Earth Day 2024 and Sustainable Existence on our Planet

By William E. Jackman, PhD
April 21, 2024

This letter is posted at https://www.jackmanstatistics.com/commentary.html in the Earth Day and Sustainable Existence section along with previous annual letters on this subject.

Dear Mayor Thao,

Congratulations on your first year plus as Mayor of Oakland (you took office on January 9, 2023). As mayor, you have already had to deal with an array of issues, including upticks in robberies and motor vehicle theft. Congratulations on your recent selection of Floyd Mitchell as Oakland's new police chief who looks like the right person for the job.

During your years of public service in Oakland, you have shown strong dedication to environmental issues, and I think you will be concerned about the issues presented in this Earth Day letter to you. It is a follow-up to the letter I sent you one year ago entitled "Earth Day 2023 and Sustainable Existence on our Planet." Your predecessor Libby Schaaf also was and is very concerned about environmental issues, and I wrote an Earth Day letter to her each year during her eight years as Mayor of Oakland.

Sustainable Existence on Our Finite Planet

Our Earth is a closed system, with a finite amount of matter on our planet and in its atmosphere. This amount of matter is essentially fixed and is likely all the matter the Earth will likely ever have. **Earth Day is dedicated to the health of our finite Planet and to our sustainable existence within its finite limits.**

Sustainability refers to the population size which our finite planet can **sustain indefinitely** (for example, in 1,000 years in the year 3024) at the minimum standard of living we find acceptable. Our planet can sustain a larger population at subsistence levels at which per capita resource requirements are low than it can at higher standards of living such as those of the United States and western Europe today at which per capita resource requirements are much higher. Our standard of living includes environmental amenities we choose such as open space for species preservation (biodiversity) and the preservation of wilderness. These environmental amenities add to our quality of life and happiness, but they can also hinder population growth and the economic growth it drives.

Human population growth and global warming

Unsustainable population levels impair our environment in myriad ways, including global warming. We cannot mitigate nor resolve this grave problem of global warming just by making **per capita** reductions in CO_2 emissions if population growth negates these reductions.

Energy-saving technology has **reduced per capita carbon dioxide emissions** since the first Earth Day (April 22, 1970). **Total carbon dioxide emissions are higher, however, because of population growth**. Even if mileage standards had risen to 47 mpg as proposed by the Obama administration rather than 37 mpg as counter-proposed by the Trump administration or if they rise to 40 mpg by 2026 as proposed by the Biden administration, **total** carbon dioxide emissions **will still rise** because of population growth, negating the benefits of higher mpg standards. **Human population growth is a major, if not the major, contributor to global warming."**

World population is more than three times its sustainable levels.

What population levels are compatible with sustainable existence on our finite planet? An abundance of solid research shows that the current world population of more than 8.1 billion is more than three times **its sustainable level of about 1.5 billion to 2.5 billion** and that the U.S. and California populations (about 341.4 million and 39.0 million in 2024, respectively) are **at least twice** their sustainable levels. To maintain current standards of living for these unsustainable population levels, we are taking more from our planet than it can restore; that is, we are living in an unsustainable manner.

- **A recent study by the United Nations University warns**, "Humans are eating away at their own life support systems at a rate unseen in the past 10,000 years." (Quoted in NPG newsletter April 6, 2023, p. 1)

- "**Scientists: Earth's climate has entered uncharted territory.**"
  "But the heat is also just one way the planet is telling us something is gravely wrong, they said."
  "Heat sets the pace of our climate in so many ways… it's never just the heat," said Kim Cobb, a climate scientist at Brown University.
  "Dying coral reefs, more intense Nor'easters and the wildfire smoke that has choked much of North America this summer are among the many other signals of climate distress."
  (by Isbella O'malley of *Associated Press*, "Scientists: Earth's climate has entered uncharted territory" which appeared in the *East Bay Times* of July 7, 2023, p. A4)

- Bonn, Germany, 25 October 2023 – A recent United Nations University report **warns about risk tipping points** with irreversible impacts on people and planet. The report warns of **six risk tipping points** ahead of us:
  Accelerating extinctions

Groundwater depletion

Mountain glaciers melting

Space debris

Unbearable heat

Uninsurable future

"Systems are all around us and closely connected to us: ecosystems, food systems, water systems and more. When they deteriorate, it is typically not a simple and predictable process. Rather, instability slowly builds until suddenly a tipping point is reached and the system changes fundamentally or even collapses, with potentially catastrophic impacts."

