

Stop traveling to save the environment

Travelers have a lot to consider when planning a trip home for the holidays — Will the flight have Wi-Fi? Who will feed the cat while I'm gone? — but one thing they might not think about is the impact their traveling has on the environment.

Pulitzer Prize and MacArthur award-winning author and writer Jack Miles wants to change that, futurism.com wrote.

In 2015, Miles contributed to "Bending the Curve", a report on climate stability compiled by the University of California (UC). The focus of his contribution was the importance of communicating climate issues in a way that will motivate people to change their behavior.

In an article published by The Washington Post in November, Miles outlines one such behavioral change, laying it out right in the article's title: "For the Love of Earth, Stop Traveling."

In the article, Miles noted how he used an online calculator provided by MyClimate, a Swiss non-profit focused on effective climate protection, to determine the carbon footprint of traveling to speak at an event in Morocco.

Based on his calculations, round-trip flights for he and his wife would pump 7.6 tons (16,800 pounds) of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. For comparison, he noted that the two generate an annual carbon footprint of about 14.9 tons (33,000 pounds) through their normal yearly activities, such as electricity usage, ground transportation, and waste disposal.

In other words, a single trip

via airplane would increase the Miles' carbon footprint for the year by more than 50 percent.

As Miles wrote, "The harm we did with one international trip surely neutralized any good that we did all year as recyclers, eco-consumers, and financial contributors to environmental

organizations." Reducing the amount of CO₂ we each pump into the atmosphere could go a long way toward stopping or even reversing the damage we're doing to the planet.

Landwehr said we'll need to become a "low carbon emissions society" to reach global

environment.

Those who must fly can help reduce their emissions by flying coach, booking through airlines that use biofuels, or only taking non-stop flights. They can also purchase carbon offsets for their flights, essentially donating a set amount of money cover-

booking process," he told Futurism.

"Today, even with our partners, it is not that comfortable for clients to offset their emissions. The offsetting platforms are hidden or appear when the booking process is already finished."

For airlines that don't offer carbon offsetting, travelers can use a calculator like the MyClimate one Miles referenced in his article.

The flyer inputs the details of their travel, such as their destination and flight class. The calculator then automatically translates that environmental cost into a financial one. The CO₂ emissions from that New York to Paris trip, for example, translate to \$67. The traveler can then donate that amount of money to one of the initiatives suggested by the website.

"It's a 'polluters pay' principle," said Landwehr. "You are causing harm to the environment, so you pay to balance out this harm to the environment."

Still, the best way to reduce emissions related to air travel is to not travel. As Miles noted in his article, technology can help in this goal. Instead of traveling to conferences, workers can participate via livestream. Training sessions and meetings can be conducted virtually, and shorter work trips can be completed via train or car instead of airplane.

As for personal travel, spending the holidays at home or taking vacations within driving distance is the best option. For some, wanting to help save the planet could prove to be a great excuse for avoiding the in-laws next December.



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organizations."

Kai Landwehr, MyClimate's Head of Marketing, told Futurism that air travel, including air freight, accounts for two to three percent of global CO₂ emissions, and within the next decade, that figure is expected to double.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported that greenhouse gas emissions are driving climate change more significantly than anything else.

emission goals and stop global warming. Members of this society would need to limit their yearly CO₂ emissions to two tons (4,409 pounds).

A single economy-class round-trip flight from New York to Paris would exceed that by about two tons (440 pounds), so this could prove difficult, if not impossible, for anyone whose livelihood depends on travel. However, staying grounded isn't the only way to help the

sponding to the damage caused by their specific travel plans to a non-profit or company focused on environmental initiatives.

Some airlines, such as Delta, United, and JetBlue, allow fliers to purchase these offsets directly on their sites. However, Landwehr said airlines need to do a better job of providing this service.

"The most crucial aspect is an easy, smooth, and customer-friendly integration in the



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If climate matters, the car can't be king

For decades, California's landmark environmental law has worked in a decidedly un-environmental way.

Enacted in 1970, the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA, was supposed to create an environmental review process for building projects and, in theory at least, ensure that new developments did a minimum of harm to the communities where they were located, latimes.com wrote.

In many ways, it has been successful. But one of the law's requirements is an analysis of a project's impact on transportation. And the way that provision works — the system set up to measure the impact on traffic — has paradoxically made it easier to build in the suburbs and harder to build in urban neighborhoods. The law has favored sprawl and penalized apartments in dense communities, offices near subway stops and even the creation of bike lanes — the very projects that California now realizes it needs in order to reduce its dependence on cars and cut the greenhouse gases responsible for global climate change.

California communities have to be redesigned to make it easier for people to walk, bike or take transit.

