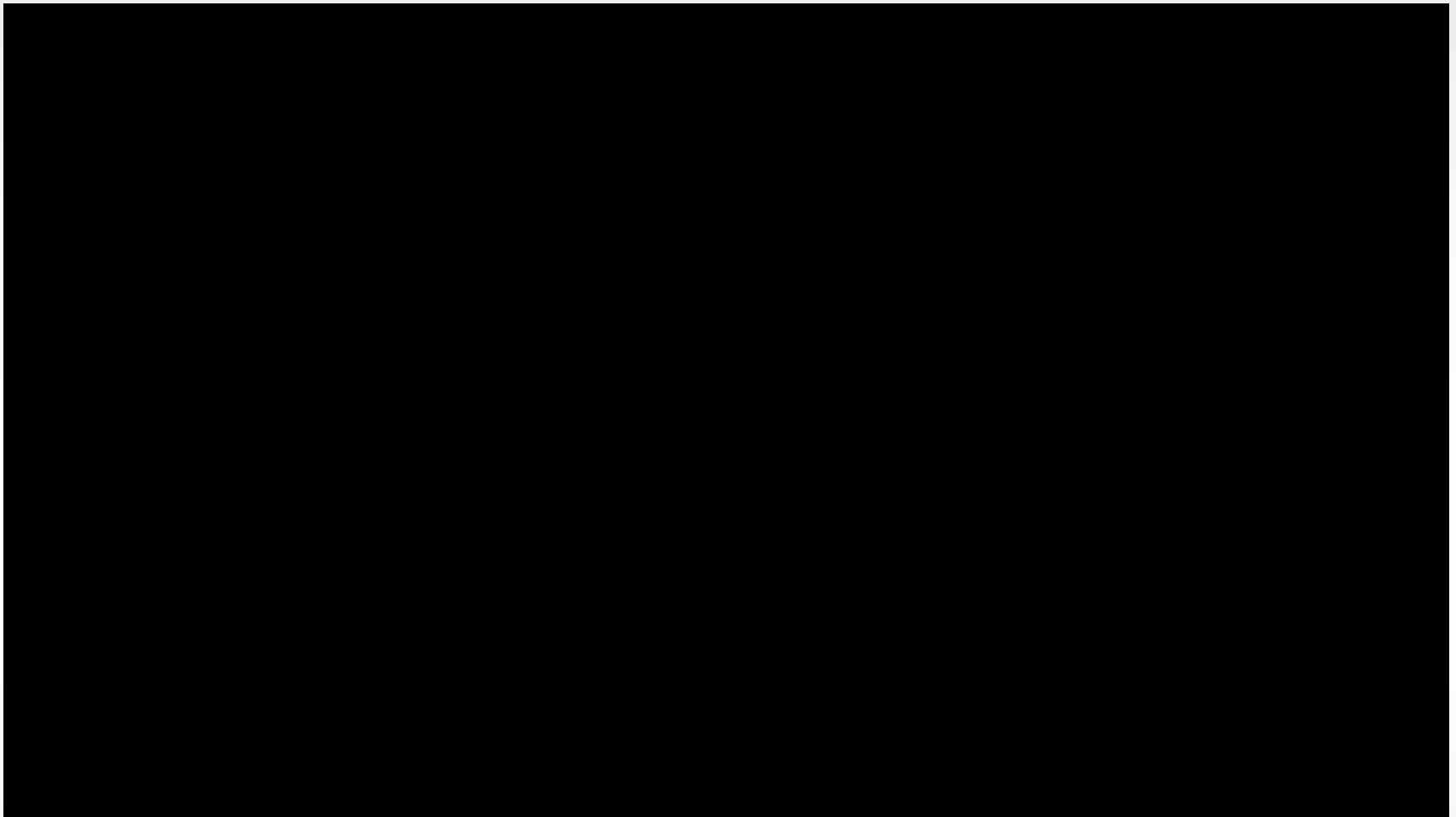


The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels





Claim: Every person in this room has the ability to significantly influence the way dozens if not hundreds of people think about this industry.

Why I believe this: Because the moral case for fossil fuels convinced me when nothing else did, and it has done the same for tens of thousands of others who didn't believe fossil fuels were moral—including former hardcore environmentalists



Typical case for a new fossil fuel project—why doesn't it work?