- "**Study: Earth is in danger in nearly all ecological ways.**"

  "Earth has pushed past seven out of eight scientifically established safety limits and into 'the danger zone' not just for an overheating planet that's losing its natural areas, but for the well-being of people living on it, according to a new study."

  "The study by the international scientist group Earth Commission published in Wednesday's journal *Nature* looks at climate, air pollution, phosphorus and nitrogen contamination of water from fertilizer overuse, groundwater supplies, fresh surface water, the unbuilt natural environment and the overall natural and human-built environment."

  "'We are in a danger zone for most of the Earth system boundaries,' said study co-author Kristie Ebi, a professor of climate and public health at the University of Washington."

  (by Seth Borenstein of *Associated Press*, "Study: Earth is in danger in nearly all ecological ways" which appeared in the *East Bay Times* of June 1, 2023, p. A4)

Our descendants will pay.

Our descendants will pay for our recklessness, and it will not just be our descendants in the year 3024 (1,000 years from now). Our descendants in the next 100 years (before the year 2124) will pay significantly for our carelessness.

Our leaders are failing to make the connection between human population growth and global warming.

Our leaders are failing to make the connection between human population growth and global warming. Some observers believe that our leaders are **not capable** of making this connection. In a November 2023 NPG Forum Paper entitled "SPOILER ALERT: 'SMART GROWTH' WON'T SAVE THE DAY" (see link below), Mark Cromer writes that "to have a meaningful national dialogue" about population levels and "population growth simply appears beyond the reach of our present political leadership in the United States." (p. 2)

https://npg.org/library/forum-series/spoiler-alert-smart-growth-wont-save-the-day-fp2023.html

Is Governor Newsom making the connection between human population growth and global warming?

Governor Gavin Newsom has spoken out forcefully against global warming, for example, in his outspoken communications with former President Donald Trump. Newsom correctly perceives the reality of global warming, **but he has not shown in his public statements** that he perceives the **connection between population growth and global warming**. Rather, he appears to believe that we can just keep our population growing (with the commensurate economic growth that population growth drives).

In September 2021, Governor Newsom signed a $22 billion funding package, the largest investment of its kind in state history, to build 84,000 new homes. When he was campaigning for governor, Newsom announced his "audacious" Marshall Plan to build more housing, with a goal of 3.5 million new housing units to be built by 2025–about 500,000 per year. It does not appear that the governor sees a conflict between building more homes for more people which results in increased **total** carbon dioxide emissions – albeit with presumably lower **per capita** emissions – and trying to mitigate global warming. (Governor Newsom and his wife, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, have four children.)

Locked into a planet-wrecking growth paradigm

Governor Newsom is not alone in thinking that if we can make a few fixes such as the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) to alleviate global warming, we can continue pushing for economic growth, i.e., "business as usual."

The Fed is locked into a planet-wrecking growth paradigm.

- The **Federal Reserve Board** of the United States is committed to **continued growth** in the economy and strives to stimulate growth. It does not appear that they consider whether the economic growth they strive to stimulate is compatible with sustainable existence on our planet.
  Jerome Powell, chair of the Federal Reserve, recently stated outright that the Fed's mission of continued growth in the U.S. economy should not be sidetracked by environmental restrictions.

  "the Fed chair also pushed back on calls for the Fed to do more on issues like climate change that often comes from Democrats.

  "'We also need to avoid mission creep,' Powell said, citing climate change as something beyond scope of the Fed. 'Policies to address climate change are the

business of elected officials and those agencies that are charged with this responsibility.'" (from the *New York Times*, "Powell awaits more cooling of inflation" which appeared in the *East Bay Times* of April 4, 2024, pp. C9-C10)

It is incredible that a person of Powell's stature is calling for the Fed to pursue its "mission" of economic growth unfettered by environmental restrictions. Doesn't he realize that the economy depends on the environment (or more generally the Earth's carrying capacity), not the other way around? The environment would do just fine without the economy, but not the other way around. Or as the Prince of Wales (now King Charles III) put it, "**the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of Nature and not the other way around.**" (*Newsweek*, 12/14/2009).

The World Bank is locked into a planet-wrecking growth paradigm.

- "**World Bank projects weak global growth**"

"Washington. The World Bank said Tuesday that the global economy remained in a 'precarious state' and warned of sluggish growth this year and next as rising interest rates slow consumer spending and business investment and threaten the stability of the financial system."

