

greenliving

## The Time is NOW

by Mick Dalrymple

In business school, students are taught to make decisions when they have gathered 80% of the information. The idea is that you will never have 100% of the information and, if you wait for it, it will be too late to capitalize on it.



For years now, we have been hearing from government leaders that all the information is not in on global warming and that we can't be sure that it is partially human-caused or that it is even really happening. Now we are paying the price for not being conservative and acting on the best information available at the time. With Katrina and an overall increase in hurricanes due to higher water surface temperatures, 143 days without rain in the Valley and then snow, drought-fueled wildfires in Texas and Oklahoma, record snowstorm in the Northeast, two-thirds of migratory herds in the horn of Africa killed by drought, record heat waves in Europe, floods in Central America, and the Arctic icecap melting at two to three times the rate previously estimated, it probably would not be prudent to wait until ALL the evidence is in. Many of us may not be around to see it.

The time delay between cause and effect now has us up against a wall. It is like trying to pay off your credit cards when they are already at the default rates. Scientists in the 1980's were telling us that the time to act was then. We are late, but that really just leaves us with the option of paying off our principal and interest at the same time.

So what can we do? On the personal level, we need to focus on energy efficiency in our homes, cars and at work. In the public arena, we need to support policies and leaders that have a strong and fast impact: Put air in your tires. Seal visible leaks around your doors and windows. Buy Energy Star appliances. Buy a hybrid. Install compact fluorescent bulbs. Replace windows with dual-pane, low-e ones. Turn off your computer when you leave the office or when you go to sleep. Insulate. Shade your west walls and windows. Change your air conditioner filter or even replace an old AC unit with a high-efficiency one. Invest in clean, alternative energy. Unlike a jet ski, it actually pays you.

From a public standpoint, demand that your elected officials do something and tell them you are not being hypocritical in your personal actions. There is a bill in the Arizona Legislature to increase incentives for solar energy. The Arizona Corporation Commission is increasingly supportive of renewable energy programs and energy efficiency. Let them know you support those efforts and that you will back them up if they rock some boats. Elections are always around the corner. Raise the issue with candidates and put it high on their agenda.

Energy efficiency is the fastest way for us to clean up our air, attack global warming, reduce our personal energy bills, reduce our nation's dependence on unstable countries, and promote long-lasting economic growth. The knee-jerk reaction is to say that reducing greenhouse gas emissions causes a drag on the economy. To the contrary, investing in energy efficient technologies actually helps make the economy stronger by promoting durable good manufacturing AND making our industries and their customers more competitive from an operating cost standpoint. And maybe we'll save a few billion dollars in disaster relief and recovery. Who knows? ALL the evidence is not in yet. Just like the side effects of global warming, we won't even know all the side benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy until we experience them.

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