The Greening of Planet Earth–*Confirmed!* Video Series

Transcript:* *The Fortuitous Link Between CO_2 Emissions and Economic Growth

This video segment discusses the proven fundamental link between CO_2 emissions and economic growth. As countries have embraced and increased their production of fossil energy, their citizens have been amply rewarded with increased economic development and prosperity.

Pretty much everyone in the world today is familiar with the claim that dangerous climate change, caused by rising levels of atmospheric CO_2, is presently occurring to the detriment and peril of humanity and the natural world. And because the combustion of fossil fuels is the principal source behind the CO_2 rise, it is also claimed that society must abandon all use of fossil fuels.

In a nutshell, this is the position and objective of climate activists, who seek to enforce government and private sector efforts to restrict fossil fuel use via tax, caps or fiat limits on CO_2 emissions. Reality, however, paints a much different picture. The *real* story is that there is no upcoming climate catastrophe and CO_2 emissions and fossil energy should be *celebrated* for enhancing life and improving the standard of living for humanity and the natural world, and they will continue to do so as more fossil fuels are used in the future.

As one simple but profound example of the many benefits that CO_2 emissions and fossil energy use afford humanity, consider the following figure.

In the year 1800, global CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel use were essentially non-existent and they did not rise much over the course of the next century. However, by 1900, industrialization was well underway and CO_2 emissions began to rise in dramatic fashion with that industrialization, experiencing tremendous growth after the 1950s as countries all around the world expanded their use of fossil-derived energy in efforts to modernize and grow their economies.

Accompanying this increase in global CO_2 emissions over the past two centuries has been an equally impressive rise in the air's CO_2 content, which has increased from approximately 280 ppm in 1800 to a value of around 415 ppm today, illustrated by the rising blue line.

Overlaying these two CO_2 datasets is a third time series of global gross domestic product, or GDP, shown in green. Global GDP is a broad measure of the overall economic performance of the world economy. It represents the monetary value of all goods and services produced by the nations of the Earth in any given year. And, as illustrated by this composite image, it

is seen that global GDP is directly related to, and a beneficiary of, CO_2 emissions and the air's CO_2 content.

The positive relationship between CO_2 emissions and economic growth is also noted in this next figure on a county-wide or national level. Here, per capita CO_2 emissions are plotted together with per capita GDP. Not surprisingly, countries with lower per capita CO_2 emissions have lower values of per capita GDP, whereas countries with higher per capita CO_2 emissions have higher per capita GDP.

Thus, nations that have embraced and increased their production of fossil energy have been amply rewarded with greater economic development and growth. Such economic prosperity, driven by fossil fuel utilization, has been proven over and over again throughout the past century as country after country has moved position along this graph from locations near the bottom left toward the upper right, as illustrated in this short animation for the United States.

In light of the relationships shown in the preceding figures, it is clear that the unprecedented global economic growth of the past two centuries that has lifted humanity to enjoy the innovations and comforts of the Modern Age occurred *because* of society's use of fossil fuels. Without adequate supplies of low-cost centralized energy, few, if any, of the major technological and innovative advancements of the past two centuries that have driven the Industrial Revolution and sustained and enhanced human life could have occurred.

When considering and accounting for such benefits, plus the fact that *none* of the apocalyptic predictions of CO_2-induced climate catastrophe are coming true, it becomes scientifically and morally indefensible to demonize fossil energy and claim CO_2 emissions are a current threat to human health and welfare as climate activists eagerly do. Consequently, efforts to restrict CO_2 emissions or limit fossil energy should be avoided, as such actions will most certainly bring about adverse economic outcomes and lead to a host of other unintended consequences that will harm humanity.

To attack CO_2 is to attack human prosperity. *More*, not less, fossil energy is needed to enhance the future human environment, and that is the critical message that must be shared from the rooftops to scientists, activists, policy makers, educators and the general public.

Note: this video was posted on 2 December 2019