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May 2020



The churning engines of industry have slowed and we can see clear skies, hear birds singing, and smell fresh air. We don't want to go back to normal—we want better than normal. Governments will take drastic measures to protect humanity when the threat is urgent and the public supports it—now is the time to demand action to prevent our next big catastrophe.

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I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM, WE ALL SCREAM FOR A GREEN RECOVERY

The buzz is louder than the [wails](#) of a quintillion baby cicadas, and now calls for a green recovery have put massive, world-wide climate action within our reach:

[Companies](#) worth \$2 trillion are calling for a green recovery.

[Forty Million Health Professionals](#), including our Director Dr. Aaron Bernstein, signed a letter calling for G20 leaders to place public health at the core of their economic recovery.

[Prince Charles](#) will lead a global meeting about how to reset the entire world's economy to address climate change. You got this, HRH!

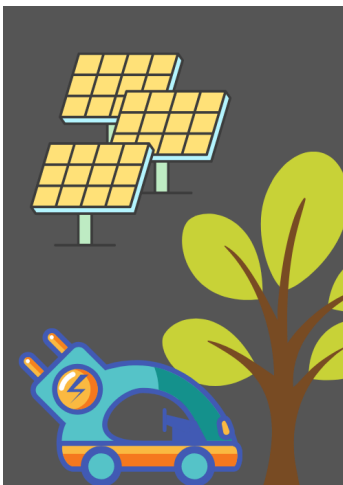


The World Bank is offering guidance to governments to build climate plans into stimulus packages. **Almost Everybody Else Too**, according to IPSOS, 65% of the global public support a green economic recovery.

Which is great, because we're at a critical juncture: Either we use these once-in-a-lifetime stimulus funds to entrench further into our high-pollutin' ways, or we build a world in which our children and grandchildren can survive. _(ツ)_/

BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS A GREEN RECOVERY? #AskingForAFriend

Oh, you know ... *only everything that's awesome* :



- Retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency
- Building clean energy infrastructure
- Electrifying transportation systems
- Implementing electric vehicle networks
- Redesigning roads for walking and cycling
- Expanding broadband to encourage teleworking
- Climate resilience projects like flood protection
- Planting trees

These large-scale projects would create new jobs and could start quickly, which is handy when one in four Americans have filed for unemployment. "Green public investment would be the most cost-effective way both to revive virus-hit economies and strike a decisive blow against climate change," according to this [Oxford Working Paper](#).

Some of these green initiatives are already taking shape

Mayors of the [C40 Cities](#), a network of the world's megacities, are looking to tackle climate change and social inequities in their economic recoveries by:

- Transforming hundreds of miles of streets for biking and walking
- Setting aside streets for "socially responsible recreation"
- Introducing programs to retrofit homes with renewable energy



- Creating collective funds to support electric vehicles, bike lanes, and retrofitting

While some projects are designed as short-term solutions to accommodate social distancing, wide pedestrian walkways and safety-first bike lanes might be too good to give up even after the coast is clear, wink-wink, nudge-nudge.

[Read more: City leaders aim to shape green recovery from coronavirus crisis](#)

One story to help you sleep at night

Hot off the presses: U.S. renewable energy consumption surpasses coal for the first time in over 130 years—wood was all the rage until the early 1800s, then hydropower swaggered in during the 1880s. Check out some glorious [#NerdGraphs](#) that show [coal consumption plummeting and clean renewables ascending](#), brought to us by the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

SAY WE DO ALL. THE. THINGS. WHAT WOULD OUR NEW, GREEN WORLD LOOK LIKE?

It's not Utopia; it's just a world in which the air doesn't make you sick and the weather doesn't try to kill you. It's green AF (as frogs).



