

# Stop Saving the Planet!

**AS A CARD-CARRYING AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALIST,** I'm obsessed with two questions that environmentalists mostly don't seem to be asking—and that I've become convinced are two of the most urgent questions you can possibly ask.

**ONE, why aren't we making more progress on environmental crises?**

More than half of the 1,340 Superfund sites have been listed for 30–40 years. The air in thousands of communities across the U.S. remains exceptionally dangerous to breathe. And can our climate-change policies even begin to save Miami?

**TWO, why do so many Americans hate environmentalists?**

How can a green agenda—let's clean up the air and water for your kids!—possibly inspire such widespread rage?

Are you saying, but the problem is big money! It's the ultraright, it's Fox News, it's the oil companies! If so, I don't disagree.

It is also way past time to grapple with the enduring and substantial failures of American environmentalism.

In *Stop Saving the Planet!*, I urge anyone who's having

nightmares about climate change to immediately stop obsessing about how to save “the environment” as a separate world out there.

Stop talking about it, stop hand-wringing about it, stop arm-waving righteously about it—if you want to save people, polar bears, or anything else.

Instead, the most passionate environmentalist question should be:

How can we *change* environments vastly better? And by better, I mean a lot more sustainably but also a hell of a lot more equitably.

We live *inside* of environments 100%, and we change environments 24/7 to live. Most of us do it ferociously badly and unfairly: that’s why the world is 2° warmer\* than it was in 1900 and why polar bears are starving and why industries pump out over 300 million tons of plastic each year.

Maybe you’re objecting, but environmentalists *do* ask that! Not mostly, though, and not really.

*Stop Saving the Planet!* is about how and why the “save the planet!” approach fails to seriously and sufficiently challenge how most of us live in the 2020s.

I ask why environmentalists find this way of thinking

\* Fahrenheit, soon to be centigrade

so deeply appealing. I ask why it makes other people so deeply angry.

And I ask what we desperately need to do instead.

I try to be reasonable, if not entirely polite.

Can we please stop saving the \$#!ing planet?!