PPIC | PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

Press Release

Record-High Majority Say State Should Act Now on Global Warming

By Slim Margins, Californians Oppose Fracking And Favor Keystone XL Pipeline

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SAN FRANCISCO, July 31, 2013—A record-high majority of Californians say state government should act right away to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, rather than wait until the economy and job situation improve. This is among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

In PPIC's 13th annual survey on the environment, 65 percent of Californians say the government should act right away to cut emissions—up 9 points since 2012. Less than a third (30%) say the state should wait for the economy to improve. Among likely voters, 59 percent say the state should act now, up 13 points since last year.

Residents express a sense of urgency in responses to another question: Most say it is very important (48%) or somewhat important (31%) that the state government pass regulations and spend money now on efforts to reduce global warming. Most also say it is very (53%) or somewhat (29%) important for the state to pass regulations and spend money now to prepare for global warming's future effects.

"As the California economy shows signs of improving, this year's survey shows strong public support for the state government taking action on global warming," said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

A large majority of Californians view global warming as a very serious threat (50%) or somewhat serious threat (27%) to California's future economy and quality of life. Far fewer say the threat is not too serious (11%) or not at all serious (9%). Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (67%) and blacks (63%) are far more likely than whites (40%) or Asians (38%) to say global warming is a very serious threat. Among age groups, residents age 55 and older are less likely than younger Californians to hold this view.

Most state residents (63%) say the effects of global warming have already begun. Far fewer (22%) say the effects will occur sometime in the future, and 11 percent say they will never happen. Across political parties, most Democrats (73%) and independents (59%) say the effects of warming have begun. Just 38 percent of Republicans express this view, while 30 percent say the effects will occur in the future and 27 percent say they will never happen. Majorities across regions and demographic groups say the effects have begun, but there are differences. Latinos (73%) are much more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to express this view. And across regions, Orange/San Diego residents (55%) are the least likely to do so.

**Threat of Wildfires Is Biggest Concern**

When Californians are asked about four possible effects of global warming, a majority of residents (57%) are very concerned about more-severe wildfires, half (49%) are very concerned about more-severe droughts, and far fewer are very concerned about increased flooding (28%) or more-severe storms (28%).

Most residents (60%) and likely voters (62%) continue to favor the idea of California making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address global warming. Solid majorities of adults (67%) and likely voters (63%) continue to support the principle behind the Global Warming Solutions Act, passed in 2006. Also known as AB 32, this law requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. In 2010, there was a sharp partisan divide in opinions, with 80 percent of Democrats and 39 percent of Republicans favoring the law. Today, the gap has narrowed: 77 percent of Democrats and 49 percent of Republicans are in favor.

Most Californians don't view government actions to reduce global warming as a tradeoff between the environment and jobs. Just 24 percent say state action to reduce global warming will result in fewer jobs for state residents, while 45 percent say it will result in more jobs and 21 percent see no effect on jobs.

One of California's signature programs to reduce emissions is cap-and-trade, which includes auctions of emissions allowances that began last November. Most residents (54%) have heard nothing about the program; 33 percent have heard a little and 12 percent a lot. The program's revenues are being loaned to the state's general fund this year. In the future, they will be used to further the goals of AB 32, with a portion spent to improve environmental conditions in lower-income or disadvantaged communities. An overwhelming majority say it is very (52%) or somewhat important (31%) to spend the money on these communities, while 15 percent say it is not too important. A large share of cap-and-trade revenue will likely go to transportation—the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in California—and housing infrastructure. How should this money be spent? Overwhelming majorities favor spending it on public transit, such as more buses or reduced transit fares (78%), and repaving roads and highways (72%). A smaller majority (60%) favor spending on housing and commercial developments near mass transit hubs.

Many policies to address global warming are being proposed or enacted, at both the state and federal level. The survey—which began shortly after President Barack Obama announced his Climate Action Plan—asked about several policy ideas and finds majority support for all of them:

- Requiring oil companies to produce transportation fuels with lower emissions (81% adults, 77% likely voters favor)
- Requiring industrial plants, oil refineries, and commercial facilities to reduce their emissions (80% adults,78% likely voters favor)
- Requiring all automakers to further reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases from new cars (80% adults, 76% likely voters favor)
- Requiring an increase in energy efficiency for residential and commercial buildings and appliances (76% adults, 74% likely voters favor)
- Encouraging local governments to change land use and transportation planning so that people could drive less (76% adults, 72% likely voters favor)
- Setting stricter emissions limits on power plants (76% adults, 73% likely voters favor)

How do Californians assess government efforts to address global warming? A majority of adults (53%) say the federal government is not doing enough. Fewer say state government (44%) and local government (44%) are not doing enough.

