

# Climate Corner

## Who cares about climate change anyway?

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The past few months have brought forth conversations about what our country wants. Because of the US election, our own provincial election, and the looming federal election, there is much talk about what people are looking for when deciding how to vote. According to Abacus Data, a Canadian polling and research firm, 61% of people stated that the rising cost of living was among the three most important issues facing Canada. In second on this list came Donald Trump and his administration with 39%, and in third was Healthcare, with 38%. Climate change and the environment ranked down at ninth, with only 16% of people including it in their top three most important issues. I understand why the rising cost of living is seen as a more pressing matter; it's affecting us right now, every day, and climate change still seems like this far off hypothetical, or something that only affects other parts of the world. It's not like we'll be getting hurricanes in Southern Ontario! So, while this prioritization [of the cost of living] makes sense, as it has a much more tangible and immediate impact on our lives, if we were to dig a little deeper, we might see that these issues aren't so separate after all. We might see that if we're going to properly address the rising cost of living, we're going to need to address climate change, too.

The cost of living and the climate crisis are linked in many ways, mainly through their **impacts**. Most conversations surrounding climate change are about global warming specifically, and I've heard things said like, '*But I like the hot weather!*', or, '*See, it's snowing, so global warming isn't as bad as you say.*', but the truth is, global warming is only **a single part** of climate change. The science of climate change is incredibly complex, so it can help to look at these different aspects as different **symptoms**. These symptoms include loss of biodiversity, extreme weather that can be both hot or cold, natural disasters increasing in severity and frequency, decrease in soil quality, and, of course, the global average temperature rising. So our snowy and frigid winter does *not* mean climate change is a myth; in fact, the unpredictable storms and temperatures we experience are included in the many symptoms. And, unfortunately, all of these different symptoms will impact our agriculture, making our local climate and ecosystems unsuitable for the crops we need.

But that's not all! That's just looking at the impacts to our surrounding environment, and not to other parts of the world. The unignorable effects of climate change have already hit other countries, specifically those in the Global South. In an article by the World Economic Forum titled '*Climate change is accelerating the global food crisis, we must act now to protect the most vulnerable*', they talked about the ways that climate change has impacted countries already suffering from food insecurity, and how that contributes to food inflation all around the world. It is stated that, "Extreme weather, fueled by climate change, causes short-term disruptions in crop growing and long-term changes in regional growing conditions." An example they give of this is the rising temperatures affecting the yield of coffee beans in Brazil. The article says, "In fact, if

you point at any agricultural region of the world, you will see at least one extreme weather risk impacting the crops grown there and that the shifts have already occurred or will occur in the near-term horizon.” So even if these more obvious impacts take time to make their way to our little Ontario towns, there are still countries around the world that we depend on for certain crops and materials that have been seeing these impacts for years now. It may not seem like the changing climate of Brazil matters to us, but unless you plan on growing your coffee beans locally, it matters a lot.

These are not theoretical risks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated that, “warming above 2 degrees [above pre-industrial levels] is likely to cause sustained food supply disruptions globally”. Scientists have seen that, on average, yields of major crops such as wheat, rice, and soybeans are likely to decrease by 3-7% per Celsius degree of warming; and when we look at the fact that we are already well over 2 degrees of warming, with this increase showing *no signs* of slowing down, all of this information is... quite worrying, to say the least.

We can clearly see the links between our food sources becoming precarious and unreliable, and said food becoming more expensive. People may say that they don't care about a government's stance on climate change, because the cost of living is affecting them more, and that needs to be dealt with first. But when we examine the situation a little closer, we see that these problems aren't so separate after all. So it comes down to this - **if we want food stability, we need our food sources to be stable**. That means adapting our agricultural practices to withstand the coming effects of climate change, as well as working to quickly reduce CO2 emissions and the other practices contributing to the climate crisis, so we can avoid as much further change as possible and restore ecosystems.

So, you're worried about the cost of living? Then it's time to think about how you can help fight the climate crisis! And don't worry, I've got somewhere for you to start... *Climate Corner* represents Nith Valley Eco Boosters. NVEB is a local group committed to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships through education, action and collaboration. To help envision and create your sustainable future, visit [nvecoboosters.com](http://nvecoboosters.com). *Climate Corner* will include NVEB updates and how you can get involved or support us. As always, thank you for reading!