- Generates new economic activity
- Creates jobs
- Generates more tax revenue
- Has lower emissions than older projects

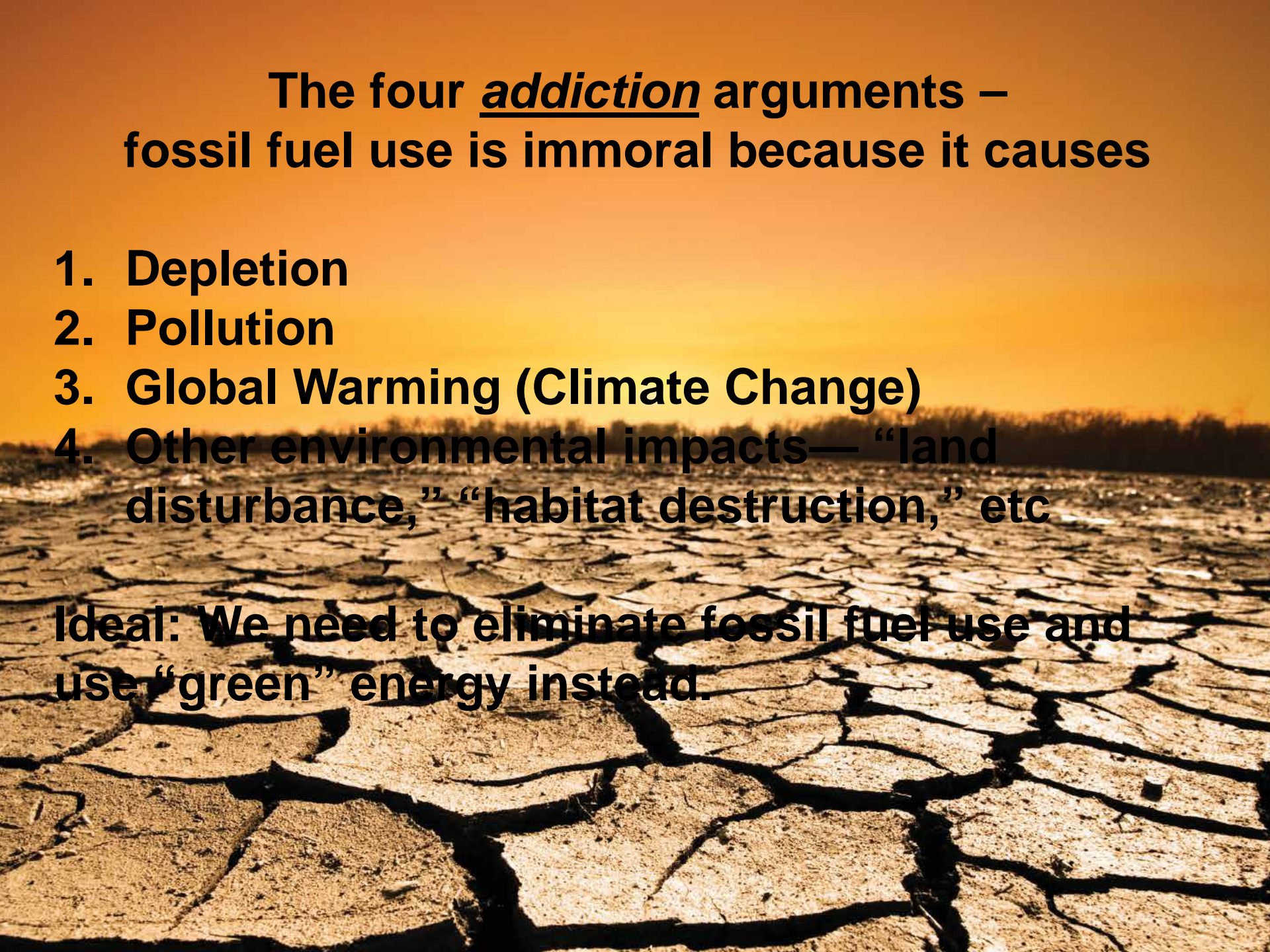
Because we are all taught that humanity's use of fossil fuels is a planet-destroying addiction that is *immoral* to continue. This is the moral case against fossil fuels.



The four addiction arguments – fossil fuel use is immoral because it causes

- 1. Depletion**
- 2. Pollution**
- 3. Global Warming (Climate Change)**
- 4. Other environmental impacts— “land disturbance,” “habitat destruction,” etc**

Ideal: We need to eliminate fossil fuel use and use “green” energy instead.



Why is the moral case against fossil fuels everywhere?

Because of you.