"The World Bank projected that global growth would slow to 2.1% this year from 3.1% in 2022."

"'Rays of sunshine in the global economy we saw earlier in the year have been fading, and gray days likely lie ahead, '" said Ayhan Kose, deputy chief economist at the World Bank Group." (from the *New York Times*, "World Bank projects weak global growth" which appeared in the *East Bay Times* of June 7, 2023, pp. C7)

World Bank economists are disappointed at the prospect of slower economic growth. But at our current rate of economic growth, we are already wrecking our

planet. The World Bank wants faster economic growth so we can wreck it faster.

The U.S. Treasury is locked into a planet-wrecking growth paradigm.

- **Janet Yellen: OPEC+ production cuts not good for economic growth.**

  On April 3, 2023, "U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen criticized the decision by OPEC+ oil producers over the weekend to cut output, saying it was 'unconstructive' and would add to uncertainty overhanging global growth." Yellen said "I'm not sure yet just what the price impact will be. …But clearly, it's not a positive for global growth…"

  Yes, if gas prices rise because of production cutbacks, people will tend to drive their internal combustion vehicles less. They will buy less gas, and the economy will grow slower. But if we burn less gas, we will slow down a bit the rate at which we are wrecking the planet. It does not appear that Yellen, in her worries about a possible slowdown in economic growth because of OPEC production cutbacks, has considered whether the faster economic growth she would like to see is compatible with sustainable existence on our planet.

Governor Newsom is locked into a planet-wrecking growth paradigm.

Do our leaders comprehend that we live on a finite planet?

Governor Newsom appears to be genuinely concerned about the environment and about leaving a livable future to our descendants (with four children, he has a personal stake in this). As noted earlier, he has spoken out firmly against global warming and pushed strongly for the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) in the state and the nation. But it appears, unfortunately, that Newsom believes that if we make a few fixes like the transition to EVs, our state's population can keep growing, and it can keep driving economic growth. It does not appear that Newsom comprehends that we live on a finite planet and that we are already far beyond its limits (carrying capacity) for sustainable

existence.

Does the HCD comprehend that we live on a finite planet?

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (**HCD**) is pushing for rapid housing growth to support population growth. Every 8 years, the HCD tells California cities and counties how much housing they must add during the next 8-year cycle (between 2023 and 2031):

- California must add more than 2.5 million new homes.
- Alameda County must add 441,000 new homes.
- Oakland must add 36,000 new homes.

Is this rate of housing and population growth compatible with sustainable existence in our state? This critical issue is **not** addressed by HCD planners. **Meanwhile, HCD pushes full-speed ahead with tunnel vision for rapid housing growth in Califoria**.

The HCD must accept solid evidence about our finite planet or refute it.

As stated above, an abundance of solid research shows that the current world population of more than 8.1 billion is more than three times **its sustainable level of about 1.5 billion to 2.5 billion** and that the U.S. and California populations (about 341.4 million and 39.0 million in 2024, respectively) are **at least twice** their sustainable levels.

Currently, the HCD just **ignores** these findings and proceeds full-speed ahead with growth as usual. This is wrong. If they do not agree with them, the HCD should be **required to contest or refute these findings** on the limits of our finite planet. For example, HCD researchers could try to make a case that

- the sustainable population of California is 59 million
  (not 15.9 million as it was in 1960 nor 20.0 million as it was in 1970) and that

- the sustainable population of the United States is 500 million
  (not 179.3 million as it was in 1960 nor 203.4 million as it was in 1970)

If the HCD could support such findings, it would justify their current tunnel-visioned push for rapid housing growth to support population growth. If, however, the HCD is unable or unwilling to show that the higher population levels they envision for California, e.g., 59 million, are compatible with sustainable (i.e., long-term) existence in our state, the HCD should be required to do a **Sustainable Existence Impact Analysis (SEIA)** to support its lofty goals for new housing growth in California.

The HCD must be required to do a Sustainable Existence Impact Analysis (SEIA).

State agencies such as the HCD that tell California cities and counties how fast they must grow and private building and real estate interests that want to initiate major, new building projects should be required to do a **Sustainable Existence Impact Analysis (SEIA)**. The SEIA would be used to determine whether the proposed building project is compatible with sustainable existence in our state and on our planet.

Other impact analyses are already required for major, new building projects:

- **Environmental Impact assessment (EIA)** is required to assess the environmental consequences of a plan, policy, program, or actual projects prior to the decision to move forward with the proposed action.
- **Economic Impact Analysis (EIA)** is required to evaluate the impacts of a project, program, or policy on the economy of a specified region.
- **Socio-economic impact assessment (SEIA)** is required to understand the potential range of impacts of a proposed change and the likely responses of those impacted if the change occurs.

