

Climate Scientists Endorse Nuclear Energy As Way To Reduce Greenhouse Emissions

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Wind and solar energy alone will not be enough to prevent severe [global warming](#) – in order to adequately reduce fossil fuel emissions, clean [nuclear power](#) plants will be required, some of the planet's top climate scientists wrote in an open letter sent to leading environmental organizations on Sunday.

According to the Associated Press ([AP](#)), the letter claims that global temperatures and carbon dioxide emissions are rising faster than ever, and that world governments need to consider focusing on nuclear power. They are calling upon environmental advocates to support the development of these power plants as a way to cut greenhouse gas pollution.

The letter, an advanced copy of which was provided to some media outlets and wire services, was written by four top scientists: [James Hansen](#), formerly of NASA who is currently with the Columbia University Earth Institute; [Ken Caldeira](#) of the Carnegie Institution's Department of Global Ecology; [Kerry Emanuel](#), a professor of atmospheric science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); and American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) fellow [Tom Wigley](#).

“Embracing nuclear is the only way, the scientists believe, to reverse the looming threat of climate change which they blame on fossil fuels. Depending who you ask, they're either abandoning – or leading – traditional environmentalists who for a half-century have rejected clean-burning nuclear power as too expensive or too dangerous,” explained [CNN](#)'s Thom Patterson. “Opponents cite disasters at Fukushima, Chernobyl and Three Mile island,” Patterson noted.

“The fear is that time is running out,” Patterson added. “Without nuclear, the scientists believe global energy consumption will overtake the planet's ability to reverse the buildup of carbon dioxide pollution from burning oil, coal and other fossil fuels. At risk, said Hansen, are disintegrating polar ice sheets and rising sea levels which will threaten coastal regions... The letter is among the scientists' strongest public statements backing nuclear power.”

While environmentalists agree that global warming is a serious threat to mankind and to ecosystems throughout the world, many of them are in staunch opposition to nuclear power, according to a story appearing in [The Guardian](#). Many believe that solar power, wind power and other types of [renewable energy](#) will be able to power the majority of the world in just a few decades' time. The authors of the letter, however, argue that such notions are unrealistic.

“Those energy sources cannot scale up fast enough” in order to produce the amount of affordable, reliable energy required by the nations of the world, they wrote. Furthermore, “with the planet warming and carbon dioxide emissions rising faster than ever, we cannot afford to turn away from any technology” with the potential to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere each year.

The authors have plenty of expertise in the field, according to the AP. Hansen started publishing research on the threat posed by climate change over three decades ago, and testified on the issue before Congress in 1988. Wigley also has over 30 years studying global warming, while Caldeira was a contributor to reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Emanuel is best known for studies investigating potential links between hurricanes and climate change.

“The time has come for those who take the threat of global warming seriously to embrace the development and deployment of safer nuclear power systems” as part of efforts to build a new global energy supply,” the four scientists wrote.