The fossil fuel industry has:

1. Failed to answer the addiction argument
2. Frequently made the addiction argument
3. Extravagantly funded anti-fossil fuel institutions

Given the conduct of the fossil fuel industry, the widespread opposition is 100% logical

And yet, the moral case against fossil fuels is 100% illogical...

The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels

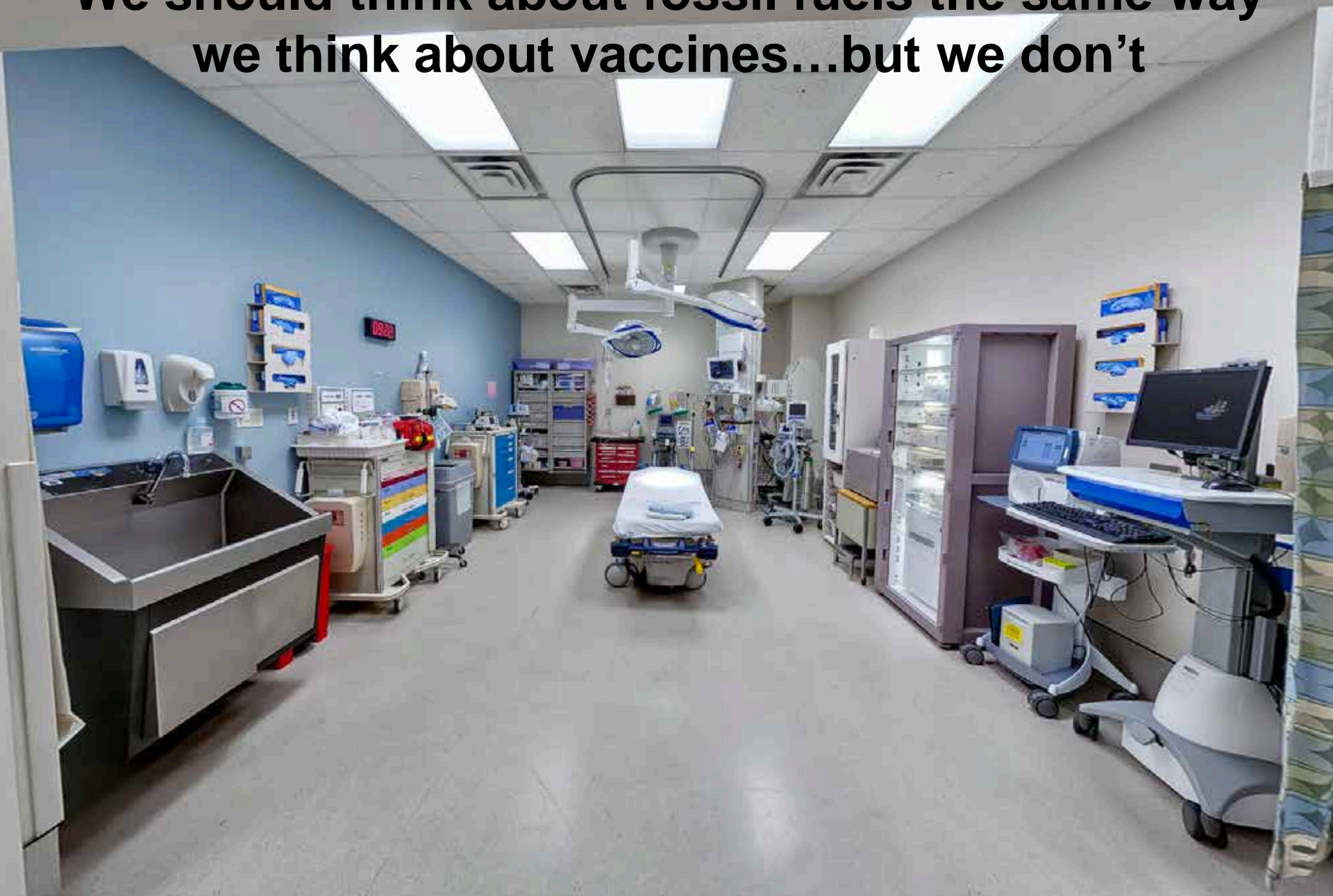
Key to understanding what's wrong with the moral case against fossil fuels: be philosophical, question our assumptions

If using fossil fuels causes depletion, pollution, global warming, and other environmental impacts make them immoral?