**Job Approval Among Likely Voters at 54 Percent for Brown, Obama**

Asked how they rate elected leaders, 48 percent of California adults approve of the overall job performance of Governor Jerry Brown. A record-high 54 percent of likely voters approve. His rating for handling environmental issues is lower: 39 percent of adults and 44 percent of likely voters approve. The state legislature's overall approval rating is 36 percent among adults and 33 percent among likely voters. On environmental issues, the legislature has an approval rating of 38 percent among adults and 34 percent among likely voters.

A solid majority of Californians (61%) approve of President Obama's job performance, as do 54 percent of likely voters. About half of adults (53%) and 46 percent of likely voters approve of his handling of environmental issues. Just 30 percent of adults and 18 percent of likely voters approve of the overall job Congress is doing. Congress' rating on environmental issues is similar (29% adults, 18% likely voters).

**Among Those Who Favor More Fracking, Most Want Stricter Regulation**

As state legislators debate stricter regulations on fracking—already under way in California—51 percent oppose increased use of the drilling method used to extract oil and natural gas (35% favor it, 14% don't know). Asked whether they favor or oppose stricter regulation of fracking, 50 percent say they are in favor. Among those who favor increased use of fracking, 62 percent also favor stricter regulation.

The survey asked about another hotly debated plan to increase the supply of oil: construction of the Keystone XL pipeline to carry oil from Canada to Texas refineries. Half of Californians (51%) favor building the pipeline, 34 percent oppose it, and 15 percent don't know.

"Californians are conflicted when it comes to controversial efforts to expand the oil supply," said Baldassare. "Slim majorities favor building the Keystone XL pipeline but also oppose fracking, with many wanting stricter regulation of the practice."

Offshore oil drilling and nuclear power have been contentious issues in energy policy, and the survey shows that most residents today oppose the expansion of either. Asked about more oil drilling off California's coast, 54 percent oppose and 41 percent favor it. Among those living in coastal areas, 57 percent oppose more drilling, while those inland are divided (49% favor, 47% oppose). In the wake of the closure of San Onofre nuclear power plant—one of two in the state—63 percent oppose building more plants. Majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups are opposed.

Asked about renewable sources of energy, 79 percent favor an increase in federal funding to develop wind, solar, and hydrogen technologies. And 70 percent favor a 2011 state law that requires a third of California's electricity to come from renewable energy sources by 2020. But support drops to 44 percent if this will result in higher electricity bills.

**Most Say Air Pollution Is a Problem**

A majority of Californians say air pollution is a big problem (28%) or somewhat of a problem (34%) in the region where they live. Adults living in the Inland Empire (44%), Los Angeles (40%), and Central Valley (31%) are much more likely to say it is a big problem than those living in the San Francisco Bay Area (16%) and Orange/San Diego (14%). Latinos (41%) and blacks (40%) are much more likely to express this view than Asians (23%) and whites (20%). About half of Californians say air pollution in their region is a very serious (22%) or somewhat serious (30%) threat to their health or the health of their immediate families. Residents are divided when asked if they think air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas of their region (48% yes, 46% no).

### A Majority of Workers Are Solo Drivers

Two-thirds of residents (67%) who work full or part time drive alone to work. Just 14 percent say they carpool, and fewer take public transportation (8%), walk (4%), or bike (3%) to work. Another 4 percent volunteer that they work at home. The percentage of Californians driving solo to work declined 11 points between 2003 (73%) and 2008 (62%) but has remained above 65 percent since 2011.

About half of Californians (53%) say that they have seriously considered getting a more fuel-efficient vehicle the next time they buy or lease one; 24 percent say they already have a fuel-efficient car. Half (51%) say that have seriously considered a hybrid or electric vehicle, while 6 percent say they already have one.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

This PPIC Statewide Survey was conducted with funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC. This survey is the 13th on the environment since 2000. Findings are based on a survey of 2,103 adult residents reached by landline and cell phones throughout the state. Interviews took place from July 9–23, 2013. They were conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Korean, and Vietnamese, according to respondents' preferences. The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ±3 percent for all adults. For the 1,691 registered voters, it is ±3.4 percent, and for the 1,273 likely voters, it is ±3.9 percent. For more information on methodology, see pages 25–26.

