



# The Steady Stater

Newsletter of the Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy

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## Feature Article – Spreading the Message about the Alternative to Perpetual Growth

A big part of CASSE's strategy for advancing the steady state economy is to spread the message that there is a positive alternative to the growth paradigm. At times it seems like we offer a lone voice in the wilderness (although as wilderness continues to disappear, perhaps the voice will become more audible!). We are finding new methods and venues to point out the downsides of economic growth and describe the path to sustainability.

*The Oil Drum* is the Internet's premiere site for discussions about energy and the way its usage, especially oil, impacts society. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, CASSE posted an article on *the Oil Drum*. The article ([www.theoil Drum.com/node/3759](http://www.theoil Drum.com/node/3759)) offers a brief discussion of the connection between peak oil and economic growth and introduces the concept of the steady state economy. Readers of *The Oil Drum*, who

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## CASSE MISSION

The mission of CASSE is to advocate a sustainable economy by:

- educating citizens, organizations, and policy makers on the conflict between economic growth and (1) environmental protection, (2) ecological and economic sustainability, and (3) national security and international stability;
- promoting a steady state economy of stable or mildly fluctuating size as an alternative to economic growth; and
- studying the means to establish a steady state economy.

## Media Highlights

CASSE posts highlights from the Internet and news outlets on its website, [www.steadystate.org](http://www.steadystate.org). Check the news/events section of the website regularly for updates. Here are three notable items:

[www.truecosteconomics.org](http://www.truecosteconomics.org) – As an extension to an article about true cost economics in *Adbusters*, this website, which has been around for a while, challenges the supremacy of neoclassical economics on college campuses. It includes ideas about how to scrap the old paradigm and establish a new vision of economics.

*Wall Street Journal* – Believe it or not, the bastion of bloating business published an article on March 24<sup>th</sup> questioning the wisdom of continued increases in population and consumption.

[http://marketplace.publicradio.org/projects/project\\_display.php?proj\\_identifier=2007/11/08/consumed](http://marketplace.publicradio.org/projects/project_display.php?proj_identifier=2007/11/08/consumed) – If you didn't catch Marketplace's radio series on excessive consumption when it ran on NPR, the podcasts are available on the Internet. ❖

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are not shy about expressing their opinions, generated 182 comments on the post. A substantial majority of the comments were supportive. CASSE will look to follow this posting with a more detailed write-up on the characteristics of the steady state economy and policies for making a prosperous change from the growth paradigm.

CASSE is also working on spreading the message through online video. We have a new channel on YouTube that displays short features made by CASSE ([www.youtube.com/user/SteadyStateEcon](http://www.youtube.com/user/SteadyStateEcon)). The first release is a slideshow that promotes the steady state economy as a means to achieve a sustainable society. It is meant to present big ideas – the rationale for changing the growth paradigm and an introduction to a stable economy. The second is an edited version of a previous DVD release. This video outlines the scientific case for the ecological limits to growth. Please take a look at these videos and share them with your colleagues, friends, and family.

CASSE has plans to release more features on YouTube and the video portion of our own website ([www.steadystate.org/CASSEVideo.html](http://www.steadystate.org/CASSEVideo.html)). Stay tuned!

Another way of getting the word out is to tell people directly. CASSE was on hand at the Pacific Seabird Group annual meeting to help present a symposium on economic growth and its relationship to ecological health. Along with Falk Huettman, professor of biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and David Batker, executive director of Earth Economics, CASSE representatives (Brian Czech and Rob Dietz) presented the scientific underpinnings of the conflict between continued growth and wildlife conservation. Following the short presentations, there was a question/answer session and an opportunity to continue discussions with interested biologists. Overall, the symposium was well received. The Pacific Seabird Group is currently considering adopting a position on economic growth.

Brian and volunteer CASSE European director, Hali Healy, are set to attend the *Conference on Economic De-Growth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity*, in Paris, France on April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. As an invited speaker, Brian will deliver two presentations. The first will outline the nascent history of steady state

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### **Steady Stater Quotable:**

**Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist.**

*-Kenneth Boulding*

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## **HOT OFF THE PRESS**

CASSE has a new, colorful brochure.



Center  
for the  
Advancement  
of the  
Steady State Economy

Take a position.

