



# the steady stater

## CASSE chapters up and running

There's no doubt about it – the transition to a steady state will require widespread public support. We need people to demand an end to reckless economic growth and call for a steady state economy. But first people need to hear about these ideas. That's why CASSE has kicked off a [local chapters program](#). CASSE's chapters provide opportunities for people to advance the steady state economy around the world. A chapter can cover one of a variety of geographic scales, including a college campus, city or county, state or province, nation or ecoregion.

Quite a few leaders have already stepped up to take on the role of Chapter Director. In Australia, Richard Sanders directs the Queensland Chapter, Sharon Ede directs the South Australia Chapter, and Tom Byrne is about to launch a Brisbane Chapter. Sharon has gotten off to a good start by setting up a Facebook page called [Steady State SA](#) that is linked to a Twitter account, both of which have a following of 40 (one of the Twitter followers is Prime Minister Julia Gillard, but don't get overly excited – she follows 50,000+ people).

The U.S. currently has three chapters. John David Evans and Seth McKinney direct the University of Maryland Chapter, Joshua Nelson directs the Washington State Chapter, and Ted Lawrence directs the Albany Chapter in New

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## our mission

The mission of CASSE is to advance the steady state economy, with stabilized population and consumption, as a policy goal with widespread public support.

We pursue this mission by:

- 1 educating citizens on the conflict between economic growth and (i) environmental protection, (ii) ecological and economic sustainability, and (iii) national security and international stability;
- 2 promoting a steady state economy as a desirable alternative to economic growth; and
- 3 studying the means to establish a steady state economy.

## words of encouragement

- This concept is 100% on the mark. Why does it not have greater awareness and or support?
- Thanks for creating a focal point for these concerns!
- I commend you on this great initiative. I will support you and pass the information on to as many people as possible.



Rob Dietz appeared as a guest lecturer in Kevin Horan's ecological economics course at the University of Oregon.

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## outreach highlights

Rob Dietz (CASSE Executive Director) presented *The Mental Gymnastics of Economic Growth* at the Eugene City Club in Eugene, OR (see media highlights section for more information).

Brian Czech (CASSE President) delivered several presentations, including:

- *Steady State Questions and Answers* at a free screening of *What's the Economy for, Anyway?* at the New Deal Café in Greenbelt, MD.
- *The Cracks in Sachs: (Micro)Economics for a Crowded Planet* at Virginia Tech, National Capitol Region in Falls Church, VA.
- *The Steady State Economy for Environmental Protection* at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD.

James Johnston (CASSE Director of Canadian Operations) presented *Advancing the Steady State Economy* to the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mike Hanauer (member of the CASSE Speakers Network) presented *Economic and Population Growth: Is Our Quest for Growth the Solution or the Problem?* at the Gleason Public Library in Carlisle, MA.

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York. John David and Seth are working on arranging speaking engagements/discussions in the coming months, and Joshua is planning to organize a meeting of interested folks.

Leaders from many other locales have also accepted the challenge of directing a CASSE Chapter. We have Neil Dawe directing the British Columbia Chapter (Canada), Claudia Múnera Roldán at the Colombia Chapter, Wendy Kellett at the Cornwall Chapter (UK), and Tormod Burkey at the Norway Chapter. Claudia has set the pace for reaching out to organizations, gaining critical endorsements of the CASSE position from Ecolodge El Almejal, Fundacion Biodiversa Colombia, and Naturar Iguaque. Tormod has developed a [Norwegian page on CASSE's website](#), and he has begun establishing contact with other steady staters.

At CASSE, we are especially thankful to these pioneering Chapter Directors. And we'll be on the lookout for additional courageous self-starters over the coming weeks, months and years. The best part about volunteering to direct a chapter is that chapters can work on a variety of projects

## signatories

to the casse position on growth

**6700** individuals have signed it.

**166** organizations have endorsed it.

**11** professional societies, government agencies, and scientific groups have similar positions.

as of 25 February 2011

of their own choosing. Yes, we have [guidelines for chapters](#), but they are not the least bit stifling. We ask chapter directors to undertake activities that reflect CASSE's mission, but we hope they will use their creativity and ingenuity to spread the steady state message.

Margaret Mead's famous quote is probably quoted a little too often. But it's so applicable to what our Chapter Directors are doing, that it's worth quoting again: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." If you're thinking about changing the world, then think about directing a CASSE chapter.

## position endorsement spotlight

### [Conservation International – Brazil](#)

CI-Brazil protects biodiversity in South America's biggest nation. Brazil is one of the most biologically diverse countries on the planet, including two biodiversity hotspots. Most of Brazil's northern half is covered

by the Amazonia wilderness – the largest tropical forest in the world – which shelters as much as a third of Earth's species. CI-Brazil recognizes that the transition from unsustainable economic growth to a steady state is a necessary step for achieving long-term conservation.

## scholarly publications

- Markowitz, E. M. and Bowerman, T. (2011), "[How Much Is Enough?](#) Examining the Public's Beliefs About Consumption," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*.
- Murtaza, N. (2011), "[Pursuing Self-interest or Self-actualization?](#) From Capitalism to a Steady-state, Wisdom Economy," *Ecological Economics*, 70(4), 1-8.
- Brown, J. H., Burnside, W. R., Davidson, A. D., DeLong, J. P., Dunn, W. C., Hamilton, M. J., et al. (2011), "[Energetic Limits to Economic Growth](#)," *BioScience*, 61(1), 19-26.
- Limburg, K., Hughes, R., Jackson, D., & Czech, B. (2011), "[Human Population Increase, Economic Growth, and Fish Conservation](#): Collision Course or Savvy Stewardship," *Fisheries*, 36(1).
- Gowdy, J., C. Hall, K. Klitgaard, and L. Krall (2010), "[What Every Conservation Biologist Should Know about Economic Theory](#)," *Conservation Biology*, 24(6):1440-1447.