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998.

PPIC is dedicated to informing and improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research on major economic, social, and political issues. The institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. As a private operating foundation, PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

The New York Times

August 1, 2013

# A Republican Case for Climate Action

By WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS, LEE M. THOMAS, WILLIAM K. REILLY and CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN

EACH of us took turns over the past 43 years running the Environmental Protection Agency. We served Republican presidents, but we have a message that transcends political affiliation: the United States must move now on substantive steps to curb climate change, at home and internationally.

There is no longer any credible scientific debate about the basic facts: our world continues to warm, with the last decade the hottest in modern records, and the deep ocean warming faster than the earth's atmosphere. Sea level is rising. Arctic Sea ice is melting years faster than projected.

The costs of inaction are undeniable. The lines of scientific evidence grow only stronger and more numerous. And the window of time remaining to act is growing smaller: delay could mean that warming becomes "locked in."

A market-based approach, like a carbon tax, would be the best path to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, but that is unachievable in the current political gridlock in Washington. Dealing with this political reality, President Obama's June climate action plan lays out achievable actions that would deliver real progress. He will use his executive powers to require reductions in the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the nation's power plants and spur increased investment in clean energy technology, which is inarguably the path we must follow to ensure a strong economy along with a livable climate.

The president also plans to use his regulatory power to limit the powerful warming chemicals known as hydrofluorocarbons and encourage the United States to join with other nations to amend the Montreal Protocol to phase out these chemicals. The landmark international treaty, which took effect in 1989, already has been hugely successful in solving the ozone problem.

Rather than argue against his proposals, our leaders in Congress should endorse them and start the overdue debate about what bigger steps are needed and how to achieve them — domestically and internationally.

As administrators of the E.P.A under Presidents Richard M. Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George Bush and George W. Bush, we held fast to common-sense conservative principles — protecting the health of the American people, working with the best technology available and trusting in

the innovation of American business and in the market to find the best solutions for the least cost.

That approach helped us tackle major environmental challenges to our nation and the world: the pollution of our rivers, dramatized when the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland caught fire in 1969; the hole in the ozone layer; and the devastation wrought by acid rain.

The solutions we supported worked, although more must be done. Our rivers no longer burn, and their health continues to improve. The United States led the world when nations came together to phase out ozone-depleting chemicals. Acid rain diminishes each year, thanks to a pioneering, market-based emissions-trading system adopted under the first President Bush in 1990. And despite critics' warnings, our economy has continued to grow.

Climate change puts all our progress and our successes at risk. If we could articulate one framework for successful governance, perhaps it should be this: When confronted by a problem, deal with it. Look at the facts, cut through the extraneous, devise a workable solution and get it done.

We can have both a strong economy and a livable climate. All parties know that we need both. The rest of the discussion is either detail, which we can resolve, or purposeful delay, which we should not tolerate.

Mr. Obama's plan is just a start. More will be required. But we must continue efforts to reduce the climate-altering pollutants that threaten our planet. The only uncertainty about our warming world is how bad the changes will get, and how soon. What is most clear is that there is no time to waste.

*The writers are former administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency: William D. Ruckelshaus, from its founding in 1970 to 1973, and again from 1983 to 1985; Lee M. Thomas, from 1985 to 1989; William K. Reilly, from 1989 to 1993; and Christine Todd Whitman, from 2001 to 2003.*

The Washington Post Print

# Arctic sea ice loss dramatically slows; record minimum unlikely in 2013

**By Jason Samenow, Updated: August 9, 2013**

Since shrinking at a torrid pace in the first half of July, the Arctic sea ice meltdown has slowed markedly.

"I've seen slowdowns before, but this is out of this world," writes the Arctic Sea Ice blog.

The blog notes Arctic sea ice actually expanded by 20,000 square kilometers for 10 days at the end of July.

"That's so crazy for this phase of the melting season that I barely have words for it," the blog says. "It's unique as far as the record goes."

The National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) says storminess in the second half of July likely halted the rapid retreat of ice that took place in the early part of the month.

