



# CHANGING THE SOCIAL CLIMATE

How global warming affects economic justice, the future of the progressive movement, and whether your child walks to school.

A conversation between Michel Gelobter of Redefining Progress and Catherine Lerza of Tides Foundation.

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## Michel Gelobter

has been the Executive Director of Redefining Progress since July 2001. Prior to joining the staff at Redefining Progress, he was a professor in the Graduate Department of Public Administration at Rutgers University. During the same period, he founded and ran CAPE, or Community/Academic Partnership for the Environment, a regional research entity spanning New Jersey, New York, and Puerto Rico. He also started the Environmental Policy Program at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

From 1990 to 1992, Dr. Gelobter was Director of Environmental Quality for the City of New York, and an Assistant Commissioner for its Department of Environmental Protection. He also served as the environmental and health issues director during David Dinkins' successful mayoral campaign in 1989. Gelobter was a Congressional Black Caucus Fellow and served with the U.S. House of Representatives' Energy and Commerce Committee from 1988-89.

He presently serves on the boards of several organizations including the Natural Resources Defense Council; the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment and the Advisory Council of the Environmental Leadership Program.

## Catherine Lerza

is a Senior Philanthropic Advisor, focusing on environmental grantmaking. In her 30+ year history in the progressive social change movement, Cathy has been both an activist and a grantmaker, working at the intersections of the environmental and social justice communities. She is also a writer and editor, with numerous books to her credit, including *Food for People*, *Not for Profit* and *Strategic Communications for Nonprofits*.



Before coming to Tides, Cathy served as the Executive Director of the Beldon Fund, Director of the Defining Sustainable Communities national conference, and Executive Director of the Shalan Foundation. She was also the Associate Director of the Rural Coalition and editor of Environmental Action magazine. She also consulted for dozens of organizations, including the Communications Consortium Media Center, Neighborhood Funders Group, the Council on Foundations, Sonoran Institute, and TomPaine.com.

Cathy has served on many boards, including Environmental Support Center, Western States Center, National Network of Grantmakers, and Pesticide Action Network. Cathy holds a B.S. in Conservation of Natural Resources from University of California, Berkeley.

# INTRODUCTION

Two things have happened since we began working on this publication in August of 2006.

First, California passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the nation's very first piece of climate change legislation. Second, the White House announced a national plan to address global warming.

The California law is truly a landmark piece of legislation. And while the merits of the White House plan are debatable, together these news items convey one simple fact: The public debate about whether or not global warming is real is officially over.

The pressing need to do something about dramatic climate change has reached a critical mass across the globe and across the country. And it is an issue that has also reached into every aspect of our lives.

Global warming is not simply an environmental issue. It is an economic issue, a social justice issue, a lifestyle issue. It's about race, class, and democratic participation. It's about globalization and global democracy. It's about national security and global security.

So how do we effectively organize around this growing crisis?

Tides Foundation invited Redefining Progress Executive Director Michel Gelobter to discuss that question—and many more—with our Senior Philanthropic Advisor Catherine Lerza at our offices in the San Francisco Presidio, on August 25, 2006.

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# WHAT WORLD DO WE WANT TO LIVE IN?



**Lerza:** There has been a tremendous shift in public consciousness in the past year regarding global warming. In the past, we've seen debate over whether global warming is "real" or not. But that era seems to be over, and the fact of global warming is no longer in question. What do you think happened to change public perception so dramatically?

**Gelobter:** First of all, there has been effective leadership by state- and local-level activists around the country. In the past three or four years, people working in this field have understood that it is extremely difficult to get anything significant accomplished in Washington, D.C. So activists are focusing on the local level, which is where the traction is going to be for a number of years to come.

The coalescing of forces in state and local governments has also been really valuable to moving the issue forward. There have also been a number of high-profile studies released recently that detail how this issue directly affects specific constituencies, such as public health, tourism, agriculture, and the like.

Another big factor has been Al Gore's fantastic effort over the last year, including his speaking tour on global warming and the release of *An Inconvenient Truth*. He has been very smart about making it cool to pay attention to this issue, and the movie has been widely seen.

## WHAT WORLD DO WE WANT TO LIVE IN?

Last but not least, I think that the impact on the American public by the devastation left behind by Hurricane Katrina last year cannot be underestimated. Katrina drew domestic attention to the issue of global warming because it really showed people what a climate-unstable future could look like.

**Lerza:** Why do you think it took so long for the U.S. public and mainstream politicians to acknowledge the reality of climate change? And moving ahead, what do you suggest as

For example, “peak oil” was a hot topic for some time—the idea that the world-wide rate of oil production will eventually begin a terminal decline. And that is a negative story, right? “We’re going to run out of oil.”

But that can be a positive story. Why can’t we talk about the *benefits* of a world where we’re *not* using oil?—about spending less of our money on oil and more of our money on education, on our children, or on recreation?—about safer vehicles and shorter commute times?

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“We have to talk about the kind of world we will be living in when we start addressing climate change.”

