

Editor, Times-Dispatch:

Opinions abound on the causes of global climate change - - ranging from the last remnants of skepticism to one recent positivist letter citing excess atmospheric CO₂ as an enhancer to the Earth's fecundity, and of course widening belief in technological "solutions" manifested in such notions as hybrid vehicles being "good for the environment" or bio-fuels as the putative answer to our climate and energy woes. Regardless of half-truths and false choices, the prevailing conviction is that human systems are delivering CO₂ into the biosphere faster than natural systems (the land and oceans) can absorb it, thus affecting a dangerous rise in the Earth's average temperature - - proof of which is not lacking.

But, growing concern surrounding global warming could also be viewed as a sort of blessing-in-disguise for the broader environmental movement. That is, the recent surge in mainstream awareness of the effects of anthropogenic CO₂ loading emphasizes climate change; however, emissions of this vital compound are the by-product of nearly all human endeavor and therefore are actually the supreme manifestation of our collective ecological footprint in which unrelenting demand from our species continues to overwhelm the carrying capacity of the planet's basic life-support systems. In this respect, the threat posed by the 'rampant' carbon dioxide molecule has positioned it as the harbinger of a dawning Ecological Age - - in fact, it has begun to sound a clarion call to action on the part of us all as, in the words of Aldo Leopold, "plain members of a biotic community". While the mantra of "reducing our carbon footprint to solve the climate crisis" may carry the

day, our response will hopefully bring humanity closer to a healthier and sustainable balance with respect to finite means and ultimately to ecological, social and economic truth.