"[A stormy pattern] brought more counterclockwise winds and cool conditions, and spread the ice out," NSIDC writes.

The storminess of late July has continued into early August. A large storm has consumed a vast section of the Arctic this week.

"I just spotted what appears to be a massive cyclone — bigger than all of Greenland — in [Wednesday's] daily Arctic mosaic from NASA's Terra satellite," writes Tom Yulsman at his ImageGeo blog at Discover.

The Arctic Sea Ice blog notes this is the third major storm of the melt season in the region.

Will this storm act to apply additional brakes on Arctic melting?

NSIDC says not necessarily. Although storms can help spread out ice and increase its extent (in the past, stormy summers have usually had greater ice extents), storms may leave it vulnerable for a rapid meltdown once calmer, sunnier weather moves in, especially if the ice is thin.

"This spreading of the ice, or ice divergence, can result in more dark open water areas between individual floes that enhance absorption of the sun's energy, leading to more lateral and basal melting," writes NSIDC.

Because of the long term decline in ice thickness and volume in the Arctic, much of the

ice that storms have been moving around is fragile, thin first-year ice (rather than the thicker multi-year ice which would be around but for the well-documented long-term decline). As such, it's not out of the question rapid ice loss could resume, given the right weather conditions.

In 2012, Arctic sea ice shrunk to its lowest extent on record in the weeks following a very powerful August storm.

"It appears that the August 2012 storm was attended by a modest acceleration in the pace of summer ice loss," NSIDC writes.

But even if melting resumes in earnest this year, the Arctic Sea Ice blog has ruled out a new record for low extent in 2013...simply due to the amount of ground to make-up (or, in reality, lose).

"There's still 5-6 weeks to go until the end of the melting season, but 2013 is trailing 2012 by over 1.2 million square kilometers," the blog writes. "A new record has become impossible for all practical purposes."

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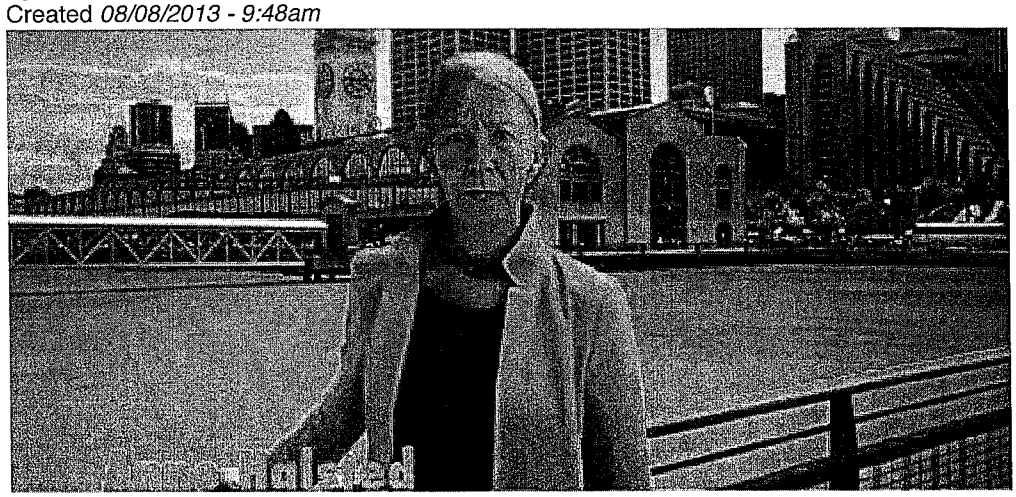
# Agency official under fire for development project endorsement

By *rebecca*
Created *08/08/2013 - 9:48am*



**BCDC Vice Chair Anne Halsted, shown in this screen shot of Open Up the Waterfront's campaign ad.**

Did a high-ranking official of a regional conservation authority improperly use her influence to secure $10,000 for a nonprofit she chairs the board of? That's the allegation raised against San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Vice-Chair Anne Halsted in a complaint filed with the Fair Political Practices Commission, a statewide ethics agency.

Halsted appeared in a campaign ad produced by Open Up the Waterfront, which is pushing a San Francisco ballot measure seeking public approval for 8 Washington, a controversial waterfront development project that has become a political flashpoint in San Francisco [1].

Halsted also chairs of the board of directors of SPUR, a member-supported San Francisco nonprofit focused on planning issues.

