

# Environmental Change-Makers

Westchester / Los Angeles Founded 2005



April 15, 2008

Mr. Herb Glasgow, Senior City Planner  
City of Los Angeles  
Los Angeles World Airports  
1 World Way, Room 218  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Re: Los Angeles International Airport Specific Plan Amendment Study  
Comments from Private Individuals and Organizations

Mr. Glasgow:

A “Master Plan” is, by definition, based on forward thinking. Any Amendment to such Plan should similarly be based on forward thinking. At this point in human history, we are on the cusp of dramatic societal transformation. Any realistic, forward thinking Plan must take into consideration both global warming and peak oil.

We acknowledge that the issue put before us is certain Proposed Amendments to the Specific Plan, which facilitates implementation of the Master Plan. However, significant changes to environmental science, legislation, and policy recommendations have occurred since the completion of the Master Plan EIR.

Changes to global warming science, updated policy recommendations for mitigation, legislation, and city Agreements have occurred since completion of the Master Plan EIR, including:

- IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), 2007.
- Hansen, et al, “Target Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>: Where Should Humanity Aim?” 2008.
- Union of Concerned Scientists, “Our Changing Climate: Assessing the Risks to California,” July 2006.
- California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Division 25.5, commencing with Section 38500, of the Health and Safety Code).
- U.S. Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement, signed by Los Angeles circa 2006.

Global warming is changing the climate of our planet. In 2007, a series of reports by the international body of scientists, the IPCC, established that, with 90% certainty, global warming is human-caused. Global warming is caused by our burning fossil fuels, including aircraft fuels, truck diesel, automobile gasoline, and fossil-based “alternative”

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 2 of 12

fuels like CNG. Any forward thinking master plan for a transportation hub like an airport must take its global warming impact into serious account.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has created reports which detail the climate change impacts coming to the state of California. Specific forecasts include an increase in heat wave days and heat-related deaths in major urban centers; an increase in days conducive to ozone formation for the Los Angeles area; increased risk of large wildfires; more critically dry years; and a substantial decrease in Sierra Nevada snowpack, the source of much of our water supply.

Union of Concerned Scientists studies also indicate that **WE HAVE A CHOICE**. If we switch to lower carbon activities as soon as possible, we stand a chance of minimizing the climate change impacts on our state, and on the planet as a whole. If, on the other hand, we choose to continue with “business as usual,” we will create catastrophic change to this planet, to California agriculture, and to the potential for long term human survival.

***Any responsible master plan amendment drafted at this time must make significant positive strides toward mitigating global warming.***

The NOP “Initial Study and Checklist,” Attachment A, Item III, promises “an assessment of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions (ghg) associated with construction and operation of the LAX SPAS alternatives.”

This assessment should reveal:

- the energy consumption and ghg emissions associated with the construction process itself, as an isolated figure;
- the energy consumption and ghg emissions associated with LAWA’s operational activities under the alternative scenarios;
- the increased total ghg emissions to the world by total LAX airport activities\* under the alternative scenarios;
- the ghg emissions associated with total LAX airport activities\*; its percentage of ghg emissions with respect to Los Angeles City’s total emissions; and its percentage of ghg emissions with respect to California total ghg emissions. In other words, how much of this state’s total ghg pollution problem is attributable to the presence of LAX and its combined activities?

Ghg measurements in the Draft EIR should be ghg emissions that are “real, permanent, quantifiable, and verifiable” as defined by California Health and Safety Code Section

**Environmental Change-Makers**

6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777  
www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 3 of 12

38562(d)(1). These ghg measurements should be stated in gross, prior to any offsets by “market-based compliance mechanisms” (Section 38505(k)).

\* Total LAX airport activities in the Draft EIR should include all emissions from the airport campus and aircraft using the airport: all parties including LAWA operations, participating airlines, contractors; airport leased facilities, airline facilities; aircraft emissions associated with approach, landing, taxiing, takeoff, climb out operations; gate and fueling operations; ground support vehicles (aircraft tugs, baggage tractors, cargo moving equipment, etc.); ground access vehicles (passenger cars, busses, vans, other service vehicles, etc.); cargo transport (light, medium and heavy duty trucks used for mail and cargo transport); military operations.

Scientists tell us that the greenhouse effect is cumulative. Carbon reductions created today have far more positive impact than carbon reductions created in the distant future. Our choice of action over the next decade will make the determination. We must begin dramatic changes in our societal habits *within the next ten years* in order to make a difference in climate change. That means we must start today.

Scientists tell us that in order to make a difference in global warming, we must achieve 70 to 80 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. Any master plan that covers the years between now and 2050 must include a phase-in of carbon reduction to achieve this goal. And that phase-in must place heavy reductions on the near end (prior to 2020).

“Potential mitigation measures” identified in the Draft EIR must be real greenhouse gas reductions, not just purchased “market-based compliance mechanisms.” While market-based compliance mechanisms like carbon credits are an interesting idea toward raising awareness, they do nothing to reduce the very real physical molecules being released into our upper atmosphere.