Correspondingly, a **Sustainable Existence Impact Analysis (SEIA)** should be required for

- state agencies such as the HCD that tell California cities and counties how fast they must add new housing units to accommodate population growth
- private building and real estate interests that want to initiate major, new building projects.

A **Sustainable Existence Impact Analysis (SEIA)** should not be diluted into a **Sustainability Impact Analysis (SIA)**. Businesses have adopted the word "sustainability" for a range of other purposes, for example, sustainable sales or sustainable profits or "**sustainable growth**."

Who is moral? Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The HCD and organizations such as YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) insinuate that Californians have a moral obligation to support population growth and housing growth. This is exactly backwards. Californians who favor a smaller population that is compatible with sustainable (i.e. long-term) existence on our planet and in our state are the moral ones, not those who push with tunnel vision for growth which exceeds the long-term carrying capacity of our state.

Our Declaration of Independence says," We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are **Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.**" Some people are happier with a smaller population with more living space and with more open space for outdoor amenities and species preservation. Others are happier with a larger population with less living space and with less open space for outdoor amenities and species preservation. People pursue their happiness in their own way. We do not have a

moral obligation to support population growth and its concomitant housing growth as the HCD and YIMBY insinuate.

Species Preservation.

A report entitled "Animals are disappearing, running out of places to live" appeared in the *New York Times* on December 16, 2022.

"Wildlife is disappearing around the world in the oceans and on land. The main cause on land is perhaps the most straightforward. Humans are taking over too much of the planet, erasing what was there before."

"With our bottomless appetitive for unchecked and unequal economic growth, humanity has become a weapon of mass extinction," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in his opening remarks last week in Montreal.

We don't have to look much farther than our own backyard to appreciate what Guterres is saying.

No more opossums

There are loud and frequent calls to build much more housing in California to support a larger population. This essay raises the question of what **human** population levels and development levels are compatible with sustainable existence in our state. But what about the **non-human** occupants of our state?

Until a few years ago, I used to see **opossums** sitting on our back fence at night. They are interesting animals. I could walk right up to them, but they would just stay there on the fence. Opossums are adaptable animals and can co-exist with humans – up to a point. But even opossums need a certain amount of space.

There used to be some open space and bushes in the surrounding lots. But now we are being asked by growth advocates to add an accessory apartment or accessory dwelling unit (ADU), e.g., a granny flat, wherever there is any open space. The result will be that in cities there will be more humans (and more economic growth) and less or no wildlife like opossums. I have not seen an **opossum** in our backyard for over four years. I was reminded of this by a short article that appeared in the March/April 2024 edition of Saturday Evening Post (p. 21) entitled "YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD OPOSSUM" (attached).

The existence value of non-human species

Our standard of living includes environmental amenities we choose such as open space for species preservation (biodiversity) and the preservation of wilderness; these environmental amenities add to our quality of life and happiness. Surveys have consistently shown than humans place value on the existence of wildlife whether it is a species you are likely to see such as an **opossum** or a species you will almost certainly never see such as a Siberian tiger. But preserving these species in the wild requires setting aside enough open space for them to exist. And this open space won't be available for humans to build houses on to accommodate our growing numbers (which are the main drivers of economic growth).

The NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) movement favors keeping back yards as back yards rather than replacing them with accessory apartment or accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and also favors retaining open space rather than losing it to a growing population with more housing developments. **California's current population of 39.0 million is at least twice its sustainable level** and needs to be gradually reduced to levels compatible with sustainable existence in our state. The NIMBY movement indirectly militates against

population growth which helps our planet and future generations while the YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) movement has the opposite effect.

To restate: Keeping back yards as back yards and open space as open space helps our planet because these actions militate toward lower population levels and toward sustainable existence on our planet and in our state. Higher population levels have the opposite effect. We are being asked to give up our back yards and our open space for the goal of having a larger population (with concomitant more housing). **But this goal does not merit support:** it is antithetical to and incompatible with sustainable existence on our planet.

Can We Move to Sustainable Population Levels to Save Future Generations?

