

City of London Climate Action Plan

Dan Mailer- submission outline- April 5, 2022

Introduction - Who am I? - a lawyer with an interest in history, politics, science

Good work!

-I want to start by applauding the city on its work so far on this issue, I have looked at many of the materials and the work and efforts are quite impressive and speak to the quality of council and staff that have been working on this issue. A cleaner city is a better city. Everyone is in favour of a greener, healthier and cleaner environment.

Historical perspective- What happened to the coming Ice Age?

You must forgive me however for being someone who very well remembers the scientific alarmism of the 1970s when in high school, we were being warned about the coming ice age and frankly it was distressing and false. It was however, the best guestimate that science had to offer at the time. Climate prediction is not an exact science. Even the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration admits that a 10 day weather forecast is inaccurate 50% of the time. How much more so, a 10 or 20 or 30 year forecast?

A few key and important facts concerning progress and science to date

- All Londoners are in favour of a cleaner environment including me
- climate change on earth is real (for past billion years or more)
- Ontario is doing well overall with 80-90% of our electricity generated by either hydro, nuclear or renewables
- Canada produces just 1.6% of greenhouse gases, primarily CO2
- China in 20 days emits what Canada emits in an entire year
- CO2 is a naturally produced gas that can't be seen, smelled, or tasted and currently measures 400 PPM (yes, thats per million) in the atmosphere
- CO2 is an essential element for photosynthesis, ie plant food (growers routinely pump CO2 into their greenhouses to maximize yields)- ie the more CO2 the better as far as plants are concerned

Growing skepticism among experts on the issue of man made climate change

- on the issue of manmade climate change and how best to react to it, we should follow the science and the science is currently and increasingly inconclusive and “unsettled” according to a growing number of scientists and authors including Steven Koonin, President Obama’s Undersecretary for science in the US Dept of Energy - see his new book “Unsettled”

-others in this camp include the co-founder of Greenpeace Patrick Moore (see his book “Fake invisible catastrophes and threats of doom”),

Michael Shellenberger (“Apocalypse Never”),

Bjorn Lomborg (“False Alarm”)

-Highly respected author Niall Ferguson in his recent book (“Doom-the politics of catastrophe”) reviewing the history of doom and gloom scenarios, more or less describes the manmade climate change doom and gloom scenario as the doom fad of the moment (and this too will one day pass)

However, on the assumption that man made Climate Change is real

A reminder that Council Priorities are Local in nature

Councillors were elected by citizens of the City of London and their local needs and issues ought to be the priority of Council- a safe and affordable lifestyle.

Lawyer George Rust-D’Eye in his legal textbook “ Councillors” Handbook for Municipal writes on page 35:

“Members of municipal councils are expected to represent their constituents, work at keeping the municipality running, make individual decisions and participate in the collective decision making of the council”

Constituents are the priority...always and I know that Council believes this and understands it. Any steps taken by Council to address climate change must ensure that growth is not suppressed and costs are affordable to local constituents. Continued prosperity creates the wealth allowing us to adapt.

“Net Zero” an expensive utopian pipedream ?

Many believe that getting to “net zero” while perhaps being a worthy goal, is a utopian pipe dream. Ross McKittrick, Professor of Economics at the University of Guelph, opines that there is no way to get to “net zero” without experiencing ruinous economic hardship. If council intends to go too far down that road, they must ensure there is transparency about the costs to taxpayers and that those costs are kept to a minimum and don’t suppress economic growth and prosperity. New technology is key.

Climate change concerns are in pith and substance a federal and provincial concern

The priority of council ought to be the nuts and bolts issues that Londoners care about most, ie. roads and bridges, services, taxes, promoting an healthy environment for large and small business, well stocked libraries, affordable living and a more attractive downtown etc

Issues that are in the mandate or jurisdiction of the provincial or federal or global powers, such as concerns about global climate change, I say respectfully, ought to be left to those other levels of government

-An overemphasis on an issue like climate change at the municipal level, can distract and divert attention and resources from the practical or essential local issues that Londoners care most about

Use the strength of persuasion rather than taking a punitive approach

-If council feels compelled to act on this issue, at the very least it should take a soft “dangle a carrot” approach of persuasion and suggestion as opposed to a “the bully stick” approach of strict and punitive enforcement

Overview and final thoughts: Adopt a cautious and measured approach and don't kill the patient to cure the disease

Author Johan Norberg in his study on the history of human progress in his book simply titled : “Progress” identifies wealth and affluence as the greatest antidote to tackling pollution and environmental issues. That is historically proven and beyond debate. He warns not to kill the patient to cure the disease. On page 120 of his book “Progress”, he writes that drastic and far reaching efforts to limit carbon dioxide emissions might be counter productive. He writes “It is not necessarily true that the best way forward is to limit emissions to such an extent as to prevent climate change. What is important is that our climate policies don't hurt our ability to create more wealth and better technologies and to bring power to the world's poor. The biggest problems in the world are ...poverty and traditional environmental hazards (polluted air and water). Forcing too many restraints and costs on today's global population might make life more difficult” in the long run.

Thank you

Submitted by Daniel Mailer