

## **What is Your Tipping Point?**

Bruce Parker

May 18, 2014

The basic science climate change is unequivocal: without a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions starting in the next few years the temperature change caused by the ever-increasing human-caused greenhouse gas emissions will very likely result in a changed climate, acidified ocean, and sea level rise that are not consistent with civilization as we know it. One can hope for technological solutions or that the changes will be significantly more benign than projected, but a prudent planner would look at the middle-to-upper end of the forecasts and demand that our politicians take actions now to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

If you don't think extraordinary measures are required today, at which of the following points will you decide that it's time to take extraordinary measures?

If annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are still increasing in 2020

When the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration reaches 450ppm (likely by 2040)

When the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration reaches 500ppm (likely by 2065)

When the Earth's average temperature reaches 1.8 degrees F (1 degree C) above pre-industrial times

When the Earth's average temperature reaches 3.6 degrees F (2 degree C) above pre-industrial times

When the sea level rise since 1870 reaches 2 feet

When the first island nation is permanently evacuated due to sea level rise

When Miami is abandoned due to sea level rise (this century)

When scientists conclude that there is at least a 50% probability the sea levels will rise 15 feet by 2200

When the annual costs of world-wide natural disasters exceed \_\_\_\_ (currently \_\_\_\_)

When the annual costs of US natural disasters exceed \_\_\_\_ (currently \_\_\_\_)

When the annual costs of US forest fires exceed \_\_\_\_ (currently \_\_\_\_)

When climate scientists conclude that the (almost) complete melting of the Greenland ice sheet cannot be stopped

Etc.

Since almost all of these are very likely to happen in the near term (by which time it may likely be too late to avoid catastrophic climate change), why not demand action now?