[www.steadystate.org](http://www.steadystate.org)



Download a copy, and please spread the word.  
[www.steadystate.org/Files/CASSE\\_Brochure1.pdf](http://www.steadystate.org/Files/CASSE_Brochure1.pdf)

politics. His second presentation will examine beneficial ways to move toward an optimally scaled steady state economy. Hali will be facilitating a panel to develop a conference position on economic growth. The conference and presentations represent a big step forward in thinking – rather than continuing to harp on problems, it is time to start defining solutions.

CASSE is also making strides on circulating its message in popular publications. One potentially attentive audience for information on the steady state economy is the vast group of outdoors enthusiasts. In a first venture to reach this audience, *Out There Monthly*, a local outdoors magazine in Spokane, Washington, published an article about CASSE and economic growth on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

Given the critical need for nations around the globe to transition away from the growth paradigm, CASSE is also pursuing expansion of its professional network of international directors. To that end, Geoff Mosley recently came on board as the Director of Australian Operations. Geoff joins fellow volunteers Neil Dawe, Director of Canadian Operations, and Hali in providing international leadership on advancing the steady state economy. Geoff is a councilor and former CEO of the Australian Conservation Foundation. He is an active member of the World Commission on Protected Areas and previously served as a member of the IUCN Council. With ample experience in educating fellow citizens on the means to achieve a sustainable society, Geoff adds a wealth of knowledge and passion to the CASSE staff.

CASSE will keep doing its part to advance the steady state economy, but we need your help to spread the message. We welcome your efforts to share information and direct colleagues to our resources. ❖



## RECENT SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

Clausen, R. and R. York, 2008. Economic growth and marine biodiversity: influence of human social structure on decline of marine trophic levels, *Conservation Biology* 22(2): 458-466.

Soskolne, C. 2007. *Sustaining life on earth: environmental and human health through global governance*. Lexington Books, 478 pp.



## ENCOURAGING WORDS

CASSE is delighted to receive positive comments from visitors to the website.

“Keep up the good work. It's people like you who CAN & WILL change the world for the better.”

“This is a great start for truly sustainable development. Excellent news to hear about CASSE.”

“This is what we need! I will put your website in my e-mail signature and spread the word.”

## SIGNATORIES COUNTER

In this space, CASSE tracks the support for our position on economic growth, which can be viewed and signed at [www.steadystate.org/CASSEPositionOnEG.html](http://www.steadystate.org/CASSEPositionOnEG.html)

As of April 13, 2008:

The number of individuals who have signed the CASSE position on economic growth is

**1,650,**

the number of professional societies that have adopted positions on economic growth similar to CASSE's is

**7,** and

the number of private, corporate, nonprofit, and political organizations that have endorsed the CASSE position is

**27.** ❖

## POLICY CORNER

In this space, CASSE provides a brief introduction to a policy idea that supports a sustainable economy. A more in-depth resource is also listed for further study.

Policies and regulations that promote energy conservation are critical for reducing economic throughput. Throughput is the movement of materials and energy from the natural environment, through the economy, and back to the environment as waste. Throughput is a function of the number of people and level of consumption (i.e., a function of economic growth). It is a key measure of the environmental impacts of an economy.

Conserving energy is one of the most effective ways of limiting throughput. Many energy conservation policies, such as gas taxes, energy usage regulations (e.g., for buildings, vehicles, or appliances), carbon taxes, and green energy subsidies, are available to help limit throughput.

Paul Hawken's seminal book on sustainable business practices, *The Ecology of Commerce*, provides case studies on how businesses have thrived by adapting to regulatory and tax schemes aimed at conservation. ❖

## FUNDING UPDATE

In this space, CASSE reports on organizational finances and efforts to raise additional funding.

The executive director is the only paid position on the CASSE staff. Small grants from foundations have provided some of the money needed, but the majority comes from generous citizens who are concerned about the sustainability of our economic systems. CASSE is continuing to pursue foundation grants, and we are working to establish some projects with other nonprofit organizations, but grassroots funding remains our most important (and fitting) source of money. CASSE currently has enough cash in reserves to supply 5 months of operating costs. ❖



CASSE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the Advancement of the Steady State Economy. Please e-mail comments to [info@steadystate.org](mailto:info@steadystate.org) or find additional contact information in the "about us" section of our website ([www.steadystate.org](http://www.steadystate.org)).

Thank you for reading the *Steady Stater* Newsletter.

