



## Energy and Climate: Vision for the Future

By Michael B. McElroy

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### **Energy and Climate: Vision for the Future** By Michael B. McElroy

The climate of our planet is changing at a rate unprecedented in recent human history. The energy absorbed from the sun exceeds what is returned to space. The planet as a whole is gaining energy. The heat content of the ocean is increasing; the surface and atmosphere are warming; mid-latitude glaciers are melting; sea level is rising. The Arctic Ocean is losing its ice cover. None of these assertions are based on theory but on hard scientific fact. Given the science-heavy nature of climate change, debates and discussions have not played as big a role in the public sphere as they should, and instead are relegated to often misinformed political discussions and inaccessible scientific conferences. Michael B. McElroy, an eminent Harvard scholar of environmental studies, combines both his research chops and pedagogical expertise to present a book that will appeal to the lay reader but still be grounded in scientific fact.

In *Energy and Climate: Vision for the Future*, McElroy provides a broad and comprehensive introduction to the issue of energy and climate change intended to be accessible for the general reader. The book includes chapters on energy basics, a discussion of the contemporary energy systems of the US and China, and two chapters that engage the debate regarding climate change. The perspective is global but with a specific focus on the US and China recognizing the critical role these countries must play in addressing the challenge of global climate change. The book concludes with a discussion of initiatives now underway to at least reduce the rate of increase of greenhouse gas emissions, together with a vision for a low carbon energy future that could in principle minimize the long-term impact of energy systems on global climate.

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*By Michael B. McElroy*

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"What are prospects for future world energy supplies and costs and how will climate change guide them? This book aims to prepare us to address these questions. It describes principles and practices of energy extraction, conversion and usage with lively examples, and it contrasts the cases of the U. S. and China. I recommend it very highly as an accurate, farsighted and readable account of very important issues."--*Ralph Cicerone, President of the National Academy of Sciences*

"The topic of energy has suddenly become essential intellectual equipment for the educated person. Michael McElroy, one of the world's most distinguished atmospheric scientists, thoroughly illuminates the topic in this remarkable new book. *Energy and Climate* provides the definitive one-volume treatment of two of the central issues of our time, the inter-related topics of energy and climate."--*Dale Jorgenson, Samuel W. Morris University Professor of Economics, Harvard University*

"Based on his deep knowledge of energy, technology, climate, economics, society, history and international politics, Professor McElroy has recognized the enormous complexity of the issues involved. As an eminent professor, chairman, director and national and international leader, McElroy understands the power of education, enlightenment and persuasion. This is what this book is: a pleasant, inspiring and insightful tutorial to the present and future decision makers by an erudite, wise and patient councilor. I cannot think of a more urgent challenge to human civilization in the 21st century than energy and climate change; and I cannot think of a more timely and appropriate book than this one to meet the challenge."--*Yuk L. Yung, Professor of Planetary Science, California Institute of Technology*

"A half-century of climate science has revealed the dangers to society of increasing greenhouse gases, and new energy policy is the only real solution. McElroy brilliantly combines these two topics in this readable and authoritative account of what lies ahead and what we can do about it. *Energy and Climate* will change the way you think and act about the future."--*D. James Baker, Director of Forest and Land-use Measurement, Clinton Foundation, and former Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*

"McElroy guides us through basic energy and climate science to build a solid case that the ongoing, rapid changes in Earth's climate are driven by human activities, largely the burning of fossil fuels, which must stop if civilization as we know it is to prosper. With an eye toward the positive, he shows the remarkable potential of wind, solar, and other forms of renewable energy to solve this critical problem, which is denied by so many but understood by so few."--*William H. Schlesinger, President (Emeritus), The Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies Millbrook, New York*

## About the Author

**Michael B. McElroy** is the Gilbert Butler Professor of Environmental Studies at Harvard University. His research covers topics ranging from planetary atmospheres to extensive studies of the earth's environment, with particular attention to the impact of human activity, and to the development of options to limit potentially negative consequences of this activity. His bestselling book *Energy: Perspectives, Problems, and Prospects* was published by Oxford University Press in 2009.

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