

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Climate change No. 1 issue

Taxes, immigration, jobs, personal character — these are the issues dominating the 2016 presidential election.

But the biggest issue is rarely mentioned: Climate change.

This year is projected to be warmer than 2015, which itself was the hottest year on record. In fact, 15 of the 16 hottest years on record have occurred since 2001.

According to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 97 percent of climate scientists worldwide agree the earth is warming with disastrous, almost inconceivable changes to come. Coastal cities like New York underwater. Frequent, violent storms. Droughts. Species extinction.

And much of this will be well underway by the time today's kindergartners are entering their prime of life.

In fact, we're already seeing its early effects, such as the prolonged drought in California and dramatically increasing forest fires in the West.

Are Americans concerned? Recent polling by the Pew Research Center shows just over a third of Americans say they care a great deal about cli-

mate change.

A significant percentage, like presidential candidate Donald Trump, don't even believe it's a problem.

But it is a problem — a **yuge** problem.

It took 200,000 years for the world's human population to reach 1 billion people, in about 1800. It took a little more than a hundred years for the population to double, to 2 billion. Now, in just ninety years, it has more than tripled, to 7-plus billion.

All these people are consuming more resources and burning more fossil fuels than ever before, endangering life as we know it for future generations.

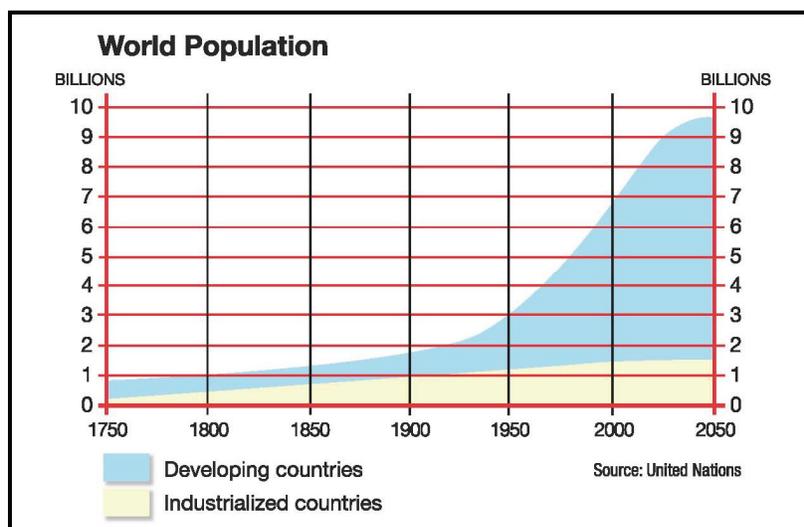
Last year, the world's nations reached an agreement in Paris to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But these are pledges, not deeds, while humans worldwide continue to add more than 50 billion tons of carbon dioxide annually to the atmosphere.

The Pottstown School District is spending nearly \$60 million this year to educate 3,200 students and prepare them for adult life.

How much effort do we make to discuss the most important issue of their lifetime? Not nearly enough.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton



Skyrocketing world population and the rise of resource consumption in developing countries are putting a tremendous strain on the carrying capacity of the earth. Climate change is the most dangerous result.