



Jamais Cascio: Peak Oil vs. Global Warming

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on March 27, 2008 - 10:34pm

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Jamais Cascio talks about the [P. Kharecha and J. Hansen](#) "resources v. climate change" paper this evening, which was talked about here at TOD a few months ago ([link](#)). I thought I would bring the discussion over there to your attention.

http://www.openthefuture.com/2008/03/peak_oil_vs_global_warming.html

It will be interesting to me to see how both peak oil watchers and anti-global warming activists take this report. I suspect that some oilers will dismiss it as not big news, since they already knew that society is going to collapse before we reach the worst of global warming; others might take it as an indicator that trying to deal with peak oil by producing liquid coal fuels (or similar fossil substitutes) is a bad idea, as it would eliminate the one slight benefit of peak oil conditions. I hope that climate watchers might have a generally more positive response, relief that the worst-case scenarios are even less likely than before. Unfortunately, I have a feeling that more than a few global warming-focused activists will see this report -- despite coming from Hansen -- as an attempt to reduce the urgency of the need to deal with anthropogenic carbon emissions.

What this report tells us, however, is that we can't simply focus on one crisis -- no matter how large and looming -- without taking into consideration the other key drivers of change. The onset of peak oil will alter how we deal with climate disruption, rendering climate strategies that don't take peak oil into account of limited value. Similarly, the fact of global warming must shape how our economies deal with a permanent oil crunch.

For both issues, the kinds of strategies most likely to succeed are those based on the precepts of an open future: innovation and experimentation; transparency and shared knowledge; and collaboration and shared responsibility. It's a future worth fighting monsters for.

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