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Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York, recently published an op-ed in the New York times making a claim on the process of resisting climate change. He stated that the process of slowing global warming “is not based in Washington and never has been” (Bloomberg). Ever since the election of President Trump and his subsequent controversial views on climate change, including rolling back the Clean Power Plan put into place by President Obama, there has been talk of America no longer being able to lead the world in combatting climate change. But, Bloomberg’s position aims to remind people that the government is not the sole factor influencing a change away from high carbon emissions and towards more clean and efficient fuel methods. The free market economy also has power to drive this change. This opinion is a different perspective than is usually expressed and gives hope for those who are concerned with Trump’s seeming indifference towards this large topic in our country today. Bloomberg’s confident tone and certain syntax makes the outcome of fulfilling the Paris agreement without assistance from the Federal government a foregone conclusion. However, it raises an interesting question that must be dealt with: Is this enough? Can the pure economic benefits of green innovation and the capitalist nature of businesses in America lead the charge on climate change? Or is federal action required in order for America to remain at the forefront of climate change in the world today and keep uphold its place in the Paris Agreement?

Setting aside the ethical and moral responsibilities for a while, the issue of innovation in the area of green technology can be viewed from a purely economic perspective. Research into its effect on multiple businesses seems to agree with Bloomberg’s claims. His finding that “wind power could displace up to two-thirds of coal-fired power production in 15 Midwestern states” (Moody’s) is very optimistic, and similar results can be found in other areas of the country and the world. Countless coal plants have been closing throughout the United States, including one in Porter County Indiana, who “beset by stagnant power demand and presented with cheaper alternatives like natural gas and wind, have shown little appetite for returning to the fuel that long powered the American economy” (“Energy Transitions”), along with the ones mentioned by Bloomberg. One obvious reason for this transition from fossil fuels includes a decreasing price, but others reasons exist as well. Looking outside the borders of the United States, a report done on twelve Canada and Italy based manufacturing companies adds more depth to why this trend is occurring. One claim from this survey includes the idea that “marketers are facing increasing challenges to address sustainability issues in order to attract, satisfy, and retain customers” (473). The movement by so many people to support climate change has created motivation for companies to follow suit in order to gain their business. Instead of government regulation driving this change, businesses have taken a purely economic stance on the issue, and gone where they believe they will attract the most customers. This process has nothing to do with the federal government, and it is, as Bloomberg puts it, “Economics 101” (Bloomberg). Brought up in an article for Science Direct is the idea of not viewing climate change as a burden, but instead as an opportunity for businesses. Reading:

Companies at the vanguard no longer question how much it will cost to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but how much money they can make doing it. Financial markets are starting to reward companies that are moving ahead on climate change, while those lagging behind are being assigned more risk… Shareholders and financial analysts will increasingly assign value to companies that prepare for and capitalize on business opportunities posed by climate change ([Cogan, 2006: 1](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0263237307000631#bib12)).

From this it can be seen that there are positive externalities for businesses making the switch to green technology and more efficient methods of power. Even without the federal government, incentives seem to be driving this change.

On the topic of the federal government, the progress towards resisting climate change seems to have a less optimistic outlook. While it is true that the Obama administration did make some positive strides towards protecting our climate, the election of President Trump and his conservative views on the subject has led to those strides being rolled back and watered down. This is the main reason the election of 2016 was considered one of the most significant ever for climate issues: Some believe that by 2036 efforts against climate change could be too late (“Earth will Cross the Climate Danger Threshold by 2036”). If this is a true claim, then we have no time to waste in our efforts against this problem, and seemingly backward moves like the one instituted by President Trump have no place in our federal government. In another article, it is claimed that “During his eight years in office, President Obama regularly warned of the very real dangers of global warming, but he did not sign any meaningful domestic legislation to address the problem, largely because he and Congress did not see eye to eye” (“A Conservative Case for Climate Action”). The bottom line is that the federal government cannot be decisive enough to solve this problem with their current methods. Roll call recently published this plea to Congress in order to end this struggle, reading “Democrats and Republicans in local communities are coming together to fight climate change. So the American people must ask Congress: When will you step up on the side of everyday Americans who want the next generation to inherit a healthy planet and a thriving, sustainable economy?” (“Climate Change Is Not a Partisan Issue”). While this argument is in the right direction, there is still tension in the basis of the argument. As long as climate change is framed as a moral problem, there will be those who oppose its validity. Why then, is the issue of climate change so often framed as a moral dilemma?