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effective strategies to capture the public’s imagination and mobilize them to support climate stabilization initiatives?

**Gelobter:** Well, to speak in broad terms, we tend to be complainers within the progressive community. We are good at saying what is wrong. But there is a positive story behind addressing the problem of global warming and moving towards climate stabilization. We really have to talk about the kind of world we will be living in when we start addressing climate change.

Earlier this year, I was asked to present on a topic: “Grand Challenges on Climate Change.” I said, “I can’t think of any.” From my perspective, they’re all opportunities. And the leadership act for the movement is in projecting a positive future. It is about getting out of our silos and talking about the world we want to live in.

**Lerza:** So what other opportunities does this dilemma create?

**Gelobter:** Climate stabilization presents many positive opportunities. This is a technological opportunity to have a set of new products that

are cleaner, safer, and more efficient. This is a business opportunity as well, for clean technology, for the venture capital community, and for the state of California to mobilize in unprecedented ways.

The public wants to know, “Where is the light?” I can’t stand it when people say, “Taking action on climate change is going to be extremely difficult.” Wait a minute! My reply is, “There is nothing to not like about a world where we’re using less fossil fuels. What is it about that world you don’t like?”

Why are we spending \$2 trillion on a war in Iraq when we could be having cleaner air, better education, and better healthcare? Talk about the things that we want, not just those things we don’t want. I think that’s an act of leadership.

We have two worlds to choose between. There is the bright world, where we address these problems, where we’re going to have a better economy through these new opportunities and new technologies. And that can also be a more just and secure world.

Or there is the alternative world: A 30- or 40-year-old war of terror and fear. And I don’t think anybody in their right mind wants that second world, except those who benefit from it economically, from a power perspective.

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (also known as AB 32) was signed into law on August 31, 2006, and represents the nation’s first piece of climate change legislation.

AB 32 sets a precedent for similar legislation to be implemented around the country to begin curbing the effects of global warming. Other states are building political momentum to pass climate stabilization bills, increasing the pressure for a national system despite White House opposition.

Key provisions of AB 32 include:

- > Implementing a 25% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions over the next 14 years. This means by the year 2020 air pollution would be rolled back to 1990 levels;
- > Requiring the California Air Resources Board to require reporting of emissions from significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions by Jan. 1, 2008;
- > Requiring the California Air Resources Board to adopt regulations governing voluntary emissions reductions and giving credit for early actors;
- > Authorizing the California Air Resources Board to use a broad range of existing authorities for enforcement of greenhouse gas emission reduction regulations; and,
- > Creating an emergency provision—in the event of catastrophic circumstances or threat of significant economic harm—the Governor can halt implementation of regulations for up to one year.

# THE SOCIAL CLIMATE

**Lerza:** The impacts of global warming highlight social and racial inequalities around the world. It certainly affects poor communities differently. We saw that clearly in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Could you talk about these different impacts of climate change depending on geography, race, and class?

**Gelobter:** Communities of color and low-income communities in this country clearly feel the impact of climate change and have been feeling that impact for over 20 years.

My organization, Redefining Progress, has conducted a number of studies on Latinos and climate change and African-Americans and climate change. Different communities bear quite a different vulnerability to the risks of global warming. Six years ago, we already had figured out that the greatest victims of climate change were the lower-income communities and communities of color. You can see it in the disparity in heat deaths in St. Louis. You can see there's an impact on agricultural communities and on border communities and indigenous communities, particularly in the Arctic.

We have to address issues of justice: people have a right to health and to a secure place to live. They have this right whether they're black, or white, or whatever.





Photo: Dean Coppola / Contra-Costa Times / WpN

## THE SOCIAL CLIMATE

Even before Katrina hit, New Orleans was an extremely clear case of what's happening all over the country. People of color and from low-income communities are spending almost twice as much of their income than white people on energy—both for gasoline, because they have to commute farther and because they live in substandard housing, which requires less efficient and more expensive heating.

them subsidies to help them and their workers transition, but at the end of the day we want to break the oil addiction. And we want to do it in a way that doesn't make our most heavily impacted communities worse off.

So there was a collision course: the greatest victims of climate change were potentially the greatest victims of climate policy. But we can

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“What is the number one thing we can do for the environment? It's to allow people to live together in diverse communities. Because the single biggest cause of environmental degradation in the Bay Area and other cities is literally people's desire to flee to the suburb where everybody looks like them.”

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At the same time, the primary policies being considered to control greenhouse gasses were economically regressive and could put communities of color at even greater risk. Many of these policies represent what we call “paying the pusher for the cure,” that is, paying off big polluters to take actions that are actually quite cheap for them. After all, why should we pay coal companies to sell less coal? We can give

change this collision course into a collaboration for justice and the environment.

Justice is central at a global level as well. Western countries have appropriated the lion's share of the atmosphere as a dumping ground for their energy waste. What are newcomers to industrialization supposed to do? If we just ratchet down fossil fuels use without offering

## FACTS & FIGURES

any alternatives, then the poor of the world will have a major road to development blocked and no way out. That's a recipe for even greater economic and social disaster.

