

Four messages coronavirus is delivering on 50th anniversary of Earth Day

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COVID-19 spread around the world, and at first all we could do was watch and disbelieve. Then we acted, at first slowly and then more quickly, as the virus reality set in.

We will win against this virus in the end but there has been a cost in human life, plus economic and mental well being, that will remain with us for quite a while to come.

The first message: Act quickly based on science to reduce the harm; don't wait and hope, or worse, disbelieve the science.

The coming climate crisis is building more slowly than the COVID-19 spread, but it is just as harmful and has potential to have much longer lasting consequences unless we follow the science and reduce the harm now.

The second message: We can have blue sky and cleaner air by using clean energy. India and China are seeing that very dramatically with the smog gone from their skies as social distancing has emptied the roads and factories have slowed or stopped entirely.

Clean air means less respiratory disease, which means fewer people susceptible to a virus like this one.

The science and technology are already here to do clean energy; more is on the way to help with clean fuel for airplanes and ships.

The price of clean power is now on a par or lower than fossil-fuel generated power. It will keep coming down in price because sources like solar and wind are free and the technology to collect them is improving all the time.

The third message: Our government and economists are figuring out that cash handouts increase spending and support economic growth and recovery in our current COVID-19 economic situation.

So let's use this tool preemptively to push for renewable energy, put a price on carbon and give the money back to us all and grow our economy, just in a different direction.

The fourth message: We can choose to protect ourselves and the habitats and ecosystems we depend on from harm.

We can choose to shift our energy use to renewables and keep our atmospheric blanket from trapping more heat by not adding fossil fuel-generated carbon to it.

This protects our oceans from heating, from rising and from changing chemically. That in turn protects our climate from changing too drastically (think drought and hurricanes, which are atmospheric rivers of rain) and also protects the food chain.

With the help of science now, we can choose a better future.

Let's not ignore the messages, even when sent by a source like COVID-19.

Elly Claus-McGahan of Tacoma is a member of Citizens' Climate Lobby - Tacoma, which lobbies for federal carbon fee and dividend legislation. For more information, go online to [www.facebook.com/ CCLTacoma](https://www.facebook.com/CCLTacoma)



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