



Questions and Answers

Q: The Secure Green Future ballot question is asking for an 80% cut in greenhouse gasses in 12 years (by 2020) while most presidential candidates and legislators in Congress are promising to reach such goals only by mid-century. What's wrong with the more leisurely pace?

Office holders often take comfort in putting off decisive action until some other administration takes office. But there comes a time when we must act on the scientific findings to avoid a clear and present danger. The longer we wait, the more likely it is that the planet will pass a crucial tipping point, and that the slide toward catastrophe will be irreversible. Today, we can use our resources build a secure future. Tomorrow, we will not have time to assemble the resources required, and our wealth will be increasingly absorbed by disaster relief. We simply can't afford to let major cuts in greenhouse gases wait for the future. We need to take decisive action now.

Q: Why should we stop giving tax incentives to energy-intensive projects?

Because when we build projects that consume excessive amounts of energy, we are just digging ourselves deeper into the hole of oil addiction. Every such project means that we will have to work harder to save our climate. Taxpayers should not be asked to fund the destruction of their future. We need to think twice before we invest in things like "destination casinos", inefficient buildings, coal-burning power plants, and remote shopping malls.

Q: Why should we be encouraging locally-owned green businesses and cooperatives?

Because such businesses circulate money within a community and create more jobs per dollar spent. Green jobs are ideal for creating locally-owned businesses and providing sustainable employment. As transportation costs rise, we must build strong local economies that are not so dependent on trucking and shipping. Furthermore, when our

economic fate is in our own hands, rather than being dictated to us by distant boards of directors, we have true economic security and can decide our own fate in a democratic way. Most of the "economic stimulus" spending of recent years has been targeted to big, wealthy corporations from outside the state. It's time to start taking care of the local economic engine that is vital to our future.

Q: Is there a danger that we could be moving too fast?

No. When it comes to saving money and avoiding environmental catastrophe, moving faster is better. The real danger comes from delays which could push us past critical tipping points and make solutions impossible.

Q: Is it technically and economically possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2020?

Absolutely. We know how to do it.. We have all the technology we need (with new technology appearing all the time). All it requires is the political will to take the necessary actions.

Q: But wouldn't it be expensive to do all this?

No. It saves money. It is a lucrative investment, not an expenditure. We simply need to make that investment. Lester Brown estimates that the investment required for his Plan B approach would amount to only one-sixth of what we are currently spending on the military. It would take about 3 per cent of the GNP. Over time, the cost savings we achieve from breaking our oil addiction will more than pay for the outlays. The question is not whether we can afford the Secure Green Future. The question is how we could be so crazy as to think we can afford the enormous costs of remaining addicted to oil.

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Q: Don't we have other important priorities?

Indeed we do. But those priorities are unlikely to be addressed effectively if we don't solve the climate crisis. Solving the climate crisis will create jobs, reduce health care costs, and make our nation more secure. We need to address all our national priorities - but in doing so we can't defer addressing climate change.

Q: What kind of things would we have to do to achieve an 80% reduction in GHG emissions?

We need to raise energy efficiency in transportation, housing, manufacturing, and personal use. We need to implement full recycling of materials (since recycling requires much less energy than manufacturing from virgin materials). We have to retire fossil-fuel based energy production and turn to renewable energy sources such as wind power, solar power, hydroelectric, and geothermal energy. Electricity will play a more central role in the energy economy of the future, and combustion will fade away. In addition, we have to stop deforestation and restore natural areas that can sequester carbon.

Q: Transportation is considered to be one of the more difficult sectors in which to reduce CO2 emissions. Can we get an 80% reduction in that sector?

Absolutely. In *Plan B: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, Lester Brown proposes one way to address transportation. He suggests that we build a national network of 1.5 million wind turbines to generate clean electricity. Simultaneously, we replace our gasoline-dependent automobiles with efficient plug-in hybrid vehicles. When our automobiles are running mostly on wind power, fuel use for automobiles will have been reduced by over 90%. We could go even further by encouraging car pooling, telecommuting, better trip planning, use of public transportation, etc. You get the idea. We can clearly get to 80% reduction - its just a question of deciding to do it and selecting the initiatives to put in our portfolio.

Q: How would SGF address the high price of gasoline?

Gasoline will never be cheap again. But if we embrace the Secure Green Future, we can drive right past the gas pumps. It can be shown that using wind-powered plug-in hybrid automobiles would be equivalent to buying gasoline at \$1 per gallon. Think about it.

Q: Does the Secure Green Future question identify a specific plan we should adopt for shaking oil addiction and creating the new green economy?

No, it does not single out any one plan. We have an overabundance of techniques and several worthy plans have been proposed (such as Plan B mentioned above). We need to build a detailed plan through an open and democratic planning process in which communities and citizens have a voice. The SGF question simply asks legislators to make a commitment to the end result, and to start building the future we deserve.

Q: If this is such a good idea, can't we just assume that our political leaders will do it?

History clearly shows that we can't assume that needed changes will occur just because they are good for the public. There are armies of lobbyists for fossil-fuel industries in Washington. Energy bills are being crafted by self-interested industries, not by objective scientists and economists. Many politicians are dependent on campaign donations from business interests promoting a fossil fuel economy and centralization of economic power. Getting effective solutions enacted will require strong pressure from independent and uncompromised citizens across the country. That is why we must speak up for a Secure Green Future.

The Secure Green Future Question

Shall the representative from this district be instructed to vote in favor of legislation that:

- 1) reduces greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts by 80% by 2020, and**
- 2) phases out tax incentives for energy-intensive projects, while expanding job creation programs for locally-owned businesses and cooperatives involved in renewable energy, conservation, and sustainable agriculture?**

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