**Lerza:** I think it's fair to say that the links between global warming and issues of justice, the economy, racial equality, and most other issues have not been widely or explicitly addressed. How do you think we can break out of thinking about global warming as strictly an environmental issue?

**Gelobter:** Economic history sheds some light on this question and highlights the opportunity we have. From 1974 to the present, per capita energy use in California has been leveled. That means, today, the average Californian family saves \$1,000 a year on their energy bill compared to what they would have been paying if the state had gone the same direction as the rest of the country did. So we have done it in this state before.

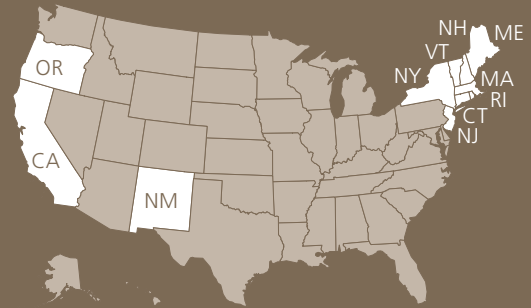
To me, that says that the next great opportunity is a community-building opportunity. When I'm speaking to an audience, I will frequently ask "How many of you walked to school when you were a kid?" And everybody raises their hand. And then I say, "How many of your kids walk to school?" And nobody raises their hand.

Really, the question is: what kind of communities do we want to have? And a world that addresses climate change seriously is a world in

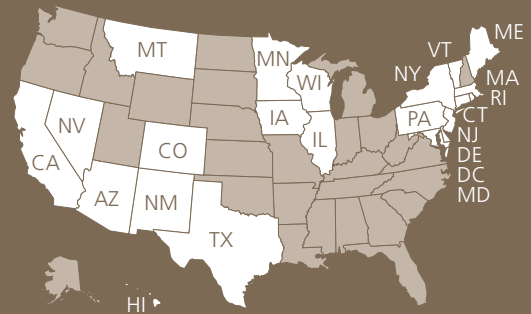
## The States and Greenhouse Gases:

(Source: *Washington Post*)

Set emission targets for greenhouse gases:



Require power plants to generate a portion of electricity from renewable resources:



Plan to adopt California's strict vehicle standard for greenhouse gases:



## THE SOCIAL CLIMATE

which we are no longer solving our problems by pouring gasoline into our tank and driving two hours a day to work. It's one where we live in diverse communities, where our jobs are closer to our homes, where we spend time with our children on buses instead of in our cars.

In this world our cities are vital places where people want to live and where there is art in the parks and art in the streets and people get the benefits of living together and keeping their capital in their own communities.

But a fossil fuels-based economy is one that fundamentally alienates us from each other and from our own community. Is it right that our that my mail carrier has to drive two hours into work to deliver mail in the city of San Francisco because he or she lives in Stockton? Our approach to energy has led us to make choices that have separated our communities out. And climate change forces us to make different choices. Are these the kinds of lives we want to lead?

**Lerza:** What you are describing is a profound overhaul of American economics and culture. In this sense, addressing the problem of climate change gives us an opportunity to build a lifestyle that's more in accordance with our values, right?

**Gelobter:** Absolutely. I think that is true for all Americans.

What is the number one thing we can do for the environment? It's to allow people to live together in diverse communities because the single biggest cause of environmental degradation in the Bay Area and other cities is literally people's desire to flee to the suburb where everybody looks like them. It's what keeps us from having jobs near mass transit hubs. And it's what keeps us from having a mass transit system that is really effective.

When was the last time you heard an environmental group talk about spending more time with your kids as a solution to climate change? All the things you do to use less fossil fuels give you more time with your kid's hand in your hand, walking down the street, doing all the things that are important to your own joy.

We must have the courage to revision the world and tell people about our vision.

From a technical perspective, one of the best things we can do for climate change is to implement energy efficiency retrofits for low-income households. That housing is of such poor quality that residents have to use a lot more energy just to heat or cool them. Let's make poor people's houses super energy efficient. It creates jobs. It makes poor people less poor because they are spending less of their income on energy.

In short, it's movement building. It's revisioning the world and telling people about it. You know, the solution to climate change is not everybody driving a Prius. That's part of it, yes, but not the whole story.

## UNLIKELY PARTNERS

### Expanding the Movement

Building a broad-based movement implies diversity of focus, diversity of tactics, and diversity in world views. As funders and as activists, it is important that we support these efforts to reach across perceived differences and take advantage of the current groundswell of unity around climate change.

### Faithful Stewards

A surprising force to emerge in this movement has been the faith community. Interfaith coalitions and national associations have taken a stand on global warming, proving that protecting our planet can be as persuasive as other social issues, if not more so. An early player has been the **National Council of Churches** which formed the Eco-Justice Working Group in 1983 and have strongly supported the Kyoto treaty on global warming.

