

Response to "Economics of climate change in forefront" (story appeared 10/28/09)  
*Washington Post*

Dear Editor,

Juliet Eilperin's "Economics of climate change in forefront" (Washington Post, October 28, A8) misses the key point. Of course politicians will argue about whether climate change legislation will "slow U.S. economic growth," because economic growth is assumed to be a top priority. But that assumption is simplistic and outdated. The reality we face is that stabilizing the climate is all about stabilizing the economy: moving it toward a "steady state" that is neither growing nor in recession. The economy is predominantly fossil-fueled, and that will not change on a dime. In other words, economic growth equals climate change. For the sake of our kids and grandkids, what we really need to argue about is whether to continue pushing economic growth at all costs, or strive for a steady state economy that fits on the planet. Politicians shy away from this debate because, in a steady state, population has to be stabilized and poverty has to be handled with at least some redistribution of wealth. But clearly, the rising tide of economic growth threatens to sink more boats than it lifts.

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