil both saying that they remain committed to civil resistance. Still, the news does signal the public resolution of a debate inside XR that made the disruptive approach inescapable.

The vital question now is whether Hallam is right that this will mean a dissipation of activist energy - or, as Read hopes, herald a new mass movement that can reach new heights by casting off trivial controversies about road closures and vandalism. One thing they all agree on is the urgency of the case. As the XR statement says: "Despite the blaring alarm on the climate and ecological emergency ringing loud and clear, very little has changed."

3 reasons local climate activism is more powerful than people realize

By Adam Aron

Global warming has increased the number of extreme weather events around the world by 400% since the 1980s. Countries know how to stop the damage from worsening: stop burning fossil fuels and shift to renewable energy, electrify transportation and industry, and reduce the carbon intensity of agriculture.

But none of this is happening fast enough to avoid warming on a catastrophic scale.

In my new book, "The Climate Crisis," I lay out the mechanisms and impacts of the climate crisis and the reasons behind the lack of serious effort to combat it. One powerful reason is the influence that the fossil fuel industry, electric utilities and others with a vested interest in fossil fuels have over policymakers.

But there's another reason for this inaction that everyone has the ability to change: response skepticism—the public doesn't believe in its own political power enough or use it.

When people speak up and work together, they can spur powerful changes. You can see this in university students demanding that their chancellor retire the campus fossil fuel power plant and switch to renewable electricity. You can also see it in ranchers in Colorado pushing their governor to enact a clean electricity standard so that they can benefit from having wind turbines on their lands.

Yet, while 70% of American adults describe climate change as an important concern, only 10% say they volunteered for an activity focused on addressing climate change or contacted an elected official about it in the previous year, according to a 2021 Pew Research Center poll.

Why do so few adults participate in actions to encourage governments and decision-makers to do more about climate change, even though surveys show they support doing so, and how can they overcome the skepticism holding them back?

What prevents people from speaking out

Polls show some people see how money from wealthy industries and individuals influences politicians and don't believe politicians listen to the public.

Others are distracted by arguments that can tamp down engagement, such as campaigns that urge people to focus on individual recycling, or ask why the U.S. should do more if other countries aren't, or argue that there's no need to rush because future technology will save humanity. Some believe that corporate and university promises to reach



carbon neutrality in the future—often far in the future—are enough.

These narratives can be seductive. The focus on recycling, for example, offers a sense of satisfaction that one accomplished something. The arguments that China emits more greenhouse gases and that future technology will fix everything appear to exonerate people from having to take any steps now.

Studies have found that participating in local climate actions may require a constellation of values, attitudes and beliefs, including believing in one's own ability, and the group's, to get things done. Some of these beliefs can be developed through practice in organizing together, which is often downright fun, and has other psychological benefits that flow from increased solidarity in an often alienating society.

What I believe is particularly important is having a local theory of change—believing that, while human-caused climate change is a global problem, it is worthwhile taking local action.

American adults' views vs. actions on climate change

The majority of American adults said they consider addressing climate change an important concern, but few invested time in actions to try to address it in the previous year.

Consider addressing climate change an important concern

70%

Donated money to an organization focused on addressing climate change

16%

Volunteered for an activity focused on addressing climate change

10%

Contacted an elected official to urge them to address climate change

10%

Attended a protest or rally to show support for addressing climate change

6%

Pew Research surveyed 13,749 U.S. adults in April 2021

Chart: The Conversation/CC-BY-ND • Source: Pew Research • Created with Datawrapper

3 reasons local activism matters

Research and history suggest that local action is more powerful than many people realize. Here are three key reasons:

First, much of the policy change that can affect climate change is local rather than national.

For example, replacing fossil fuel power plants with renewable energy technology can help lower greenhouse gas emissions. Much of this is under the control of state governments, which delegate the authority to public utility commissions. The public can pay attention to what utilities and public utility commissions do, and let their governors know that they are watching by writing letters and joining local groups that make their voices heard.

Cities can set policies to replace natural gas with electric appliances in homes and buildings, encourage homeowners to install efficient electric heat pumps and determine whether investments are made in public transit instead of freeways. When pressured, city officials do enact these policies.

Second, local wins can become contagious. In 1997, a handful of advocates in Massachusetts won their battle for a local policy under which a portion of electricity bill payments went to a not-for-profit agency that funneled money toward renewables. By 2022, this policy, known as community choice aggregation, was adopted by over 1,800 local governments across six states, affecting millions of people. Local action can also create learning curves for technology—pushing for more solar and wind turbines leads to increased manufacture and price drops.

Third, local action can trigger national policy, spread to other countries and ultimately trigger global agreements.

There are many historical examples, from the suffragette movement that won U.S. women the right to vote, to the fight for a 40-hour work week. Local action in the Southern U.S. catalyzed 1960s civil rights laws. Local action for same-sex marriage, starting in San Francisco, led to state laws and ultimately to federal legislation signed in December 2022 that prohibits states from refusing to recognize out-of-state marriages based on sex, race or ethnicity.

Environmental regulation in the 1970s is a striking case. It started with public alarm about cities clouded in smog, rivers catching fire from industrial waste and beaches fouled by oil spills. Citizens organized thousands of protest actions, and municipalities responded by implementing environmental enforcement.

The lawsuits that followed were very costly for corporate interests, which then supported federal intervention as a way to have predictable rules. It was President Richard Nixon who signed some of the furthest reaching legislation ever.

Youth successes in changing climate policy

In 2022, Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act, which authorizes nearly \$400 billion of climate-related spending over 10 years. I believe the youth-led Sunrise Movement can claim a major role in its success.

The group has relentlessly organized marches and demonstrations in dozens of cities since 2019 and pressured Democrats in Congress. While the result fell short of the group's vision for a Green New Deal, it went further than any previous climate-related law.

Group action targeted at local decision-makers is a time-honored tradition—and I believe necessary in the current political environment for action on climate change.

Other regular stories in this newsletter



Good and Bad News



Reports and Research

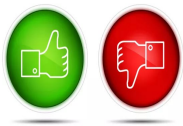


Plastic and Pollution



Land, Sea and Ecology

Good and Bad News



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