

Global Warming and Climate Change Are Becoming a Conservative Priority

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Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy has been gradually working to build support for a conservative climate change plan.

A conservative person is one who is cautious about taking actions. In the true sense of the word, a conservative will account for risks with every decision they make to ensure that they are taking the most conservative and least risky action.

In this context, addressing the substantial risks associated with future global warming and the substantial changes in climate that it will cause should be a priority among conservatives. For many years, mainstream conservatism simply ignored or denied the physical reality of global warming and climate change.

Lately, addressing these matters has become a priority with a new generation of young conservatives, with headlines appearing in the media such as, "[Young Republicans Push Party to Act on Climate Change](#)" and "[For Decades, the GOP Has Fought Against Climate Action; 'Eco-Right' Groups Are Working to Change the Conversation.](#)" Even traditionally conservative young evangelical Christians have rebuffed their elder's disinterest in addressing global warming and climate change and have [formed lobbying groups](#) such as Young Evangelicals for Climate Action to press people within their community to act.

Conservative Think Tank Member Changes His Mind About Addressing Global Warming

Jerry Taylor worked for the conservative-libertarian Cato Institute think tank for many years during which he argued against taking action to address global warming and climate change. In [an article](#) published in TheBulwark in May 2019, he explained that he changed his opinion about the necessity of addressing global warming and climate based on his understanding of how the risk associated with this growing problem should be addressed. This was after spending 13 years working for the conservative-libertarian think tank known as the Cato Institute, during which he spent a great deal of time advising decision-makers that there as no need to address global warming and its resultant changes in climate.

Per Mr. Taylor:

"I changed my mind about that, however, because (among other things) I changed my mind about risk management."

"If we think about climate risks in the same fashion we think about risks in other contexts, we should most certainly hedge—and hedge aggressively—by removing fossil fuels from the economy as quickly as possible."

He noted that the big debate in climate science now isn't whether or not global warming and climate change is occurring or even whether mankind's activity is the main cause. The focus of the debate is about the scale of the problem: how much and how large the impacts will be over how long a time frame, and how impactful the ongoing effects will be.

Mr. Taylor acknowledges that there's a wide difference in the estimated warming that the planet will endure from 1.5 Celsius to 4.5 Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit to 8.1 Fahrenheit).

In regard to the expected warming, he notes that we can't be sure about how bad it will be, but that's quite common in regard to the problems we face. He explained that risk management requires planning for a range of outcomes and trying to mitigate your exposure to the worst possible risks. We need to determine the response that makes the most sense given the distribution of possible outcomes and plan for the possibility that the climate problem winds up being a bigger problem than we expect.

So, the crux of Mr. Taylor's change of opinion in regard to addressing global warming and climate change is that there are clear risks and the protocols of risk management call for the risk to be addressed to the most likely distribution of possible outcomes.

Jerry Taylor of the conservative-libertarian think Cato Institute cato.org

Growing Support for Addressing Climate Change

A poll conducted by Morning Consult in August 2020 found that 75 percent of Generation Z (72 million people in the U.S. born between 1996 and 2010) believe that climate change is happening and will continue, while about half believe climate change can be slowed.

Speaking of the younger generation of conservatives, Chris Johnson, managing director of a group called Young Conservatives for Carbon Dividends said, "This is a generation for whom the reality of climate change has never really been in question."

A group called ConservAmerica uses the tagline "conservation is conservative" to draw attention to the fact that conservative politics and conservation of resources go hand in hand.

Young Evangelicals for Climate Action's national organizer and spokesperson Kyle Meyaard-Schaap said since the group's founding in 2012, "they have attempted to wake up the evangelical community to the demands of their faith when it comes to caring for God's creation: both the planet itself and the people on it, especially the poor and the oppressed."

Future Global Warming Scenarios

The spread of global warming scenarios (earth-ways.co.uk)

The Republican Party Makes Tepid Moves to Address Climate Change

The Republican Party leadership is taking notice of its younger member's demands and has started to introduce bills in the U.S. Congress to address global warming and climate change. Not surprisingly, their proposals are rather modest, and many rely on free-market solutions rather than government mandates.

In essence, they are just playing around the edges of what really needs to be done to take a precautionary and conservative action to address the risk associated with global warming and

climate change, that being weaning the U.S. economy off of fossil fuels and onto non-carbon emitting energy sources to avoid the serious risk of runaway global warming that would cause massive economic and social chaos, as well as the loss of life at some point in the future.