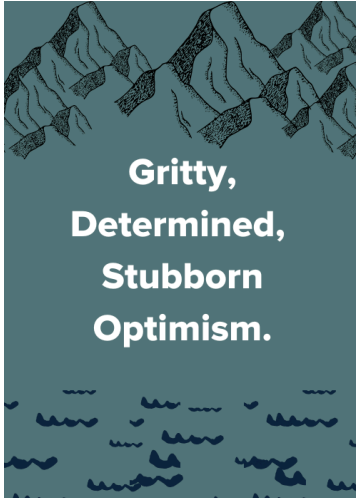
It comes from British poet Tom Roberts, whose video, [The Great Realisation](#), went viral (English majors everywhere, there's hope!). In it, a father from the future reads a bedtime story depicting how the pandemic transformed our screens-obsessed, over-consuming culture into a world that embraced connections and kindness, and allowed nature and humans to heal.

It's sad and hopeful, capturing the mood of just about everything these days—and it's also the choice before us.

We're not crying, you're crying.

BUT WHAT IF I'M TOO MIRED IN DESPAIR TO TAKE ACTION?

We need optimism to fight climate change, but not the Pollyanna kind. It's really more of the boulder-dodging Indiana Jones kind. And as Christiana Figueres, the UN leader who negotiated the Paris Agreement, tells us, we need "gritty, determined, stubborn optimism."



Her appearance on NPR's TED Radio Hour is well worth the 14 minutes to listen. Key points:

- Optimism is a constant choice; a relentless commitment to move forward no matter what.
- Impossible is not a fact, it's only an attitude. We have to change our attitude because future generations are depending on us.
- It's not that we can't be frustrated and angry; it's about using that energy productively, to contribute to the solution.
- There will be barriers, but climate momentum is unstoppable. Don't confuse the waves with the current.

[Listen now: How can we choose optimism—even in the darkest times?](#)

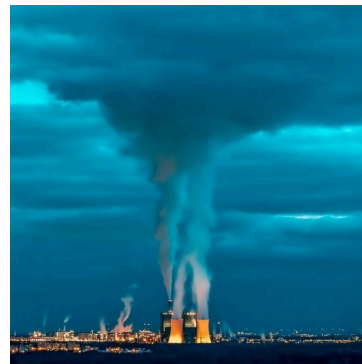
CLIMATE ACTION TO-DO LIST #QuarentineStyle

In early March, when many were discouraging conversations that connected climate change to the pandemic, we deployed a [rapid-response strategy](#) that injected climate into the national discourse. We hope you'll find hope ways to be part of the solution in some of our latest resources.



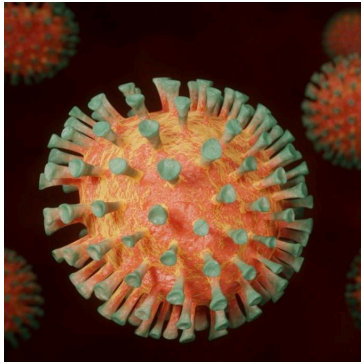
[Coronavirus and Heatwaves](#)

Four ways to protect health as we prepare for summer during the pandemic.



[Coronavirus and Air Pollution](#)

Context for research happening at Harvard and around the world.



[Climate Action Can Help Fight Pandemics](#)

How we can protect ourselves: An op-ed from our Director, Dr. Aaron Bernstein.



[Why Pandemics Could Become More Likely If We Continue to Destroy the Environment](#)

A video from Los Angeles Times



[Reel Science: Actors Asking Experts](#)

Together with [EMA](#), we pair celebrities with scientists to talk climate and health.

Your Voting Checklist

The Earth Day Network is giving Earth Day two birthdays this year: One on April 22, and one on Election Day. The [Vote Earth Initiative](#) encourages all Americans to reject inaction and demand change at the polls.



[Check your registration status](#)
(30 sec)



[Register to vote](#)
(2 min)



[Get your absentee ballot](#)
(2 min)



[Get election reminders](#)
(15 sec)



[Pledge to register, get reminder on your 18th birthday.](#)
(15 sec)

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!



To all Harvard graduates today, and to all graduates across the country in the coming weeks, you accomplished something great under the most unique and stressful circumstances. Our hats are off to you and we can't wait to see what you do to make the world a better place.

Pictured: Harvard Chan graduates Aviva Musicus, Erika Eitland and Annalise Blomberg.

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