

Highland High School

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Why Highland Needs a Clean Energy Transition Plan

Everyone has heard about climate change and how we need to start caring more about our environment, but nothing ever really happens, right? People will come up with excuses and say things like, “one person or small group of people can’t make a big enough difference,” but that’s not true. It may seem that way, but the people who say that could have made a difference if they actually tried. Had they tried, I’m sure there would be a mass of people, groups big enough to *change* something. As the saying goes: “you’ll never know until you try.”

This is the reason why Highland School District should have a clean energy transition plan. We may be small, but we could be part of a ripple big enough to make a difference. Every little bit of help counts towards a bigger goal.

There are many benefits to being energy efficient! These benefits include lowering the amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, electricity demand, and even energy prices! This is because we would reduce the necessity of new and expensive energy generation resources and materials.

Lowering the number of greenhouse gas emissions is a very important matter. In fact, it is so important it could be a key factor in slowing climate change. A study was done by Jason West, Ph.D., assistant professor of environmental sciences and engineering at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. In these simulations, actions were taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in two possible situations. One situation was one in which there were no climate policies and the other one was with aggressive climate policies to reduce greenhouse gasses. According to the article by

Gillings School News, "Reducing greenhouse gasses benefits air quality, saves lives." In simulations with aggressive climate policies to reduce greenhouse gasses, it was projected that approximately one-half million premature deaths related to air pollution worldwide would be avoided per year in 2030, about 1.3 million in 2050, and about 2.2 million in 2100. This simulation shows that reducing greenhouse gas emissions would improve the health of the human population and prevent premature deaths.

Since energy consumption is directly involved in energy prices, energy efficiency can reduce it! If anything in this essay catches your eye, lowered energy prices must look the most enticing. If energy efficiency is widespread enough and more openly available, prices can be lowered because of the more readily available supplies with less expensive resources to make it.

I encourage all readers who are even slightly interested in this topic to do some research into it and encourage others to do so as well! Have you heard of the Butterfly Effect? It goes like this: "If a butterfly flaps its wings at just the right time in just the right place. It can cause a hurricane thousands of miles away." Referring to what was said at the beginning of this essay, it only takes a little effort to create a big effect. Become the butterfly and create that hurricane.