

Response to "For Florida, 'end of an era' of population growth," (story appeared 8/31/09)  
*USA Today*

The 'end of an era' of population growth has many eyes trained on Florida. People from all over the nation will be watching to see which of two paths the remaining 18.3 million citizens of the Sunshine State will take: (1) face the consequences of the last 6 decades of growth and redesign their economy to achieve a sustainable quality of life or (2) cling to the anachronistic goal of ever-increasing population and consumption that is, at best, fuel for another economic bubble and, at worst, a dangerous game of chicken with Mother Nature.

In this new era that mixes ecological and economic calamities (climate change, species extinctions, unemployment and home foreclosures to name a few), the last thing we need is to re-employ the flawed economic thinking that brought us to this point. Authorities trying to coax a few more years of growth out of an already overgrown economy aren't seeing the bigger picture. An economy doesn't have to grow to be healthy – that's just the way we've structured the game. In reality, an economy based on unending growth will collapse sooner or later. It's time to take a new path, time to build a steady state economy with stabilized population and consumption. We need an economy that meets human needs without undermining the life-support systems of the planet. Florida can lead the way toward this vision of economic health. Population stability presents an opportunity to seize – an opportunity to make the economy better instead of bigger.

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