## policy talk

Corporations are the dominant institutions in our unsustainable, growth-addicted economy. Failure to establish policies that limit the power of these institutions will result in failure to evolve a sustainable economic system. Unfortunately, corporate abuses seem to be more and more prevalent by the day. In the United States, corporations have been granted the same rights as people. And the Supreme Court decision in *Citizen's United vs. Federal Election Commission* expanded those rights by permitting massive corporate expenditures to influence government elections.

Now is the time to begin reclaiming powers and privileges granted to corporate institutions – powers and privileges that ought to belong to people. Gus Speth has described six policy reforms for managing corporations to achieve environmental and social responsibility:

1. Use the power of revoking corporate charters and require periodic public reviews and

rechartering.

2. Exclude or expel unwanted corporations.
3. Roll back limited liability to make corporate officers and shareholders more responsible for misdeeds.
4. Eliminate corporate personhood – overturn judicial rulings that extend Constitutional rights to corporations.
5. Get corporations out of politics, by mandating publicly financed elections.
6. Increase oversight on corporate lobbying to lessen its effects on broad public policy issues.

Speth, J. G., 2008. *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability*, Yale University Press.

And for an entertaining look at the psychosis of corporations, see the film [The Corporation](#).

## hot off the press



The Australian Conservation Foundation has developed a primer for policy innovation. It is called *Better than Growth: the New Economics of Genuine Progress and Quality of Life*, and it is [well worth a look](#). The report opens with this quote from Pavan Sukhdev, Head of Global Markets at Deutsche Bank: “The economic models of the 20th century are now hitting the limits of what is possible – possible in terms of delivering better livelihoods for the 2.6 billion people still living on less than \$2 a day and possible in terms of our ecological footprint.” And it notes that “Many think that we can do better, and not just those outside the economic mainstream. When the head of global markets at Deutsche Bank calls on us to re-think the economic models of the 20th century, for example, we should listen carefully.”

## funding update

Since establishing a membership program in the summer of 2009, our base of grassroots support has grown. As demand for CASSE's services grow, we are trying to position CASSE to work more effectively and more extensively. We will continue to work with volunteers, but we are also very interested in gathering enough financial resources to hire additional help. If you know of anyone who would like to see us keep doing what we do (and maybe do more of it) then please direct them to the [membership](#) and [donation](#) pages.

## media highlights

- Rob Dietz's *Mental Gymnastics of Economic Growth* was aired on National Public Radio in central and western Oregon on February 21. Download the broadcast [here](#).
- Brian Czech's *Daly News* essay, *Obama Steps onto a Slippery Slope*, was published in *The Huffington Post* on February 8.
- Peter Victor (CASSE Board Member) and Tim Jackson (CASSE Advisor) participated in a debate, *Green Growth or No Growth?*, that was aired across Canada on CBC Radio One. Listen to the debate [here](#).
- Beppe Grillo, one of Italy's best known political commentators, referred his blog readers to *Enough is Enough* (co-published by CASSE and Economic Justice for All) on January 26. This resulted in record traffic at [www.steadystate.org](http://www.steadystate.org)

## president's peninsula

with brian czech

With this new feature of the *Steady Stater*, I endeavor to complement the steady statements of Executive Director Rob Dietz. I'm calling this little feature "President's Peninsula" because it occupies a sort of geo-literary position here in the *Steady Stater*. We at CASSE often feel like an island in an ocean; might as well have a peninsula to highlight some of the terrain.

To build a bit on this metaphor, we steady staters are an island in an ocean of pro-growth tidal waves. One after one they come; free-trade "agreements," banker bailouts, stimulus packages... there's nothing sustainable about it! But our island is not submerging – it's growing – because the terra firma is sound. The bedrock of steady state economics is physics and ecology, and above that are layers and layers of common sense, cultural mores, and historical corroboration. Of course there are limits to growth, of course the failure to reckon



### quote this!

*More and more people who are thinking deeply about economics are, in fact, becoming committed to a new economic approach, known as 'The Steady State Economy'.*

Bob Andrews in *The Concord Journal*, 10 January 2011



*Jean-Michel Cousteau visits with students at the NCSE Conference where he signed the CASSE position on economic growth.*

with limits has been a recipe for ruin, and of course a steady state economy is a sustainable alternative. What else could be?

So perhaps it won't come as a surprise that this winter we've seen dignitaries (including our first diplomats) sign the CASSE position on economic growth, volunteers step up to the plate with data management, new friends establish chapters, colleagues publish key articles, board members open communications with potential donors, and foundations ask our advice on trends in ecological economics. Since the last *Steady Stater* we've been on the airwaves, at UN headquarters, and, for brief moments at least, with presidents of corporations and countries. None of this warrants any arrogance, but it does warrant encouragement and it does reinforce our determination. We may be on an island, but we are building our bridge to the continental public, and we are moving closer to meaningful policy circles and performances.

*CASSE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of the steady state economy.*

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