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Opinion

## **Doppelt: Engage All Americans in a Climate Mobilization**

**By Bob Doppelt**

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Climate scientists say that if fossil fuels are swiftly eliminated, a civilization-changing rise in global temperatures might be averted. To achieve this, the federal government must mobilize the entire nation, as it did to win WWII.

In today's political climate this seems laughable. But the necessity will soon become evident. Let's expand our vision of what a mass mobilization to convert to an ecologically restorative Climate Recovery Economy should include.

Fortunately, most of the methods, practices, and technologies required for the conversion already exist. We can do it by emulating the methods used during the WWII mobilization: nationalizing the fossil fuel, Wall Street, and other firms that block change, engaging entire economic sectors in the conversion, and using aggressive regulations.

Historians say another core goal of the war mobilization was to establish a collective sense of purpose by engaging all Americans. This should also be a top priority of a climate recovery mobilization.

In WWII, the government realized discarded materials were economically essential to the war effort. So it urged everyone to "get into the scrap," which meant collecting used lumber, newspaper, tin, steel, rubber from tires, and other materials. Millions participated.

Today's linear "take it, make it, waste it" economic system is massively wasteful and polluting. To reduce these impacts, the government should once again call on Americans to preserve, reuse, and reprocess materials.

Extended Producer Responsibility policies mandatory would catalyze this conversion by requiring all products to be designed for easy reuse and recycling. Lane County could show the nation how to create a circular, zero emissions and waste system by building on the expertise of organizations like St. Vincent de Paul, BRING and NextStep Recycling to establish model businesses for product maintenance, repair, refurbishing, remanufacturing, reuse, recycling and upcycling.

In WWII, the military also needed vast amounts of agricultural products, and farm workers were in short supply. So the government encouraged everyone to grow their own food by planting “victory gardens.”

Industrial agriculture, food packaging, shipping and waste damage the environment and generate substantial emissions. To reduce harm, the government should once again call on Americans to grow their own food by using the principles of permaculture to transform yards, patios and other spaces into “climate recovery gardens.”

To keep people engaged in war mobilization, the government also maintained an affordable cost of living by controlling the price of gasoline and other goods in short supply. A climate mobilization must do the same.

I’ve always thought that establishing firm, declining caps on the use of fossil fuels was a far more effective way to eliminate emissions than a carbon tax. That’s because as their use is restricted, fossil fuels’ costs will rise far faster than the availability of affordable clean renewable energy. People without access to public transportation or electric vehicles, or the capacity to pay higher utility and food bills will be disproportionately affected. Temporary price controls can prevent this.

Everyone must be involved to prevent runaway climate disruption. Pragmatic policies will be needed to make this happen.

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