Finally, state officials have released a proposal for a new way to measure transportation impacts, and it flips on its head the "car is king" thinking that has shaped California's development patterns for the last half-century and more. The change is required by a bill passed in 2013. The author, then-Sen. Darrell Steinberg, recognized that while other state laws and policies were requiring local governments to plan their

housing and transportation systems to reduce driving, limit pollution and cut greenhouse gases, CEQA often worked against those mandates.

Under current CEQA rules, a project has a negative environmental impact if it would slow the speed of traffic or add to congestion. There are several major problems with this approach.

First, if you're measuring transportation impacts based only on how quickly cars can move, every solution will be geared toward moving cars faster. That often has translated into developers being required to add more lanes, synchronize traffic lights

so cars don't have to slow down at intersections and make other car-centric changes that create streets that are uninviting or dangerous for cyclists and walkers. Plus, when motorists are able to drive faster, they are more likely to drive more often and for longer distances, avoiding alternative modes of transportation and emitting more greenhouse gases.

The current approach also makes it harder to build new apartments, offices or shops in dense urban areas and along transit lines where it's easier to get around without a car. That's because the rules look at transportation only in terms of moving

cars; if roads can't be widened or lanes added for cars, which is often impossible in built-out areas, then a project can be blocked. The same types of projects built out on the undeveloped fringe typically won't face the same hurdles during approval because the roads in such areas aren't congested. Yet, but continued car-dependent sprawl eventually leads to more traffic, more congestion and more greenhouse gas emissions.

Under the proposed change, a project would be deemed to have a negative impact if it increased the number of cars on the road or created longer trips. (An

US Postal Service celebrates National Museum of African American History

A new US postage stamp honoring the National Museum of African American History and Culture highlights African-American achievements and promotes the museum on the international stage.

The US Postal Service unveiled the Celebrating African American History and Culture Forever Stamp in October, a few weeks after the newest addition to the Smithsonian Institution celebrated its first anniversary on Sept. 24, etr-bonews.com reported.

The museum has counted nearly three million visitors since it opened, said museum director Lonnie G. Bunch III.

Visitors are spending an average six-and-a-half hours in the building, the nation's largest and most comprehensive museum devoted to African-American life, art, history and culture. Visitors to other Smithsonian museums typically spend between an hour and two-and-a-half hours, Smithsonian spokeswoman Linda St. Thomas said.

This is the first time the postal service has honored a Smithsonian museum with its own stamp, said Roy Betts, a postal service spokesman. He said 15 million of the stamps were printed.

The stamp is based on a photograph taken of the northwest corner of the museum with its three-tier, bronze-colored facade that conveys faith, resilience and hope and pays homage to enslaved African-American craftsmen from New Orleans and Charleston, South Carolina.

"The stamp that we dedicate today captures the majestic beauty of this museum," said Ronald A. Stroman, deputy postmaster general for the postal service. He said the postal service was crucial to helping create a black middle class because it hired African Americans in the early 20th century when many other businesses wouldn't.



architecturalrecord.com

"Forever" stamps are always valid for first-class postage in the US, regardless of any future rate increases. Some 30 million people each year visit one of 19 Smithsonian Institution museums and art galleries in Washington and New York.

The goals of the African-American museum, which was authorized by an act of Congress in 2003, are to "break the silences that have divided America and to help us remember that we are all shaped and made better by the African-American experience," Bunch said.

Climate change increasing forest fires

This year is poised to be remembered as one of the worst years of record for the severity of its wildfires. North America is counting the cost.

The skyrocketing cost of putting out this year's record-breaking forest fires in British Columbia is serving as a stark warning about the economic toll of climate change, futurism.com wrote.

Fire-related expenses averaged \$182 million between 2006 and 2016, but in the first nine months of this year, more than \$500 million was spent fighting the flames, while costs associated with reconstruction and other damages remain unknown.

According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the region's two biggest forest fires alone caused more than \$127 million in insurance damage. So can we attribute the fires — and therefore these costs — to climate change? While scientists agree that the factors at play are disparate, including changes in land use, vegetation composition, and natural climate variability, evidence is mounting that climate change is now driving the worrying trend.

A 2016 study published in PLOS estimated that under a high emission scenario, the cost of fire management in Canada could reach \$1.4 billion per year by the end of the century, an increase of 119 percent compared to the average spent between 1980 and 2009. With this year's forest fires exceeding even the most pessimistic forecasts, those grim economic projections look like they may become reality.

And the problem is not unique to Canada. "Human caused ignitions, warmer temperatures, dry and wet spells, and accumulation of fuels are some of the factors contributing to longer wildfire seasons, increases in the number of large and long-duration fires, and more severe effects from the wildfires," said Paul Steblein, fire science coordinator with the US Geological Survey (USGS).



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"Such conditions — along with the wildfires that accompany them — are likely to increase in the future." After a five-year drought, California has been devastated by over 50,000 fires, burning 8.9 million acres of land. According to the California Department of Insurance, as of October 2017, insured losses accounted for more than \$3 billion.

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