

Can Young People Bear the Burden?

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“Cost of Carbon Capture: Can Young People Bear the Burden,” published in *Joule*, a new Elsevier journal, is available free from Elsevier until 4 October via the Share Link below (note that the link to the PDF of our article is at the top of the page – they also provide a link to the Keith et al. article):

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Our article is a preview of the David Keith et al. article on carbon capture. We note that estimated costs of carbon capture, although lower than some prior estimates, are so high as to strongly support the need for rapid reduction of fossil fuel emissions. However, our article ends as follows:

In view of our longstanding knowledge of the threat posed by climate change, we find it morally repugnant and reprehensible that we, the older generations, have not developed, tested and costed the known technological options for addressing climate change, so that today’s young people and future generations will have viable options for addressing climate change.

Instead we placed all of our eggs in a single basket, renewable energies, with almost unlimited subsidies through renewable portfolio standards. Carbon capture is one of the technologies that should be thoroughly explored, and the Keith study is a welcome step in that direction. Advanced generation nuclear power is another, as it is a good candidate for providing the huge requirements for power and process heat in countries such as China and India.

Unless such technology options are developed rapidly, young people and future generations likely will be forced into extensive geoengineering, purposeful intervention in nature, which will raise many practical and ethical issues. Scientific analysis of all options is appropriate, but so saying should only increase the incentive to reduce CO₂ emissions rapidly, thus reducing human-made climate interference and minimizing deleterious consequences.

Note: in my 15 August Communication I wrote that my next Communication would be on “Acceleration of Global Warming.” I forgot about this *Joule* article; the reprint is also available [here](#).