

Letter: Climate change insurance for today and tomorrow

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Global warming already affects us. The Daily News recently published two articles about adapting to it in our region. One discussed changes in Great Basin rangeland management to reduce wildfires, noting that 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 were significantly warmer than the previous 100 years and the fire season is now 1-2 months longer.

The second discussed the need for snowmaking equipment to sustain Inland Northwest ski resorts, including 49 Degrees North. Schweitzer, which averages 300 inches of snow a year, received only 180 inches last year, but had a normal season thanks to the equipment.

Snowmaking equipment, which is helping the ski industry adapt to current global warming, was described as insurance. We also need insurance to manage future risks of more catastrophic climate changes.

Arguments for managing risk against climate change are made in "The Conservative Case for a Carbon Tax" by Jerry Taylor (from Niskanen Center, a Libertarian think-tank). He says if scientists are correct, but we wait for more physical proof, it will be too late to reverse the devastation. You can't wait until your house is burning to buy insurance. The world needs climate insurance now. Taylor favors a policy similar to carbon fee and dividend proposed by Citizens' Climate Lobby. George P. Shultz, secretary of state under Ronald Regan, also supports it.

This simple, transparent, market-based policy will send businesses a clear message that greenhouse gas emissions must drop. A gradually rising fee on greenhouse gases provides companies time to respond. Taylor argues this is far superior to regulations dictating what companies must change. He notes that if the future proves scientists wrong about global warming, it will be much easier to reduce or eliminate a tax than to undo complex regulations.

Learn more about carbon fee and dividend at cclplause.org.

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