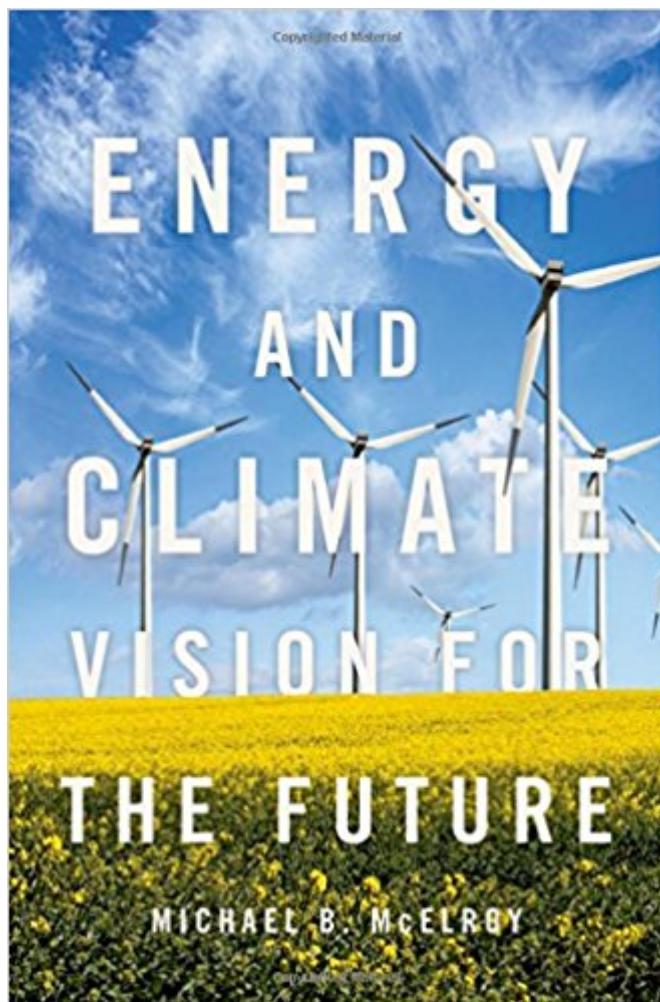


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# Energy And Climate: Vision For The Future



## Synopsis

The climate of our planet is changing at a rate unprecedented in recent human history. The energy absorbed from the sun exceeds what is returned to space. The planet as a whole is gaining energy. The heat content of the ocean is increasing; the surface and atmosphere are warming; mid-latitude glaciers are melting; sea level is rising. The Arctic Ocean is losing its ice cover. None of these assertions are based on theory but on hard scientific fact. Given the science-heavy nature of climate change, debates and discussions have not played as big a role in the public sphere as they should, and instead are relegated to often misinformed political discussions and inaccessible scientific conferences. Michael B. McElroy, an eminent Harvard scholar of environmental studies, combines both his research chops and pedagogical expertise to present a book that will appeal to the lay reader but still be grounded in scientific fact. In *Energy and Climate: Vision for the Future*, McElroy provides a broad and comprehensive introduction to the issue of energy and climate change intended to be accessible for the general reader. The book includes chapters on energy basics, a discussion of the contemporary energy systems of the US and China, and two chapters that engage the debate regarding climate change. The perspective is global but with a specific focus on the US and China recognizing the critical role these countries must play in addressing the challenge of global climate change. The book concludes with a discussion of initiatives now underway to at least reduce the rate of increase of greenhouse gas emissions, together with a vision for a low carbon energy future that could in principle minimize the long-term impact of energy systems on global climate.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"What are prospects for future world energy supplies and costs and how will climate change guide them? This book aims to prepare us to address these questions. It describes principles and practices of energy extraction, conversion and usage with lively examples, and it contrasts the cases of the U. S. and China. I recommend it very highly as an accurate, farsighted and readable account of very important issues."--Ralph Cicerone, President of the National Academy of Sciences

"The topic of energy has suddenly become essential intellectual equipment for the educated person. Michael McElroy, one of the world's most distinguished atmospheric scientists, thoroughly illuminates the topic in this remarkable new book. Energy and Climate provides the definitive one-volume treatment of two of the central issues of our time, the inter-related topics of energy and climate."--Dale Jorgenson, Samuel W. Morris University Professor of Economics, Harvard University

"Based on his deep knowledge of energy, technology, climate, economics, society, history and international politics, Professor McElroy has recognized the enormous complexity of the issues involved. As an eminent professor, chairman, director and national and international leader, McElroy understands the power of education, enlightenment and persuasion. This is what this book is: a pleasant, inspiring and insightful tutorial to the present and future decision makers by an erudite, wise and patient councilor. I cannot think of a more urgent challenge to human civilization in the 21st century than energy and climate change; and I cannot think of a more timely and appropriate book than this one to meet the challenge."--Yuk L. Yung, Professor of Planetary Science, California Institute of Technology

"A half-century of climate science has revealed the dangers to society of increasing greenhouse gases, and new energy policy is the only real solution. McElroy brilliantly combines these two topics in this readable and authoritative account of what lies ahead and what we can do about it. Energy and Climate will change the way you think and act about the future."--D. James Baker, Director of Forest and Land-use Measurement, Clinton Foundation, and former Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

