As written, 340 Words / Goal: reduce to 250 Words

The world is running out of clean, fresh water. Humanity is polluting, diverting, and depleting water at a startling rate. Every day our demand for fresh water outpaces its availability, putting thousands of people at serious risk. As I write these lines, the social, political, and economic impacts of water scarcity are rapidly becoming a destabilizing force around the world, with water-related conflicts around globe. Unless we dramatically change our ways, one-half to two-thirds of humanity will be living with severe fresh water shortages within the next quarter-century.

Isn't it odd how it just snuck up on us all of the sudden? Until the last decade, study of fresh water was left to highly specialized groups of trained experts—hydrologists, engineers, scientists, city planners, weather forecasters, and others who possessed an interest in what so many of us everyday people took for granted. However, an increasing number of voices are sounding the alarm: the world-wide, global freshwater crisis looms in front of us as the single greatest threat to the survival of our planet.

Tragically, this global call for action comes in an era guided too much by the principles of the “Washington consensus,” a model of economics rooted in the belief that liberal market constitutes the only true economic choice for the world. Key to this general consensus is the commoditization of “the commons.” Everything appears to be for sale, even community social services and natural resources, once considered by almost everyone to be the common heritage of humanity.