It depends on the big picture

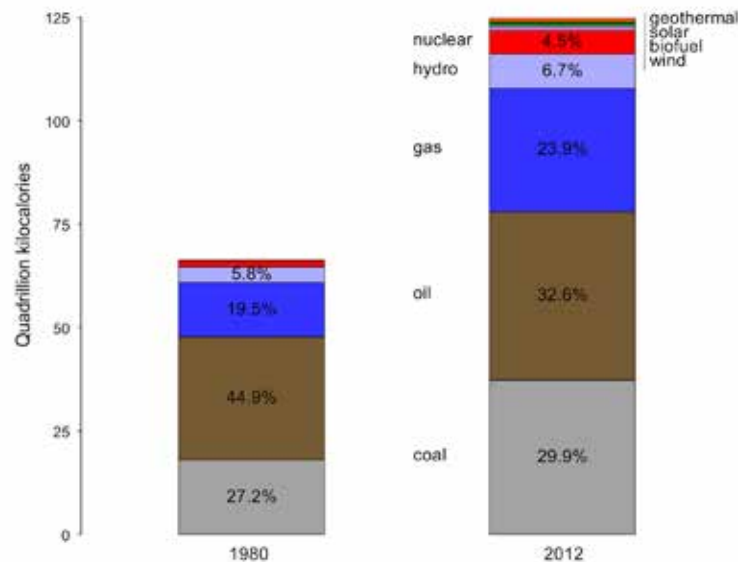
How to think big-picture about fossil fuels and climate

**We should think about fossil fuels the same way
we think about vaccines...but we don't**



The (unique) benefits

Benefits of fossil fuels: the best, most resource-efficient technology--which means choosing fossil fuels enables billions of people to improve their lives.



Let's compare to allegedly moral solar and wind

Since the 1970s, energy thought-leaders have claimed that solar and wind could supply all the energy we need...today, Germany is cited as a leading example

The German experiment



The China and India experiments

70


65

China

45

0

China



If we were forced to use renewables/unreliables, billions would suffer and die prematurely—and if we use more fossil fuels, there is the potential to make everyone's lives better.

Yet no one seems to care too much...why?

How to assess climate livability impact

1. Look at magnitude of impact on temperature and climate (Greenhouse Effect)
2. Look at magnitude of impact on plant life (Fertilizer Effect)
3. Look at magnitude of impact on climate mastery (Energy Effect)

Separate fact from speculation

Greenhouse Effect

Long-standing track-record of claims of runaway global warming

Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions

EARTH INSTITUTE | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*In next 10 years,
“Average global
temperatures [will]
rise by one-half a
degree to one
degree
Fahrenheit.”*



*And 10 years after
that, “the global
temperature [will]
rise by another 2 to 4
degrees.”*

-1986!

Dr. James E. Hansen

“The choice of doing nothing—of continuing to burn ever more oil and coal—is not a choice, in other words. It will lead us, if not straight to hell, then straight to a place with a similar temperature.”