"McElroy guides us through basic energy and climate science to build a solid case that the ongoing, rapid changes in Earth's climate are driven by human activities, largely the burning of fossil fuels, which must stop if civilization as we know it is to prosper. With an eye toward the positive, he shows the remarkable potential of wind, solar, and other forms of renewable energy to solve this critical problem, which is denied by so many but understood by so few."--William H. Schlesinger, President (Emeritus), The Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies Millbrook, New York

Michael B. McElroy is the Gilbert Butler Professor of Environmental Studies at Harvard University. His research covers topics ranging from planetary atmospheres to extensive studies of the earth's environment, with particular attention to the impact of human activity, and to the development of options to limit potentially negative consequences of this activity. His bestselling book *Energy: Perspectives, Problems, and Prospects* was published by Oxford University Press in 2009.

I was delighted when I opened *Energy and Climate: Vision for the Future*. It is just the kind of book I like to read. The layout is clean, its very well-written and best of all, I understand it. It makes me feel like I am now ready to discuss energy as it relates to climate and be comfortable putting my own ideas into the mix.

**Addendum:** Right now, since writing this previous review, it has become crucial that well-educated individuals take on the responsibility of studying and understanding the importance of climate change and the role it will play in our world's future. Decisions are being made as to which path the United States to take. We dare not leave this decision to others to make alone. We need to put our thinking into the mix. Again I say this energy and climate book by McElroy is absolutely the best source I have found for developing a scholarly understanding of climate. It needs to be read widely. It is our responsibility to discuss climate issues with our friends, our colleagues, and our legislators. Together we need to establish a framework as to how we can insure future global climate for our children, our posterity and ourselves.

I have grown weary of the debate. Is the globe warming? Is climate change a hoax perpetrated by a worldwide cabal of conspiring scientists? For respite and guidance, I turned to this book, *Climate and Energy*, written by Harvard Professor Michael McElroy, who I know as a wise man. It is a thorough examination of both the subject of global warming and climate change, a positive vision of our energy future, and a discussion of the real potential that exists to fix the problem. It is so much better to dwell on the possibilities that he puts forth than to be frustrated with the ongoing denial of what is so obviously happening. And the irony remains that the real possibility of an energy future much less dependent on fossil sources is a positive benefit to society, independent of what one may or may not believe in about global warming - energy independence, cost stability versus inevitable increases in cost of extraction of fossil sources, new industries, new jobs, energy security and a level playing field worldwide, and to boot we may save life on earth as we now know it. Dr. McElroy deserves much credit for shining a hopeful light to guide our path forward.

What would it be like to audit a class at Harvard University, taught by an eminent professor? Read this book. Even though I have known Professor McElroy for many years, and have read articles that he has published on similar subjects, this book reads as a college course being delivered in methodical and interesting form. Each chapter has the high points noted, you may underline them in yellow, and plenty of source notes. Reading the book, it is fun to find points that could serve as a basis for a term paper. For example, in the chapter on Plant Biomass, the last sentence smartly points out that the entire program for the United States ethanol mandate should have been eliminated in 2013 by the bi-partisan Feinstein Coburn bill. I would write my paper on the farm lobby opposing this wasteful, inflationary project. Read this book and buy a Harvard T-shirt. This is the knowledge that the smart kids know.

Any person interested in the nuts and bolts of climate change must read this book. Michael McElroy isn't a zealot with a single axe to grind. He understands the entire energy business and its key drivers. He agrees with my thinking on corn ethanol (it's bad) and CO2 sequestration (it's good in special situations). He patiently considers questions from skeptics and answers them honestly. McElroy's vision surprised me with its elegance. I'm looking forward to taking his class,

Prof. McElroy has produced an invaluable work that challenges the reader to reflect on the energy consumption and production that drive our lives. It is easy to read as a non-expert and a powerful tool for future teaching and policymaking.

Michael McElroy did a great job with this book. It was very logical, well organized, inspirational, and very informative.

McElroy delivers on his goal to educate his audience. Whether or not you are new to the climate change discussion, there is an abundance of information presented in a logical, compelling, and thought provoking way. The structure of the book allows it to be used as a valuable reference guide that one can return to when needed. You will learn about the past and present state of our climate's existence, and be educated in the virtues of alternative energies and their feasibility. McElroy highlights how the shale revolution has changed America, and the importance of investment in energy efficient enterprises. The final chapter ties all of this information together and gives the reader what they are looking for: a concise plan of action moving forward. As a new homeowner, McElroy's current take on home energy audits resonated with me, and his vision of supplying

homeowners with the appropriate audit data is very interesting.

In this brilliantly written book, Harvard professor Michael McElroy has clearly laid out the sobering linkages between Energy production and our changing climate. But it is also an inspirational work for he ultimately lays out a pragmatic energy futures strategy to harness this disruptive change. In reading this book I was reminded of the famous Einstein quote, "God does not play dice with the Universe." We have the future of our earth in our own hands. Armed with the knowledge gained from this book we can all work to stabilize our climate system and with it the viability of future generations.

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