**Interfaith Power and Light** is a national effort with coalitions in several states. Their mission is to be faithful stewards of the earth “promoting energy conservation, efficiency and renewable energy.”

Perhaps most surprising has been the National **Association of Evangelicals**. Close to 90 evangelical Christian leaders have signed a statement calling for federal regulations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. “Millions of people could die in this century because of climate change, most of them our poorest global neighbors,” the statement said. “Many of us have required considerable convincing before becoming persuaded that climate change is a real problem... But now we have seen and heard enough.”

### Big Thinking from Small Businesses

When the California legislature passed AB 32, the very first climate control law in the nation (see page 9), major business groups unsurprisingly opposed the effort. However, at least one business group praised the bill: **Small Business California**.

“We think this is going to create a huge industry and will provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop technologies to meet the demand that will be created,” said a spokesman for the group. “Small businesses will therefore be creating thousands of jobs, which is what we do best.”

### The Blue-Green Wave

Labor unions and environmentalists traditionally have been at odds in the standard “jobs vs. conservation” framework. But the growth of “blue-green” alliances over the past few years has been very promising. The **United Steelworkers** has developed a formal blue-green alliance with the **Sierra Club**. And in February, 2006, the Steelworkers also published *Securing Our Children’s World*, a report that covers topics such as global warming, air pollution and sustainable forestry. More importantly, it details why these are union issues and worker issues.

Meanwhile, groups like the **Apollo Alliance** promote clean technology and smarter energy as clear benefits for workers. They also frame their message in highly positive themes, urging America to hope again, to dream again, and to think big when thinking of solutions to big problems.





Photo: Jennifer S. Altman / WpN

# JUST SOLUTIONS

**Lerza:** I would like you to talk about solutions to global warming, things we can do that will stabilize climate. At the same time, how can those solutions actually address the justice issues you are talking about? For example, you could do cap and trade, (a policy which provides economic incentives reducing polluting emissions). You could implement all kinds of trade or regulatory solutions, which would not get at the social and economic justice issues that you just so eloquently described.

What needs to be built into climate solutions to make sure that we don't either continue the inequities we have now or even exacerbate them?

In the international arena, I'm thinking about how this country's development is not sustainable. As less developed nations seek to provide people's basic needs, how can those countries continue to be on a path to development that is sustainable, green, nontoxic, and equitable? If they follow the U.S.'s path, we're all going to be in deeper trouble. At the same time, we can't just say, "Look, the fossil fuels path doesn't work." We need to offer a different path.

**Gelobter:** Well, we cannot block the old route without opening a new one. That is neither fair nor just.

And you cannot have a successful climate policy that is not about justice. It doesn't exist. On a global level, the problem is that one universe of people used up all the capacity in the atmosphere to absorb fossil fuels. Now, everybody else, particularly brown people in poor countries, can't do it anymore.

For example, how can China continue to grow? When the world says, "You can no longer use coal," who is going to suffer first?—a Chinese coal-burning oligarch or a peasant of the Tibetan

cooking over open fires every year. There are ways we could really improve people's livelihoods and health and make some clean-energy transitions at the same time. The transition to efficient burners, for example, not only improves air quality, but also reduces greenhouse gases.

**Lerza:** Right, and it also stops deforestation.

**Gelobter:** Right, right. There is incredible confluence between so much of what we want to have happen in the world and solving this

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**"The only way to slow climate pollution is to make it more expensive to do it."**

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plateau, burning brown coal? They're going to be shutting down the small guys long before they're going to be shutting down the big industry groups. It's about energy systems. We have to change them across the board.

If you just ask countries like China to cap their emissions, and they attempt to do so by pressuring small farmers and nomadic people and women who are burning firewood, sooner or later they're going to anger a lot of people. Those policies are going to fail. It would be really important to get women in Africa to use natural gas fuels because so many of them die from

problem. But again, we have to name it and use it to move constituencies.

**Lerza:** There are several U.S. policies that are not viewed as energy policies or climate change policies yet have an enormous effect on this issue. I'm talking about access to public lands for coal, oil, and natural gas development; continuing subsidy of oil drilling; and a variety of other things that really conflict with the kind of future you're talking about.

Can you talk a little bit about those? Because I think people aren't aware of the extent to

which we actually subsidize the most profitable industries in the world and global warming itself.

**Gelobter:** Right. And there is a whole range of new subsidies emerging around the 21st century economy that is really to the detriment of justice in this country.

If we really want to fix our dependency on fossil fuels, we have to stop subsidizing that concentration of wealth among energy companies and among oil companies particularly. Instead of actually reforming their practices, they are milking the last drops out of a polluting infrastructure. And then they will be asking us to bail them out.

There is no way to solve a fossil fuels addiction by paying present polluters more money. The cap and trade policies you mentioned are one example of this. You would put a cap on greenhouse gas pollution and then let polluters trade amongst themselves to try to reach an efficient level. And there is nothing wrong with that, in theory. The problem is: who owns the right to pollute?

