

August 30, 2018

## ***Environmental Justice - A Great Disruption***

Project SnowFall's Letter to our Congregation #4

*July 2018 marks 403rd consecutive month with temperatures above the 20th century average - NOAA (1)*

The forces that urge caution in response to concerns about the effects of climate change site the cost of making the adjustment as creating a disruption. This cost does not include the effects of not making an adjustment.

What do we make of stories with titles like these?

"Thirty American Cities that will soon be underwater" from the Wall Street Journal (2). And they are not talking financially.

Or that "Rising sea levels could cost the world \$14 trillion a year by 2100" Phy.org (3)

And "The military paid for a study on sea level rise. The results were scary". The Washington Post (4) The report shows more than a thousand low-lying island becoming uninhabitable by mid century.

Add to that, the cost of floods and drought.

The dollar amounts are only approximate, but they do not show the loss of life. The loss of community and tear in the fabric of society that this much disruption will cause.

Disruptions in the future at distant shores are not the only problem.

"Pollution kills more people than any thing else" Forbes (5)

"Air Pollution Increases Diabetes Risk at Levels the EPA Calls 'Safe" EcoWatch/Lancet (6)

"Cost of New EPA Coal Rules: Up to 1,400 More Deaths a Year New York Times (7)

All of this will make a bad situation worse, much worse. Neither floods nor air pollution or disease or death are factored into the cost of transition.

Today's letter will be short and to the point. The poor get hit first, the poor get hit the hardest, the poor had the least to do with this and they have the least ability to respond. 100's of million already live on the land no one else would want because it is too dangerous.

We need more environmental justice, not less. Once again, we are moving in the wrong direction. At least temporarily advantageous for a few. But in the long term, we are heading for a catastrophe. This must be considered when we are counseled to heed the call for “caution in response”.

William Koehl  
Green Sanctuary  
Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva

1 <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/global-climate-201807>

2 <https://247wallst.com/special-report/2018/06/19/american-cities-that-will-soon-be-under-water/2/>

3 <https://phys.org/news/2018-07-sea-world-trillion-year.html>

4 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2018/04/25/climate-change-could-make-thousands-of-tropical-islands-uninhabitable-in-coming-decades-new-study-says/?utm\\_term=.d0c014a8db27](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2018/04/25/climate-change-could-make-thousands-of-tropical-islands-uninhabitable-in-coming-decades-new-study-says/?utm_term=.d0c014a8db27)

5 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2017/11/07/pollution-kills-more-people-than-anything-else/#200912ef1a35>

6 <https://www.ecowatch.com/air-pollution-diabetes-epa-2583155988.html>

7 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/21/climate/epa-coal-pollution-deaths.html>