--1989

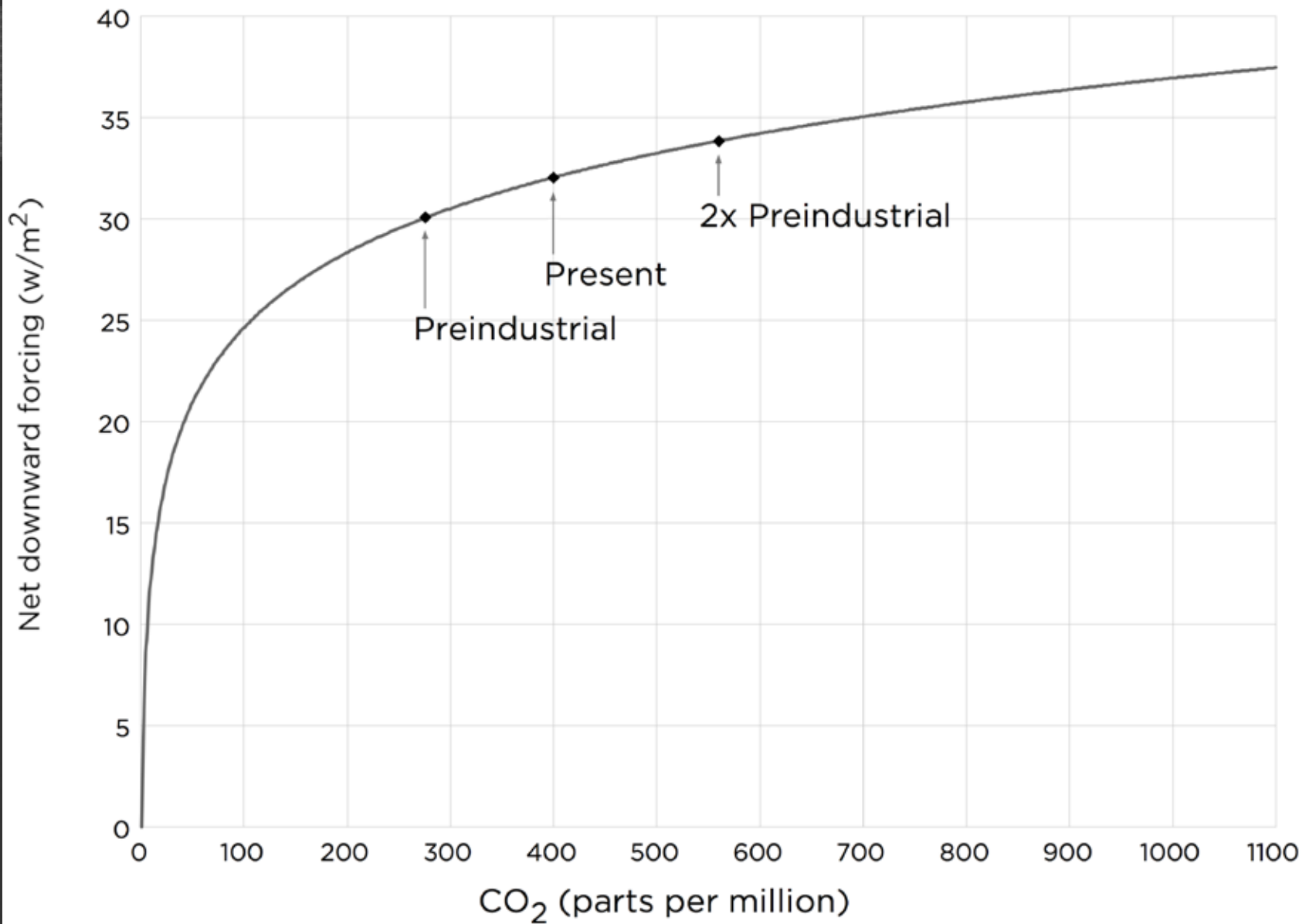


“a few more decades of ungoverned fossil-fuel use and we burn up, to put it bluntly.”

--1989

Bill McKibben

Reality



Range
New York, NY, 2013

Parts per million

Degrees Celsius

ent CO₂

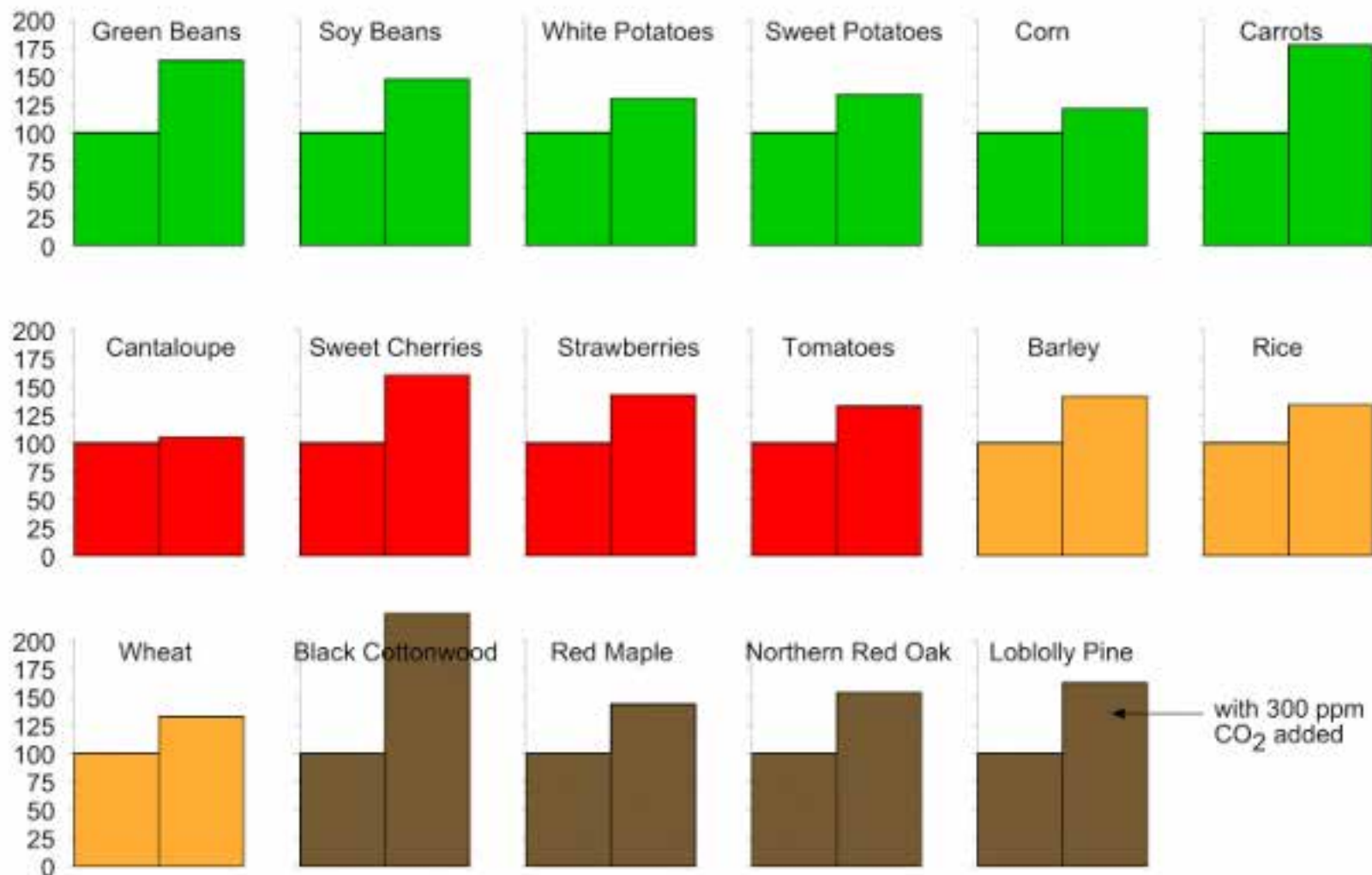
Fact: life on Earth thrived, not fried, when CO₂ levels were more than 10X today's levels!