The value of greenhouse gas permits in the U.S. alone is estimated to be between \$80 billion and \$300 billion. We're collecting that money from consumers and giving it to energy company stockholders. On the other hand, if you assume that the atmosphere belongs to all of us, then a greenhouse gas permit system can be designed that recycles those billions of dollars back into

Some of the best organizing work on this international issue has been done locally. For example, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has formed a new partnership with ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability—to take local steps to address this global crisis.

Currently 295 mayors representing more than 49.4 million Americans across the United States have signed on to the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The effort was spearheaded by Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels.

Under the agreement, participating cities promise to:

- > Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns;
- > Urge their state governments, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol—7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012; and
- > Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system

ICLEI is an international association of nearly 700 local governments and national and regional local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development.

For more information on the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, visit <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate>

our communities, back into making all of us less fossil fuels dependent.

One reason we're so excited by the recent climate victory in California is that we were successful in keeping "the polluter pays" and other core principles in the law (*for more about this new law, see page 9*).

And we, the electorate, have allowed this stance to dominate. Our current leader on climate change, Al Gore, proposed a carbon tax in the early 1990s when he was vice-president. And that was the end of Al Gore as a viable political figure until 2006. Not only had he completely lost credibility, but he became an object of ridicule in American politics.

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**"Fundamentally, we have to rewire our energy economy. We have to start paying the real price of our energy use. And the real price of our energy use for fossil fuels includes climate change. If we do anything that avoids paying the real price, we won't be solving the problem."**

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**Lerza:** ExxonMobil's annual profit is greater than all the American automobile manufacturers put together. The power of the oil, coal, and gas industries to influence members of Congress is unprecedented and almost unassailable at this point. Many times, when progressives speak about this vision of the world we want, we immediately collide with, "This is unrealistic. You want us to freeze in the dark. You're soft on security. You're soft on terrorism."

We're constantly up against the money invested in keeping us fossil fuels dependent. So how can we begin to take on the economic and political issues behind global warming?

**Gelobter:** That's a key question. Fundamentally, we have to rewire our energy economy. We have to start paying the real price of our energy use. And the real price of our energy use for fossil fuels includes climate change. If we do anything that avoids paying the real price, we won't be solving the problem.

The only way to slow climate pollution is to make it more expensive to do it. The question is: how do you put a price on it? If you put a price on it in a way that further lines the pockets of big energy industries you end up with a policy that is politically unsustainable. They pass that cost on to consumers, then suddenly, not only are we paying for oil, but we're paying for Exxon to address climate change. And consumers will say, "Hell no," and reject it.

We can have a pollution charge on greenhouse gas pollution, or we can auction the right to emit greenhouse gas pollution the way we auction cell phone bandwidth. Redefining Progress research has shown that net revenues, nationally, from that kind of a charge or auction system could be as high as \$300 billion dollars a year.

You need that money to help everybody transition. You can't build new mass transit systems without large capital investments. So if we pay Exxon to stop polluting, they take that money and invest it in whatever they want. If Exxon pays us because they're polluting, we take that money and we get ourselves off fossil fuels.

**Lerza:** So "us" in this case, means "us taxpayers"?

**Gelobter:** Yes. "Us" is taxpayers. "Us" is small businesses. "Us" is everyone in this system whose direct livelihood is not emitting greenhouse gases. There is a huge opportunity,

and I think the opportunity far outweighs the clout they have as the most profitable companies on the planet.

The markets are critical because you need to rewire them so that money flows to the joy of breaking oil dependence. You want people to feel that they have more money for education, for recreation, for their health, because they're not using as many fossil fuels.

If you invest the dollars you get by making polluters pay in helping everybody transition to an economic system based on clean energies, then you see a net economic boost across the whole economy and a real ability to foster a just transition. And that also turns out to be the only politically sustainable way to achieve control over the climate change issue.

Rewiring our economy promotes justice because it creates investment capital for all the things that communities of color, poor communities, need to live in ways that take less of their time and life energy just to be healthy.

We can also support investment in clean technologies. Progressives and venture capitalists in Silicon Valley can form alliances that benefit both the environment and the investment community. The more successful environmentalists become in changing policy the more profitable the clean technologies become as well.

**Lerza:** What is your climate change agenda at Redefining Progress?

**Gelobter:** First of all, we need to understand and use the positive connection between market mechanisms and social justice. It's not everyday these two come together, but they do so in spades on the issue of climate change. Maybe we will need more energy someday in the future.

involved in the founding of the Blue-Green Alliance that brings labor and environmentalists together behind climate policies that create jobs. Four years ago, we devolved our economic policy work to states and started linking fiscal health to action on climate change.

Some of this work culminated in the passage of California's recent climate change law, which set new benchmarks for ensuring that energy and air

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“The value of relocalizing your economy is huge. You retain capital. You reduce environmental impacts. You build community. It's the intersection of economics and justice.”

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But there is a fourfold increase in efficiency sitting on the table that we haven't harvested yet. And there are solar and wind technologies that we haven't exploited yet. Why on earth would we not take those easy, commonsense steps towards a better future?

