

Health & Science

Ceres Conference focuses on signs of progress in clean energy

Business and Money Environment

by [John J. Berger](#) - May 25, 2015

Clean energy and climate protection are both focuses during the recent Ceres Conference



US EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy | Image EPA.Gov

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SAN FRANCISCO, May 25, 2015 – A world of 7 billion people that is currently overexploiting its energy, water, biodiversity, and soil can ill afford to misspend vast sums of investment capital and public funds on climate-destabilizing fuels.

But that’s exactly what we’re doing.

The global oil industry has already found more fossil fuel than we can safely burn without roasting the planet. Yet the industry will spend about \$570 billion this year exploring for even more oil and gas.

Governments facilitate that misallocation of capital by giving the global fossil fuel industry about \$775 billion a year in public subsidies, according to [Oil Change International](#).

Not unexpectedly, annual global carbon emissions have soared to 70 percent above 1990 levels and are still rising. As a result, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere today is dangerously high—greater than at any time in more than three million years.

Concern about the imperiled climate as well as natural resource abuse and waste is what animates a highly effective and sophisticated Boston-based nonprofit that perhaps you haven't heard of. Known as Ceres, the group encourages corporate America—including energy and mining companies—to adopt more sustainable energy and environmental practices.

Founded in 1989, Ceres has a target [Roadmap to Sustainability](#) for companies and has recruited some 1,350 companies, including dozens of Fortune 500 firms, to sign its [Climate Declaration](#) calling for national action on climate change.

The group's current programs on water scarcity and transportation were showcased recently at Ceres's annual conference at San Francisco's Fairmount Hotel in mid-May. Corporate leaders and asset managers rubbed shoulders there with entrepreneurs, foundation executives, and a few environmentalists.

US EPA head Gina McCarthy, California Air Resources Board (CARB) Chief Mary Nichols, NRG Home CEO Steve McBee, and physicist Amory Lovins, co-founder of the Rocky Mountain Institute, all gave upbeat keynote presentations.

“Attacking climate change is a moral responsibility,” McCarthy declared. “The move toward a low-carbon future is already happening. People now recognize it's inevitable.”

They see climate change as a public health and safety challenge, she said, as well as an economic and national security problem. “We've never seen such investments in renewables and efficiency” as we're seeing today.

John J. Berger, Ph.D. (<http://www.johnjberger.com>) is an energy and environmental policy specialist who has produced ten books on climate, energy, and natural resource topics. He is the author of the award-winning *Climate Peril: The Intelligent Reader's Guide to the Climate Crisis* and *Climate Myths: The Campaign Against Climate Science*.

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