In addition to publicly endorsing Open Up the Waterfront, SPUR received a $10,000 donation from San Francisco Waterfront Partners, the 8 Washington developers and major funders of the ballot initiative, sometime between May and the end of June. The campaign ad was posted to YouTube on July 22.

Geraldine Crowley, a volunteer working on a competing ballot measure campaign formed in opposition to 8 Washington, No Wall on the Waterfront, seized on this donation in her FPPC complaint. Crowley charged that Halsted violated conflict-of-interest rules under the California Political Reform Act, saying Halsted "used [her] official position to influence a governmental decision in which the official knows or has reason to know that he or she has a financial interest."

"I would just like to have her portion of the commercial erased," Crowley said in an interview. "What she says in the commercial does not reflect how all of BCDC feels about Open Up The Waterfront."

The video also features an appearance by Will Travis, retired director of BCDC. "This appears to be a violation of the conflict-of-interest rules designed to prevent financial gifts from influencing public officials entrusted to steward public assets such as the Bay," said Jon Golinger, a spokesperson for No Wall on the Waterfront.

Halsted didn't respond to our request for comment, but she did contact BCDC Chair Zack Wasserman to address the concerns raised by No Wall on the Waterfront in a message that was later forwarded to the Guardian.

"For several years [I] have supported a project called 8 Washington which is near the waterfront, but totally outside BCDC's jurisdiction. Because a recent video advocating the project indicated that I, a supporter of the project, am vice chair of BCDC, some have worried that it implies BCDC support - something I have never envisioned or contemplated!

Please be assured that my advocacy is personal because I believe it is an excellent project, not because any organization with which I associate has voted to endorse the project! Sorry if this confused anyone."

Whether Halsted influenced the $10,000 donation to SPUR in connection with her support for the project remains unclear. The organization's operating budget exceeded $3 million during the 2011-2012 year, according to SPUR'S annual report.

"When it comes to conflict-of-interest violations, it needs to be found that a public official is making governmental decisions based on money that has been given to them," Gary Winuk, chief of the enforcement division at FPPC said. "After we receive the complaint, we wait 10 days for the person accused to respond, then launch an investigation and review all the facts if there is just cause."

David Beltran, spokesperson for Open Up the Waterfront, criticized the complaint as "a reckless and meritless attempt to suppress free speech."

It's likely to be a week or more before the FPPC determines whether Crowley's complaint has any validity. If the FPPC determines that that Halsted did indeed violate the conflict-of-interest rules under the California Political Reform Act, she may face penalties such as a misdemeanor and $5,000 per violation.

Larry Goldzband, the commission's executive director, noted that BCDC has yet to endorse the project.

"The multi-use project proposed at 8 Washington Street in San Francisco is not in the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission," Goldzband said. "BCDC has neither considered nor endorsed the project, nor has any Commissioner asked that the Commission review the project in any manner."

8 Washington Development Erin Dage

**Source URL:** http://www.sfbg.com/politics/2013/08/08/agency-official-under-fire-development-project-endorsement

**Links:**
[1] http://www.sfbg.com/bruce/2012/03/06/editorial-case-against-8-washington-tower

BAY AREA NEWS GROUP
Monday, August 12, 2013

CARQUINEZ SCENIC DRIVE

# Road fenced off for Bay Trail work

## Two-year project started to make it safe for public use

By Chris Treadway
*ctreadway@bayareanewsgroup.com*

There is a lot happening with the Bay Trail in West Contra Costa — and, for once, not all of it is in Richmond.

A 1.7-mile stretch of the former county road between Crockett and Martinez known as Carquinez Scenic Drive was fenced off recently to start a two-year project to make it safe for public use. The road was closed to motor traffic in the 1980s because of landslide damage. The East Bay Regional Park District acquired it from the county in December after extended negotiations.

The $5.6 million construction project "will include stabilization of embankments and cut slopes with retaining walls and debris walls; installation of new and repair of existing drainage systems; and rehabilitation and construction of the old roadway to a multiuse, Class I bicycle/pedestrian trail," the district announced.

In the meantime, the scenic drive is closed to the public because of safety concerns, even during a scheduled halt of construction from October to April.

"When completed, it will be one of the most scenic trails in the region, with sweeping views of the Carquinez Strait, and a way to access parkland in the Martinez, Briones, Crockett and Rodeo areas," said park district General Manager Robert E. Doyle. Learn more about the project at www.ebparks.org/parks/carquinez.

