



BAY AREA CLIMATE NEWS

July 2017

The Big Picture

David Wallace-Wells' tough, stark and riveting [The Uninhabitable Planet](#) (July 10 New York Magazine) is the hottest article of the year (so far).

"What follows is not a series of predictions of what will happen — that will be determined in large part by the much-less-certain science of human response. Instead, it is a portrait of our best understanding of where the planet is heading absent aggressive action. It is unlikely that all of these warming scenarios will be fully realized, largely because the devastation along the way will shake our complacency. But those scenarios, and not the present climate, are the baseline. In fact, they are our schedule."

Understandably, Wallace-Wells has stirred up a LOT of (mostly smart) arguments. **David Roberts** in VOX nicely summarizes this (with links) in ["Did That New York Magazine Climate Story Freak You Out? Good"](#).

"The theme of all these critiques is that bad, scary news doesn't help. It terrifies and paralyzes people. People often cite social science in support of this critique (Emily Atkin at the New Republic [has a few references](#)), but I think the lesson, such as it is, has been wildly overlearned."

"Even if it's true that fear only 'works' when it is joined with a sense of agency and efficacy, that doesn't mean that every single instance of fear has to be accompanied by a serving of hope. Not every article has to be about everything. That's okay. Fear +hope requires fear. Wallace-Wells himself has the best defense, in an [interview with Gothamist](#)."

Slate's Science Editor Susan Matthews wades into the fight with ["Alarmism is the Argument We Need to Fight Climate Change."](#)

"An argument for freaking out, his piece has been decried for being too alarmist. Actually, it is not alarmist enough. As I read it in bed at midnight Sunday night, for the first time I started to realize just exactly why climate change might be a reason not to have children—because if those children have children, this could be their world. That's how close to the edge we are."

"But, contrary to the belief perpetuated by a lot of the criticism of this piece, addressing climate change does not rely on people being psychologically self-possessed enough to freely give up meat and airplane rides for the greater good. There is no amount of individual good intention that can solve this massive, structural problem in enough time to have an impact. What we need is leaders who will take this problem seriously. We need it yesterday. And the right way to get there is to tell people the truth about the future and implore them to vote for and insist on a better one."

California Leads the Way (Part 88)

The California legislature is [debating significant changes](#) to our current **Cap and Trade Program** (recently upheld by the courts). The Bay Area's proposed [cap on refinery emissions](#) (postponed just before a key vote at BAAQMD last month) is one of the prime points of argument.

Meanwhile, the current version of [AB 398](#) includes **adaptation and resiliency projects**, for the first time, as potential recipients of cap and trade's considerable \$\$.

The Governor, Michael Bloomberg and others have announced a [major international Climate Summit](#) in San Francisco for September 2018 linked with the [Under 2 Coalition](#). This should provide major opportunities to showcase the best Bay Area GHG and adaptation projects.

Brown and Bloomberg are leading the new [America Pledge](#) effort, a group of 227 cities and counties, 9 states and thousands of businesses that are vowing to stick with the Paris Agreement in spite of the Trump exit. This will include teaming with experts to quantify their climate commitments and sharing plans with the United Nations.

Cool Bay Area Projects

Fifty-one teams entered the big [Resilient By Design Bay Area Challenge](#) by last week's deadline. Now the RBD [jury](#) will review and select 10 teams to begin the challenge in the Fall. Your deadline for [nominating a site](#) for the challenge is this Friday July 14th.

Eight Bay Area water agencies, calling themselves the [Bay Area Regional Reliability Partnership](#) have just released a DRAFT [Drought Contingency Plan](#), a new and different regional approach to water planning that leverages existing assets and brings these separate agencies together. Great work!

CRI Project Updates

Mark Lubell (UC Davis) has just published [The Governance Gap: Climate Adaptation and Sea Level Rise in the San Francisco Bay Area](#). This report is based on extensive interviews and focus groups with Bay Area sea level rise stakeholders and is a part of the Berkeley/Davis/USGS [RISer project](#) that is supported by CRI.

UC Berkeley and CRI stalwart Kristina Hill has been working a lot recently on **Bay Area groundwater issues** from sea level rise and on **"floodable development."** More on this next month, but for now see a short interview with Kristina in [GB&D Resiliency Roundtable](#) where she calls out The Sand Engine (Netherlands), Nate Kaufman's LEAP for San Francisco Bay and other wonderful forward-thinking development concepts.

More info? Email bruce@climatereadinessinstitute.org.

Photo of the Month

[KCET Infographic by Dennis Nishi](#) (click for larger image and story)

