

Abstract Submitted
for the APR15 Meeting of
The American Physical Society

The Greatest Challenge Ever for Mankind, Requiring Policies of Accelerating Hardship and Implementation Difficulty JOHN WILSON, Virginia Commonwealth University — Providing energy for the contemporary world has resulted in a multi-variable problem in which a confluence of historical anomalies and economic, psychological, political, and demographic factors thwart efforts to prevent significant harm from increasing atmospheric CO₂. This unlikely combination has created the perfect storm in which the warnings by scientists are ineffective. Global warming is occurring simultaneously with increased population, some dysfunctional political institutions, ascendancy of oversimplified economic theory, campaigns to discredit scientists, misinterpretation of the meaning of noise in the Milankovitch climate cycles, and substantially improved hydrocarbon extraction methods. These factors are compounded by traits of human nature, such as greed and resistance to changing the familiar and discontinuing profitable endeavors. The idea that future people are equal with us may not be widely supported, yet this value is the foundation of climate change action. History shows that most people and nations will not take appropriate measures until forced, yet the cost increases as action is delayed. This makes appropriate policies even more extreme and difficult to accomplish as more wealth is consumed in treating global warming symptoms.

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Date submitted: 06 Jan 2015

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