

Climate Connections

Over the past 5 million years, changing climates contributed to the evolution of humans. Earth's relationship with the long term carbon-cycle is changing slowly and hence there has been a natural change in the climate. Carbon is the key factor of life, and it must cycle between the four systems of earth – the atmosphere (air), geosphere (land), hydrosphere (water) and biosphere (life). Over the past 150 years, human greed has played a major role in disrupting this carbon cycle and resulted in the poor climate conditions we suffer today.

Wide-spread burning of fossil fuels in cars, homes, and industries increases the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The toxins in the air change the ocean currents and its acidity (hydrosphere). This threatens the coral-reefs and mangroves which protect the islands from storm surges. In addition, global warming is heating the Arctic almost twice as fast as other planets. If this continues, all of the polar bears will be wiped out within a century. This climate change threatens all life forms (biosphere) by altering their basic needs and giving them very little time for evolutionary responses. Above all, landfills are becoming a major problem for the geosphere.

Composting biodegradable materials can help us restore our soils and protect our climate. I am very proud to be a part of the San Francisco Bay Area, a pioneer area in protecting our climate. San Francisco adopted the zero waste approach. This approach significantly decreases the waste that is discarded in landfills and in incinerators, protecting the climate in a cheaper and more effective way. We have to face the reality. Climate change is happening fast. It's an environmental battle for our generation and generations to come. I call upon all students to join together to prevent this global ecological crisis.