Not surprisingly, there is also Bay Trail news from Richmond, already home to more stretches of the trail than any other city. The City Council recently approved a $384,500 construction contract to close two gaps in the Ferry Point Loop trail in Point Richmond and create additional public shoreline access.

"When completed this fall, the result will be a continuous Class I hiking and biking trail between Shipyard 3 Trail and Ferry Point," noted the Trails for Richmond Action Committee.

Another $18,000 was approved by the council to help the regional park district with a requested redesign of the planned Atlas Road bridge that will be the second entrance to Point Pinole Regional Shoreline. The redesign, recommended by the city's design review board, calls for narrowing the vehicle lanes there in order to widen the Bay Trail by 2 feet. Work on the project is expected to be done by late 2014.

Richmond also accepted a $45,000 grant from the Association of Bay Area Governments and is applying the funds to close a trail gap by the Richmond Plunge between Cutting Boulevard and the tunnel to Ferry Point. Learn more about the projects and events on existing portions of the trail at www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail.

The New York Times

August 12, 2013

# Timing a Rise in Sea Level

By JUSTIN GILLIS

Thirty-five years ago, a scientist named John H. Mercer issued a warning. By then it was already becoming clear that human emissions would warm the earth, and Dr. Mercer had begun thinking deeply about the consequences.

His paper, in the journal Nature, was titled "West Antarctic Ice Sheet and $CO_2$ Greenhouse Effect: A Threat of Disaster." In it, Dr. Mercer pointed out the unusual topography of the ice sheet sitting over the western part of Antarctica. Much of it is below sea level, in a sort of bowl, and he said that a climatic warming could cause the whole thing to degrade rapidly on a geologic time scale, leading to a possible rise in sea level of 16 feet.

While it is clear by now that we are in the early stages of what is likely to be a substantial rise in sea level, we still do not know if Dr. Mercer was right about a dangerous instability that could cause that rise to happen rapidly, in geologic time. We may be getting closer to figuring that out.

An intriguing new paper comes from Michael J. O'Leary of Curtin University in Australia and five colleagues scattered around the world. Dr. O'Leary has spent more than a decade exploring the remote western coast of Australia, considered one of the best places in the world to study sea levels of the past.

The paper, published July 28 in Nature Geoscience, focuses on a warm period in the earth's history that preceded the most recent ice age. In that epoch, sometimes called the Eemian, the planetary temperature was similar to levels we may see in coming decades as a result of human emissions, so it is considered a possible indicator of things to come.

Examining elevated fossil beaches and coral reefs along more than a thousand miles of coast, Dr. O'Leary's group confirmed something we pretty much already knew. In the warmer world of the Eemian, sea level stabilized for several thousand years at about 10 to 12 feet above modern sea level.

The interesting part is what happened after that. Dr. O'Leary's group found what they consider to be compelling evidence that near the end of the Eemian, sea level jumped by another 17 feet or so, to settle at close to 30 feet above the modern level, before beginning to fall as the ice age set in.

In an interview, Dr. O'Leary told me he was confident that the 17-foot jump happened in less than a thousand years — how much less, he cannot be sure.

This finding is something of a vindication for one member of the team, a North Carolina field geologist, Paul J. Hearty. He had argued for decades that the rock record suggested a jump of this sort, but only recently have measurement and modeling techniques reached the level of precision needed to nail the case.

We have to see if their results withstand critical scrutiny. A sea-level scientist not involved in the work, Andrea Dutton of the University of Florida, said the paper had failed to disclose enough detailed information about the field sites to allow her to judge the overall conclusion. But if the work does hold up, the implications are profound. The only possible explanation for such a large, rapid jump in sea level is the catastrophic collapse of a polar ice sheet, on either Greenland or Antarctica.

Dr. O'Leary is not prepared to say which; figuring that out is the group's next project. But a 17-foot rise in less than a thousand years, a geologic instant, has to mean that one or both ice sheets contain some instability that can be set off by a warmer climate.

That, of course, augurs poorly for humans. Scientists at Stanford calculated recently that human emissions are causing the climate to change many times faster than at any point since the dinosaurs died out. We are pushing the climate system so hard that, if the ice sheets do have a threshold of some kind, we stand a good chance of exceeding it.