Fertilizer Effect

**Never discussed, never thought about even
though it's obvious from grade school
knowledge!**

(Why don't we think about it?)







Office of Science and Technology Policy

*"[C]arbon-dioxide
climate-induced famine
could kill as many as a
billion people over the
next 35 years."*

-1985!



Director John P. Holdren

Reality

Parts per million

Millions

average

A horizontal line is drawn across the lower portion of the page. An arrow points from the word 'average' to this line.

Truth: Using fossil fuels doesn't take a safe climate and make it dangerous, it takes a dangerous climate and makes it far, far safer

The Overall Truth, the moral case for fossil fuels

Fossil fuels are not a self-destructive addiction that is destroying our planet, they are a life-enhancing technology that is improving our planet

Why don't we think big picture, why don't we see the truth?

Because of the way we measure what is moral.

2 views of the right moral standard

- 1. Maximize human well-being (humanist)**
- 2. Minimizing human impact (green)**

In our culture we hold minimizing human impact as our standard, which makes us ignore the human benefits of fossil fuels, to view all impacts as immoral, and to *assume* that those impacts must cause disaster no matter how much evidence there is to the contrary.

Minimal impact (green) is an immoral, anti-human ideal and standard, and completely self-defeating in persuasion.



Leveraging the Moral Case

**This reframing of the debate is the only approach
that can truly neutralize attackers, turn non-
supporters into supporters, and turn supporters
into champions**

People are convinced by honest, logical arguments
with a noble goal and a common-sense thinking
method.

When they are exposed to it...which is where you
have far more power than you think.

3 ways to start your chain reaction

I'll send you a list of high-impact resources you can immediately share with your sphere of influence.

1. Email alex@alexepstein.com now
2. Hand business card
3. Fill out sheet

More on humanism vs. anti-humanism

Standard 1: Maximize human well-being

The right choice is the one that, in the full context, looking at both positives and negatives, maximizes human well-being—survival, progress, flourishing, happiness. HUMANISM

Underlying philosophy of life:

- The planet: Imperfect—Ever-changing and ever-improvable
- Human beings: Producers—Ever-evolving creators who improve the planet through ingenuity, technology, and development

Standard 2: Minimize human impact

The right choice is the one that minimizes human impact on the planet or ecosystem.

Underlying philosophy of life:

- The planet: Perfect—stable and nurturing
- Human beings: Parasites—Greedy, meddling dependents who shortsightedly plunder and despoil the perfect planet they depend on.

ANTI-HUMANISM (not “environmentalism”)