Six years ago we convened the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative. It's going strong as a network of grassroots community, labor, and faith groups. It's also training almost 700 youth this year to become members of the Climate Justice Corps. In 1999, we were also

quality policies are designed with the economy and communities in mind.

Redefining Progress is involved in something called “Bay Area Relocalized,” where we have done economic and environmental analyses of the value of relocalizing your economy. And it's huge: you retain capital in the economy; you give communities control over their own fates; you reduce environmental impacts; you build community; you build networks. We focus primarily on economics and its intersection with justice.



Photo: Mike Adaskaveg / Boston Herald / WpN



Photo: Ivan Kashinsky / WpN

A vertical photograph on the left side of the page. The top part shows a grassy field with several people in the background. One person is sitting on the grass, and others are standing. The bottom part shows a close-up of a soccer ball and a red and black jacket on the grass. The title 'MORALS, MESSAGES AND MARKETS' is overlaid on the top part of the image.

# MORALS, MESSAGES AND MARKETS

**Lerza:** You mentioned the Prius. As people begin to accept that global warming is real, they want to make changes in their lives. They're buying compact fluorescents and hybrid vehicles. Then they realize that you can have all compact fluorescents in your home and take mass transit to work. But how do you make your personal actions add up to create that systemic change we need?

Sometimes it's presented as either/or. You've got people talking about what individuals can do. Then you've got another set of people talking about policy and programs, and that typically falls into the realm of politics, which has become such a turnoff for most Americans. So some people think, "Well, I can do this myself," and others might say, "We'll just let technology fix it."

How can we bridge those two worlds: the worlds of individual action and political systemic change? How to see them not as either/or, but as "Yes, and..."?

**Gelobter:** The things that are keeping us from a more efficient world are being promoted by the government. Our existing systems support our fossil fuels dependency. So individuals who want to take action have to fight the system. Wouldn't you rather have a government or a system that actually supports you in living more creatively and living more cleanly on the earth?

## MORALS, MESSAGES AND MARKETS

Individuals cannot accomplish this acting on their own, alone. We will not achieve this change without a change in policy. The forces for the status quo are too strong. Can we, as a movement, highlight the benefits of a new world, a new status quo, and help policy move in that direction?

We are in a moment of huge opportunity. The American public can easily figure out that our

But as a movement, we need to be positive about individual actions because those are extremely important as well.

The key is to play to the positive. When California limited property tax through Proposition 13, local, state, and county governments were forced to rely on sales tax. This meant that they ended up encouraging shopping malls and sprawl. We can name

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“Al Gore’s film raised the alarm bells. Now we need to stand and deliver a vision and then results.”

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government policies have been in the thrall of the fossil fuels industry for the last six years.

**Lerza:** We’re talking about finding hope for future change while being clear about what we’re up against.

**Gelobter:** We are tied deeply to the fossil fuels industry. Look at the profitability of oil companies, at where our president and vice-president come from. Or look at the war in Iraq. But with a little bit of smart communication we could easily explain how this industry is sucking the lifeblood out of our country, all with government support.

the dysfunctions this has engendered for real people: long commute times, bad traffic, poor air quality, a stressed educational system, and, most importantly, a loss of community.

Can policy actually make us happier? The answer is, “Yes.” We can rewire the energy economy in ways, for example, that fund state, local, and county governments to discourage sprawl and encourage people to live in neighborhoods with their friends and with their families. We can help people see how fossil fuels use not only sends our kids to war but also keeps us farther away from them every day when we commute too far to work. And we can build policies that turn these bad stories into good ones.

And we can be creative in speaking about these topics. Messaging is so important.

It's a false dichotomy to say that individual action is separate from policy action. It's a continuum. Individuals' choices are shaped by the rules set by government and policy.

Businesses will be the first people to tell you that. A lot of companies now are saying, "Fine, we will change. Just give us the rules of the road."

**Lerza:** So what we're talking about is sweeping, transformational change. And we understand that it's going to have to include a broad set of issues and become a progressive movement that isn't just environmental but about what our country looks like physically, politically, economically, and culturally.

So what are the components of an effective climate change movement? And what is it going to take to support these components and put them together effectively?

**Gelobter:** The good news here is that we aren't far from being there.

I would say the number one ingredient, above all, is leadership. We really need to recognize people who can speak about the movement because we have a very good new story to tell about communities that are more cohesive, living closer to our loved ones with more green space and more time spent with our families. It's a

story about our pocketbooks not being raided as much by things like the price of gasoline, about getting out of the war that we're fighting in the Middle East over oil. These are all things the American public, I think, is eager for.

Al Gore's film raised the alarm bells. Now we need to stand and deliver a cohesive vision and then deliver results.

**Lerza:** You mentioned leadership: What does that mean to you? Are you talking about individuals? Are you talking about organizations? What does leadership mean in this case?