Another recent paper, by Anders Levermann of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany and a half-dozen colleagues, implies that even if emissions were to stop tomorrow, we have probably locked in several feet of sea level rise over the long term.

Benjamin Strauss and his colleagues at Climate Central, an independent group of scientists and journalists in Princeton that reports climate research, translated the Levermann results into graphical form, and showed the difference it could make if we launched an aggressive program to control emissions. By 2100, their calculations suggest, continuing on our current path would mean locking in a long-term sea level rise of 23 feet, but aggressive emission cuts could limit that to seven feet.

If you are the mayor of Miami or of a beach town in New Jersey, you may be asking yourself: Exactly how long is all this going to take to play out?

On that crucial point, alas, our science is still nearly blind. Scientists can look at the rocks and see indisputable evidence of jumps in sea level, and they can associate those with relatively modest increases in global temperature. But the nature of the evidence is such that it is hard to

tell the difference between something that happened in a thousand years and something that happened in a hundred.

On the human time scale, of course, that is all the difference in the world. If sea level is going to rise by, say, 30 feet over several thousand years, that is quite a lot of time to adjust — to pull back from the beaches, to reinforce major cities, and to develop technologies to help us cope.

But if sea level is capable of rising several feet per century, as Dr. O'Leary's paper would seem to imply and as many other scientists believe, then babies being born now could live to see the early stages of a global calamity.

The Washington Post Print

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But even if melting resumes in earnest this year, the Arctic Sea Ice blog has ruled out a new record for low extent in 2013…simply due to the amount of ground to make-up (or, in reality, lose).

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# Agency official under fire for development project endorsement

By *rebecca*
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**BCDC Vice Chair Anne Halsted, shown in this screen shot of Open Up the Waterfront's campaign ad.**

Did a high-ranking official of a regional conservation authority improperly use her influence to secure $10,000 for a nonprofit she chairs the board of? That's the allegation raised against San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Vice-Chair Anne Halsted in a complaint filed with the Fair Political Practices Commission, a statewide ethics agency.

Halsted appeared in a campaign ad produced by Open Up the Waterfront, which is pushing a San Francisco ballot measure seeking public approval for 8 Washington, a controversial waterfront development project that has become a political flashpoint in San Francisco [1].

Halsted also chairs of the board of directors of SPUR, a member-supported San Francisco nonprofit focused on planning issues.

In addition to publicly endorsing Open Up the Waterfront, SPUR received a $10,000 donation from San Francisco Waterfront Partners, the 8 Washington developers and major funders of the ballot initiative, sometime between May and the end of June. The campaign ad was posted to YouTube on July 22.

Geraldine Crowley, a volunteer working on a competing ballot measure campaign formed in opposition to 8 Washington, No Wall on the Waterfront, seized on this donation in her FPPC complaint. Crowley charged that Halsted violated conflict-of-interest rules under the California Political Reform Act, saying Halsted “used [her] official position to influence a governmental decision in which the official knows or has reason to know that he or she has a financial interest.”

“I would just like to have her portion of the commercial erased,” Crowley said in an interview. “What she says in the commercial does not reflect how all of BCDC feels about Open Up The Waterfront.”

The video also features an appearance by Will Travis, retired director of BCDC. “This appears to be a violation of the conflict-of-interest rules designed to prevent financial gifts from influencing public officials entrusted to steward public assets  such as the Bay,” said Jon Golinger, a spokesperson for No Wall on the Waterfront.

Halsted didn’t respond to our request for comment, but she did contact BCDC Chair Zack Wasserman to address the concerns raised by No Wall on the Waterfront in a message that was later forwarded to the Guardian.

"For several years [I] have supported a project called 8 Washington which is near the waterfront, but totally outside BCDC's jurisdiction. Because a recent video advocating the project indicated that I, a supporter of the project, am vice chair of BCDC, some have worried that it implies BCDC support - something I have never envisioned or contemplated!

Please be assured that my advocacy is personal because I believe it is an excellent project, not because any organization with which I associate has voted to endorse the project! Sorry if this confused anyone."

Whether Halsted influenced the $10,000 donation to SPUR in connection with her support for the project remains unclear. The organization's operating budget exceeded $3 million during the 2011-2012 year, according to SPUR'S annual report.