Interestingly enough, progress against climate change has been coming from those who see benefits to the process besides the usual moral and ethical obligations. According to CNBC, multiple corporations, including Gap, have stated that “investing in a low-carbon economy will not only help foster a healthier environment, it is also a key to unlocking new business growth potential for the US and around the world” (“Big companies defy Trump on climate change”). Corporations including General Mills and American Electric Power pledging to “keep cutting carbon emissions for economic reasons” will create a powerful resistance to climate change even with Trumps conservative policies (“Big companies defy Trump on climate change”). Viewing investments in green innovation and climate friendly fuels as a “win-win” for both corporations and the public is the attitude that will drive changes in policies the fastest. Jones and Levy support this view as “Perhaps the most significant change in the corporate landscape” and state that “Groups such as the Pew Center actively promote this position; indeed, the win-win paradigm is a key discursive foundation for a broad coalition of actors supporting the emerging climate regime” (“North American Business Strategies Towards Climate Change”). If it seems to be moving faster in an economic sense than politically, would it not make sense to keep the problem framed in a business sense and allow the economics of the situation to take care of itself?

This thought process must have been present when President Obama gave his speech to Georgetown University in 2013. Both types of argument against climate change are present in his speech, both moral and economic minded points. While both have their place in his argument, it appears that the economic arguments more clearly with the reader. When he states “we know that the costs of these events can be measured in lost lives and lost livelihoods, lost homes, lost businesses, hundreds of billions of dollars in emergency services and disaster relief” (“Remarks by the President on Climate Change”), the argument against climate change is put into a more clear light that seems to demand action. He goes on to elaborate on this point, still through an economic lens, when he states

Farmers see crops wilted one year, washed away the next; and the higher food prices get passed on to you, the American consumer. Mountain communities worry about what smaller snowpacks will mean for tourism -- and then, families at the bottom of the mountains wonder what it will mean for their drinking water. Americans across the country are already paying the price of inaction in insurance premiums, state and local taxes, and the costs of rebuilding and disaster relief (“Remarks by the President on Climate Change”).

Higher prices, taxes, and costs for consumers and corporations are a terrifying prospect and will stir action towards finding more reasonably priced fuel alternatives. On the other hand, when President Obama makes the argument that “the question now is whether we will have the courage to act before it’s too late. And how we answer will have a profound impact on the world that we leave behind not just to you, but to your children and to your grandchildren” (“Remarks by the President on Climate Change”) its moral tone lacks the urgency and concrete of his former arguments.

If the resistance on climate change is to pick up steam and keep America at the forefront of the climate change movement, then the lenses of our arguments must be carefully considered before being passed on. If corporations and people tend to respond stronger to economic arguments, then framing arguments will help combat this potentially fatal issue. Climate change is not only an issue for our future generations, but one vital to our National Security today. Effects, both physically to our planet and to our economy, will severely impact us if action is not taken soon. Even though it may be that we have a moral obligation to protect the climate that we live in, it may be time to face the dark truth that deep divisions in government and moral arguments may be too difficult to repair in the near future. At the beginning of the essay I posed the question if trusting the market to drive efforts against climate change would take too long, or if the government would need to hurry the process in order to create meaningful change in time. This question has now flipped, and it has become clear that the federal government is the one who is taking too long to act against climate change. It is imperative that the economy takes a role in making green innovation a more viable and usable option, like Bloomberg stated in his piece. Some may view acting against climate change as a moral and ethical issue, but it needs to be made into an economic issue. Lowering the price of green innovation will make actions against climate change into a business decision, where people are much more united than in their moral decisions.

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