**Gelobter:** We need some individuals. We don't have a Jesse Jackson for the environment. And unfortunately movie stars don't cut it. We need to support individuals the public will see as moral and political leaders on an issue. Movements have to groom and stand behind those people. There's a link between being someone that people can relate to and being able to move large groups of people.

Secondly, there's organizational leadership. Tides Foundation has written about this. This is what we were starving for when George Lakoff talked about framing. We need to talk in ways that can reach more constituencies than we're reaching now. We need to speak about the opportunities for progress, growth, and happiness that are waiting for us. We can't always talk about the ugliness that we're fighting.

## MORALS, MESSAGES AND MARKETS

That's organizational leadership. That's movement leadership: being willing to set not our agendas aside but our vocabulary aside so we can find more effective ways of speaking so that everybody can relate to this issue.

I'm pretty optimistic. It's going to take coordination and leadership and sticking to messages. The necessary elements are messages, markets, movements, and morals. We must have a grounding and morality that gives people a common base to work together. We have to take the markets on. They're not going to be destroyed, but they're going to be different, changed for the better. We have to have messages that resonate with where people are at today. And we have to have a movement that holds that together.

How many big, well-funded national groups can have climate change as their national issue before they form strategic alliances? We're simply not pooling our resources effectively. If we're serious about unity and outreach, we have to actually do it. It's about capturing people's imaginations, framing things the way we want them framed, linking messages to mobilization, and then sticking together.

For the environmental community to broaden its appeal, we have to state how important global warming is to the rest of our lives. If we stick with floods, heat waves, and disasters, we're certainly not going to attract or keep a broad set of constituencies for very long. We have to

make it clear why our futures and justice are tied up with solving this problem.

**Lerza:** If you had to list the top things that we could do to stabilize climate change, what would those be?

**Gelobter:** First of all, make serious commitments to cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. Second, join the international discussion on energy and climate. But we won't have a credible voice in the international discussion unless we do commit to greenhouse gas emission reduction.

**Lerza:** What does that mean? Does that mean signing the Kyoto treaty?

**Gelobter:** I don't think it necessarily means that.

**Lerza:** Because that's been such a banner kind of thing. Is that essential, or is there another way we can do that?

**Gelobter:** Thirty-five percent of all global warming that has happened is due to emissions from the U.S. alone. As global consciousness of this issue rises, it would be very smart for domestic consciousness to rise as well because there could be a lot of outrage globally when people come to understand the U.S.'s role in this issue.

## FACTS & FIGURES

The U.S. owes it to the world and to itself to leapfrog over Kyoto. Kyoto is not enough. Let's go to the next level. I think that's the only legitimate position. Kyoto is supposed to be done by 2012. It's too late, and Kyoto doesn't deal with the justice issues properly yet.

Going beyond Kyoto means, from a social justice and an economic perspective, we might need to lock up U.S. coal and even some of the oil. That means permanently tilting the playing field against fossil fuels use through economic signals, through regulatory signals, through the stopping of subsidies. We need to do this for two reasons: It's a way to build a movement, and it sends the unambiguous economic signal needed to grow alternative ways of generating energy.

These changes will have very deep ramifications for agriculture, for forest, and for fishing. We will shift our relationship from one of exploitation to one of collaboration across community and nature.

Focusing on specific land use, regulatory, and economic policies around fossil fuels will build a very powerful political movement from progressive constituencies in blue states to rural constituencies in red states.

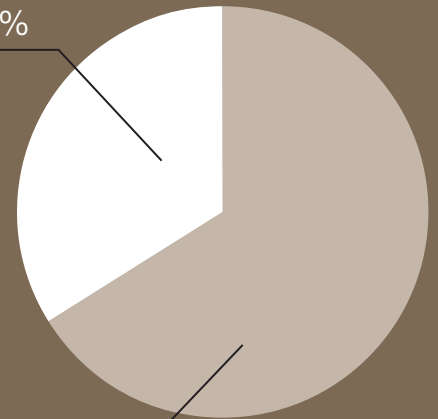


### Cumulative Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 1850 to Present:

(Source: Redefining Progress)

United States  
Share 35%

Rest-of-World's  
Share 65%



# THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY

**Lerza:** Could you talk a bit about the best place for donors to act on their concern? And we're talking about donors who are not going to be making 6- or 7-figure grants but smaller grants. What are your thoughts on how to use those funds strategically? What are some missing pieces in the funding puzzle? And what other kinds of roles can funders play as people who can bring partners to the table?

**Gelobter:** I think the kind of patience and local intelligence that smaller funders bring is a real asset, and their ability to make a difference in a corner of the world that's strategic is the beginning that we need. I believe that a smaller funder can be very effective on a smaller scale, not at the national level. A funder can be strategic in a city where the mayor is a man of commitments, in a state with a grassroots group that's got a different approach. I would imagine right now that there are a lot of groups—take the Citizens Coal Council, for instance—that are looking for ways to get into the debate.