The current U.S population of 341.4 million is over twice the sustainable level of approximately 150-200 million people. So, the first step toward a more sustainable U.S. population would be to stabilize our population at its current level and then gradually reduce it. **This will be difficult for U.S. residents to accomplish**: The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that immigration will become the "primary driver of U.S. population growth" between 2027 and 2038. Immigration is expected to account for 82% of U.S. population growth by 2050.

There are humanitarian reasons for allowing high levels of immigration to the U.S., **but the dominant reasons advanced are economic**. Businesses say that they need to import workers ranging from computer programmers to dishwashers and everything in between to remain competitive.

Do we need to import "smart people" to be economically competitive?

California “tech” employers say we do.

Computer Programmers

Silicon Valley regularly reports that more than two-thirds of its computer programmers are foreign-born. This is indeed remarkable given that California has a population of 39 million, has a widely-admired system of higher education (its three-tier system), and is much more racially and ethnically diverse then the countries which are providing us with programmers.

Work Visas to import “smart people”

California “tech” employers regularly complain that restrictions on work visas impede their ability to import the “smart people” they need to be competitive. For example, from a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times*: Tech employers assert that “being able to recruit talent from around the world is indispensable for their growth.” “Recruiting globally, he [Brian Riley] said enables the company to hire the best people for specific roles.”

(by Andrea Castillo and Don Lee of the Los Angeles Times., “Fee hikes driving up costs for work visas” which appeared in the East Bay Times of April 9, 2024, pp. C7-C8)

Less diverse nations with smaller populations which don’t import “smart people” are beating us economically.

Human intelligence is equally distributed among the nations of the world. Nations can utilize the native intelligence of their own people to develop homegrown “smart people” and “smart workers” for their tech workforce or they can import “smart people.”

The U.S. appears to believe that importing "smart people" makes more us more competitive internationally and makes us more diverse which they claim gives us an edge in international economic competition. **But is this strategy working?**

The following six countries have smaller populations and less diverse populations than the U.S., and they **do not import** lots of "smart people." Yet **they are beating us economically**, invalidating our claim that with a population of 334.2 million we need to import lots of "smart people" to be economically competitive. (Population and economic data cited in this section are for **2023**.)

- México has a population about 38% of that of the U.S., but they had a trade surplus* with us of about $152.4 billion.
- Japan has a population about 37% of that of the U.S., but they had a trade surplus with us of $71.2 billion.
- Taiwan has a population about 7% of that of the U.S., but they had a trade surplus with us of $48.0 billion.
- South Korea has a population about 15% of that of the U.S., but they had a trade surplus with us of $27.7 billion.
- Vietnam has a population about 30% of that of the U.S., but they had a trade surplus with us of $51.4 billion.
- Germany has a population about 25% of that of the U.S., but they had a trade surplus with us of $83.0 billion.

*A "trade surplus" for our economic competitors, e.g., México, means that they sold to us more than we sold to them.

Taiwan warrants special mention. Taiwan's population of 23.4 million (2023) is about one-third of one percent of the world's population of 8.045 billion (8,045,311,447). Yet Taiwan is the epicenter of global semiconductor manufacturing, producing over 60% of

the world's semiconductors. Taiwan does not depend on importing “smart people”; rather it develops its own “smart workers.” Taiwan is much less diverse than the United States: 95% to 97% of Taiwan's population are Han Chinese.

Taiwan is so advanced in semiconductor manufacturing compared to the United States that “The Biden administration will award up to $6.6 billion in grants to Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., the leading maker of the most advanced microchips, in a bid to bring some of the most cutting-edge semiconductor technology to the United States.”
(by Madeline Ngo and Don Clark of *The New York Times*, “Taiwan firm to get $6.6B to boost U.S. chip manufacturing” which appeared in the *East Bay Times* of April 9, 2024, pp. C7-C8)

We were winners in 1960 with a population of 179.3 million.

The United States has been running a large deficit in international trade every consecutive year since 1976, so it is easy for younger people to not be aware that the U.S once ran a surplus, that is, we used to be the winners in international trade competition. (The United States first had trade deficits in 1971, 1972, and 1974, and then every year since 1976. We have become chronic losers in international trade competition, that is, we chronically buy from others countries more than we sell to them.)

Population growth boosters say that we need a larger population to be competitive in international economic competition. But our own historical data does not support this claim. Recall the “golden age” of U.S. manufacturing after World War II. The period from the end of World War II to the early 1970s was one of the greatest eras of economic expansion in world history. In the US, Gross Domestic Product increased from $228 billion in 1945 to just under $1.7 trillion in 1975.

