

Dear Pat:

... If we have learned anything from the past, it is that while we are very clever at inventing powerful new technologies, our knowledge of how the world works and is interconnected is almost zero. So we do things like explode nuclear bombs over Japan and then discover years later there is a thing called radioactive fallout, electromagnetic pulses of gamma rays and nuclear winter. We use DDT only to discover biomagnification years later when eagles begin to die off. We use CFCs and years later discover impacts on the ozone layer. The world is complex and tightly interconnected and our perturbations are alien impacts with enormous but unpredictable repercussions.

We know what is creating our problem with climate and we know the best solution, which is to accept that mother nature, not governments or corporations sets the limits and we've got to meet those limits. That's the problem and that's the solution. How we do it, is each society's problem but nature dictates the conditions. But we impose our political jurisdictions and our creations like economics as the driving conditions to be fulfilled by any strategy. Won't work. So instead, we find ways that will allow us to carry on as we are and as the problem gets worse and worse, we have to turn to more and more heroic solutions which will have enormous, but unpredictable repercussions.

Geoengineering is insane. Take the one the Harper government clings to as its excuse for doing nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, carbon capture and sequestration. Until very recently, it was thought life petered out at bedrock. But people found organisms deeper and deeper underground. Now we know there are bacteria many kilometers underground, organisms that have been there for millions and millions of years, organisms so different from anything we know above earth that we have to create new PHYLA to classify them. We have no idea what role they might play in transfer of nutrients deep in the earth, of energy from the magma or water flowing through. We just don't know if they play any role above ground or what they do beneath ground. Experts estimate there is more protoplasm below the earth than there is above it and we know nothing about them.

I asked Tullis Onstott, one of the world's experts on these creatures, what he thought the effect of pumping millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the ground would be. He said "I have no idea, but the methanogens will love it." Methanogens are bacteria that take up carbon dioxide and convert it to methane which is 22 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide!!! We are too smart for our own good. I have not heard one word about life underground in this discussion.

Please sign me up to support your movement.
David Suzuki