**Lerza:** So funders can help bring new constituents to the debate?

**Gelobter:** Right, bring new voices. Donors may already be funding them on something else. And they may be looking to join this debate because they see it as a critical issue. Coal communities, indigenous communities, low-





## THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY

income communities, even business communities are great examples of that. So rather than just the environmental community, how do we get new constituencies to the table? I think there are new constituencies begging to come to the table. And you know, funders can help get them there in a way that is not paternalistic.

**Lerza:** But aren't we talking about more than getting folks to the table? It seems to me that we are really talking about building a

**Lerza:** What other kinds of activities can donors support to address this issue?

**Gelobter:** I think culture change is another key element. There is very high leverage in cultural work in this arena on the local and the national level. You have the ODC dance company, in the Bay Area, that based a major recent production on climate change. And you also have Jon Stewart on "The Daily Show" riffing on the insanity of gas prices. That has

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"I think youth, young people, are also critical for success in climate stabilization. We're going to be fighting the same problems I'm listing for you today 50 years from now. You want the people who come right after your heroic victory to achieve their own."

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new table altogether, one that is not labeled "environmentalism," but is rather a brand new, inclusive table for the whole progressive movement. That's what we need.

**Gelobter:** Absolutely. And funding for the process of collaboration will be critical and will require patient and engaged support.

a couple of impacts. One is that it makes it cool. The second is that it gives people space to reflect on and to think about the issue. "Well, what does it mean to my life to take this issue seriously, at a moral level, at an ethical level, at a personal level?" So I think cultural work is another very high leverage place where funders can help out.

## AMERICA'S TOP FIVE

As we've said, this issue touches everyone. So funding the space to make those connections and provide opportunities for convening and collaboration is necessary to build a movement.

I think youth, young people, are also critical for success in climate stabilization. We're going to be fighting the same problems I'm listing for you today 50 years from now. So it's really important to train and develop multigenerational leadership models that are sustainable. This is crucial. You want the people who come right after your heroic victory to achieve their own. You don't want to be in their way. You want them pushing the next one.

When AB1493 passed—it was a bill to make cars in California more climate friendly—everyone who worked on that thought, “Okay, that’s it. This is the greatest, best thing ever.” And they became oppositional to anything new because this was “it.” They had achieved this historic victory. Well, solving climate change is going to take one historic victory after another for the next hundred years. And so we need to find ways of benchmarking ourselves against real world conditions.

**Lerza:** So it's about learning to see each heroic, historic victory as clearing a path for the next even bigger one and celebrating that.

**Gelobter:** Exactly.



## 5 Top Five Things We Need to Do in the United States to Address Global Warming:

- 1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2 Join the international discussion on global warming.
- 3 Stop subsidizing industries and companies that profit from the fossil fuel economy.
- 4 Localize the economy and support these efforts through individual action and government policy.
- 5 Build strong and diverse urban communities.

# Join the Conversation

You can be a part of this ongoing conversation.

At Tides Foundation, we are currently developing an Initiative on the intersection between environmental sustainability and the broader progressive movement.

We have made a 30 year commitment to not only environmental protection, but environmental justice, economic justice, civil rights and forwarding global social change. And more than ever, we are dedicated to bringing together people, resources and ideas to make the connections necessary to make that change happen—connections across issues, across strategies, across identities and across borders.

You can learn more—and contribute ideas—about how we can maximize the potential of our network of partners through shared knowledge, gatherings, and collective grantmaking.

Contact us at: [ChangeTheSocialClimate@tides.org](mailto:ChangeTheSocialClimate@tides.org)

At Tides Foundation, we have a history of bringing together people, resources and ideas for positive social change. Our current Tides Initiatives include:

- > Bridging the Economic Divide
- > Civic Engagement
- > Reproductive Justice
- > Global Change

For more information, contact us at: [info@tides.org](mailto:info@tides.org)  
or call us at 415 561-6400

## This Publication

*Changing the Social Climate* is part of Tides Foundation's series of publications about progressive issues and social change.

### **Other publications include:**

*Global Change*: A Donor's Guide to International Grantmaking

*The Momentum Papers*: Funding Strategies for the Progressive Movement

*Arcing Toward Justice*: The Evolution of the Living Wage Movement

*Words That Work*: Messaging for Economic Justice

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## Tides Foundation:

Tides Foundation partners with donors to increase and organize resources for positive social change. Tides brings together people, resources, and vision through donor advised philanthropy, Tides Initiatives, funding collaboratives, gatherings and learning opportunities, foundation management services, comprehensive and flexible program services, and a framework for strengthening the progressive movement. For more information about Tides Foundation, visit us at [www.tidesfoundation.org](http://www.tidesfoundation.org).

Tides Foundation is a member of Tides Network, a group of nonprofits that brings together people, resources and an overall vision for creating a healthy and just society—a society based on principles of social justice, broadly shared economic opportunity, a robust democratic process and sustainable environmental practices. Tides Network includes Tides Foundation, Tides Center and Tides Shared Spaces. For more information, visit us at [www.tides.org](http://www.tides.org)

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