In 1960, roughly in the middle of the "golden age", the U.S had a trade **surplus** of 3.5 billion with a population of 179.3 million. In 2023, the U.S had a trade **deficit** of 773 billion with a population of 335.9 million, almost twice (1.87 times) our 1960 population.

Do we need to import all kinds of workers because we have a people shortage?

The section above showed that the U.S economy did well in 1960 with a population of 179.3 million. U.S. workers were doing well too; that was when you could buy a home on one income. Previous sections also gave examples of six countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Vietnam with considerably smaller and less diverse populations than the U.S. in 2023 that beat us in international economic competition (that is, we bought much more from them than we sold to them). Also, the tech economies of these countries are not dependent on importing "smart people."

Regardless of this significant evidence, business people regularly warn about a "worker shortage" and say that we need more immigration to alleviate these shortages. Academics also warn us about a "people shortage." For example, the *East Bay Times* ran an article in 2021 entitled "Why California's youth population is shrinking" in which business leaders and academics worried about California's slowing population growth (not enough babies) and **California's future labor force**. For example, Dowell Myers, a demographer and public policy professor at the University of Southern California, commented, "It's that we need them [babies] to be **future workers**, future taxpayers, and future consumers…"

How large do they want the U.S. population to be so there is not a "people shortage"?

The U.S population in 2024 of 341.4 million is almost double (1.87 times) the U.S population in 1960 of 179.3. As written above, 1960 was in the heart of the "golden age" of U.S. manufacturing after World War II, and the U.S had a trade surplus of 3.5 billion. How large a U.S. population do population-growth boosters like Dowell (the academic) or Dan Walters (CalMatters columnist) want to alleviate the "people shortage" and "worker shortage"? Would they be satisfied with a U.S. population of 400 million people or would they want a U.S. population of 500 million people? **Both these population levels are unsustainable.**

Checking with Our Planet First

Dowell, Walters, and others are **asking the wrong question**. The most important question business and all of us should ask is: **What is the sustainable population of our state**, not how large a population we need to provide the workers that business says it needs. **We must check with our planet first.**

We are **not** checking with our planet first. In California, we are plowing ahead at full speed to build more housing for a growing population without considering whether our state and our nation has the carrying capacity to support these population levels now and in 1,000 years.

Checking with our planet first entails keeping in mind that the economy depends on the environment (or more generally the Earth's carrying capacity), not the other way around? The environment would do just fine without the economy, but not the other way around.

Governor Newsom is not walkin' the talk.

Newsom sees himself as being for environmental quality and for "sustainability" but his actions belie his words. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was signed into law in 1970 by President Reagan in response to strong demand for this act by Californians. (The first Earth Day was April 22, 1970.) The CEQA "generally requires state and local government agencies to inform decision makers and the public about the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects, and to reduce those environmental impacts to the extent feasible."

Newsom blasts the CEQA for doing its job, charging that the environmental reviews the CEQA requires for major, new building projects are holding up housing projects builders are pushing for.

From the East Bay Times, March 6, 2023, p. 1

"Gov. Newsom blasted CEQA for allowing the state to be 'held hostage by NIMBYS' and vowed to help change the law. Scott Weiner, a Democratic state senator from San Francisco told the East Bay News Group he plans to introduce a bill 'to deal with the specific problems this court case has created.'"

The NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) movement generally favors retaining open space rather than losing it to a growing population with more housing developments.

Returning in 2024 to Taking from Our Planet What It Can Restore

Let us rededicate ourselves on Earth Day 2024 to bringing our demands on our planet back into balance with what it can restore. Our demands now greatly exceed our planet's restorative capabilities. As noted above, a recent study by the United Nations University warns, "Humans are eating away at their own life support systems at a rate unseen in the past 10,000 years."

Some political and academic factions will oppose such measures because they might impede population growth and the economic growth it drives. Don't they realize that the economy depends on the environment (or more generally the Earth's carrying capacity), not the other way around? The environment would do just fine without the economy, but not the other way around. Or as the Prince of Wales (now King Charles III) put it, "**the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of Nature and not the other way around**" (*Newsweek*, 12/14/2009).

Sincerely,

William E. Jackman, PhD
Statistician/SAS & SQL Programmer
Jazz and Popular Pianist
Oakland, California
April 21, 2024

I am a second-generation Irish-American who grew up with immigrant Irish grandparents and aunts in Oakland. I am a graduate of Oakland High School and of the College of Engineering at UC Berkeley. I am fluent in Spanish.