"When it comes to conflict-of-interest violations, it needs to be found that a public official is making governmental decisions based on money that has been given to them," Gary Winuk, chief of the enforcement division at FPPC said. "After we receive the complaint, we wait 10 days for the person accused to respond, then launch an investigation and review all the facts if there is just cause."

David Beltran, spokesperson for Open Up the Waterfront, criticized the complaint as "a reckless and meritless attempt to suppress free speech."

It's likely to be a week or more before the FPPC determines whether Crowley's complaint has any validity. If the FPPC determines that that Halsted did indeed violate the conflict-of-interest rules under the California Political Reform Act, she may face penalties such as a misdemeanor and $5,000 per violation.

Larry Goldzband, the commission's executive director, noted that BCDC has yet to endorse the project.

"The multi-use project proposed at 8 Washington Street in San Francisco is not in the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission," Goldzband said. "BCDC has neither considered nor endorsed the project, nor has any Commissioner asked that the Commission review the project in any manner."

8 Washington Development Erin Dage

**Source URL:** http://www.sfbg.com/politics/2013/08/08/agency-official-under-fire-development-project-endorsement

**Links:**
[1] http://www.sfbg.com/bruce/2012/03/06/editorial-case-against-8-washington-tower

The New York Times

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# A Republican Case for Climate Action

By WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS, LEE M. THOMAS, WILLIAM K. REILLY and CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN

EACH of us took turns over the past 43 years running the Environmental Protection Agency. We served Republican presidents, but we have a message that transcends political affiliation: the United States must move now on substantive steps to curb climate change, at home and internationally.

There is no longer any credible scientific debate about the basic facts: our world continues to warm, with the last decade the hottest in modern records, and the deep ocean warming faster than the earth's atmosphere. Sea level is rising. Arctic Sea ice is melting years faster than projected.

The costs of inaction are undeniable. The lines of scientific evidence grow only stronger and more numerous. And the window of time remaining to act is growing smaller: delay could mean that warming becomes "locked in."

A market-based approach, like a carbon tax, would be the best path to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, but that is unachievable in the current political gridlock in Washington. Dealing with this political reality, President Obama's June climate action plan lays out achievable actions that would deliver real progress. He will use his executive powers to require reductions in the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the nation's power plants and spur increased investment in clean energy technology, which is inarguably the path we must follow to ensure a strong economy along with a livable climate.

The president also plans to use his regulatory power to limit the powerful warming chemicals known as hydrofluorocarbons and encourage the United States to join with other nations to amend the Montreal Protocol to phase out these chemicals. The landmark international treaty, which took effect in 1989, already has been hugely successful in solving the ozone problem.

Rather than argue against his proposals, our leaders in Congress should endorse them and start the overdue debate about what bigger steps are needed and how to achieve them — domestically and internationally.

As administrators of the E.P.A under Presidents Richard M. Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George Bush and George W. Bush, we held fast to common-sense conservative principles — protecting the health of the American people, working with the best technology available and trusting in

the innovation of American business and in the market to find the best solutions for the least cost.

That approach helped us tackle major environmental challenges to our nation and the world: the pollution of our rivers, dramatized when the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland caught fire in 1969; the hole in the ozone layer; and the devastation wrought by acid rain.

The solutions we supported worked, although more must be done. Our rivers no longer burn, and their health continues to improve. The United States led the world when nations came together to phase out ozone-depleting chemicals. Acid rain diminishes each year, thanks to a pioneering, market-based emissions-trading system adopted under the first President Bush in 1990. And despite critics' warnings, our economy has continued to grow.

Climate change puts all our progress and our successes at risk. If we could articulate one framework for successful governance, perhaps it should be this: When confronted by a problem, deal with it. Look at the facts, cut through the extraneous, devise a workable solution and get it done.

We can have both a strong economy and a livable climate. All parties know that we need both. The rest of the discussion is either detail, which we can resolve, or purposeful delay, which we should not tolerate.

Mr. Obama's plan is just a start. More will be required. But we must continue efforts to reduce the climate-altering pollutants that threaten our planet. The only uncertainty about our warming world is how bad the changes will get, and how soon. What is most clear is that there is no time to waste.

*The writers are former administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency: William D. Ruckelshaus, from its founding in 1970 to 1973, and again from 1983 to 1985; Lee M. Thomas, from 1985 to 1989; William K. Reilly, from 1989 to 1993; and Christine Todd Whitman, from 2001 to 2003.*