Aircraft emissions that take place at high altitude have even greater effect (radiative forcing) on greenhouse warming than molecules emitted at ground level. Air flight, particularly any “short hop” flight under 500 miles, tops the list of the most polluting, least fuel-efficient forms of travel.<sup>1</sup>

LAX is one of the 5 biggest airports in the world. The environmental effects of LAX’s extended activities far transcend the short little list in the March 2008 notice of availability letter, which included air quality, biological resources, hazards and hazardous materials, and more. LAX’s combined activities (air, ground, access, passenger, cargo, etc.) mean enormous additions to the entire planet’s global warming problem.

**Environmental Change-Makers**

6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777  
www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 4 of 12

The greenhouse gas emissions of LAX's combined activities impact not just Los Angeles voters, but *every person on the earth*, today and in future generations.

***Any LAX Master Plan that covers the years between now and 2020 must include SUBSTANTIAL and SIGNIFICANT real greenhouse emission reductions across all operations.***

The Draft EIR should reveal, with respect to ghg emissions that are “real, permanent, quantifiable, and verifiable” (as defined by California Health and Safety Code Section 38562(d)(1)):

- LAX targets and specific action steps to reduce global warming pollution at least 7% below 1990 levels by 2012;<sup>2</sup>
- LAX targets and specific action steps to reduce global warming pollution at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020;<sup>3</sup>
- LAX targets and specific action steps to reduce global warming pollution at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050;<sup>4</sup>
- How does the LAX Master Plan participate in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations below 350ppm by late this century?<sup>5</sup>
- How does the LAX Master Plan reflect the IPCC's “Underlying policy framework” for Transport Sector?<sup>6</sup>
- How does the LAX Master Plan comply with the California Global Warming Solutions Act? How does the LAX combined airport enterprise measure up to Health and Safety Code Section 38530(b)(1) (irrespective of any and all waivers LAX might have sought under Section 38562(b) or other sections)?
- How does the LAX Master Plan adhere to the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, Item C 1?<sup>7</sup>
- How do the Yellow Light Projects help the overall LAX enterprise to meet the above goals?

Each of the above should be stated with respect to

(a) LAWA's operational activities

**Environmental Change-Makers**

6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777  
www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 5 of 12

and also

(b) total LAX airport activities (as defined at page 3 of this letter). In other words, how is the combined airport enterprise and airline industry working to mitigate its total share of California's ghg pollution problem?

Fossil fuels are a non-renewable resource. The planet cannot make more very quickly, and at present we are using fossil fuel supplies at a mind-boggling rate. "Peak oil" is the term for the fact that we have exhausted the first half of our planet's supply of fossil fuels. Oil reserves are a closely held industry and political secret, but studies have shown that new discoveries of major oil reserves reached a maximum in the 1970s. New discoveries can not keep pace with our rate of using this nonrenewable resource. In short, we are currently delving into the second half of our oil supply. Demand for oil and its derivatives is only increasing. We will soon run out.

Yes, Richard Branson and Virgin recently tried to fly a plane "on biofuels." But the fuel mix in that plane included a very low percentage of biomass-derived fuel, and a very high percentage of fossil-derived fuel. In other words, that plane was still flying on fossil fuels. Biofuels are not a sustainable solution to our overuse of oil, because we haven't enough acreage on the planet to produce both food and fuel.<sup>8</sup> Other alternatives, such as hydrogen, are extremely experimental and will not be available in time to ease the shortage. We must accept the reality that the road ahead is inevitably one of decrease and "power down": decrease in passenger transportation, decrease in cargo hauling, decrease in ground transportation, decrease in air transport overall.

The term "Peak oil" is also used for the end of cheap oil. With \$4.00 a gallon gasoline and \$112 a barrel oil, it is obvious: we are already there. The second half of our oil supply is going to cost a lot more.

As a society, we have had a cavalier attitude about fossil fuels. Fossil fuels have been cheap, widely available, and they've allowed us to do wonderful things like travel and import lots of goods from very far away. But we are currently poised at the very end of this short-term fantastic blip in the course of human history. The twin crises of global warming and peak oil spell the end of the high-powered fossil fuel era.

The end of cheap oil is already curbing our appetite for excess. The revaluation of the dollar is adding its impact. Foreign imports and shipping cost more. Air cargo will soon decrease. People are now more cautious in their spending. The carefree days of world travel are ending.

**Environmental Change-Makers**

6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777  
www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 6 of 12

***Any amendment to a master plan for an airport must take into consideration the inevitable decrease of demand brought on by Peak Oil.***

Changes to peak oil science have occurred since completion of the Master Plan EIR, including the Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas scenarios (2006).<sup>9</sup>

Changes and updates to the price of fuel, and thus to the long-term viability of energy-intensive airport services, have occurred since the completion of the Master Plan EIR.

The Potential Amendments to the LAX Master Plan maintain an assumed capacity of 78.9 million annual passengers. The Draft EIR should reveal, with respect to airport demand:

- changes in demand for air transportation since Fall 2007 (when gasoline threatened \$3.00 per gallon);
- changes in demand for air transportation since Spring 2008 (when gasoline threatened \$4.00 per gallon);
- changes in demand for air transportation as fuel prices further increase (say, as gasoline threatens the \$5.00 and \$6.00 thresholds);
- a justification of using “practical capacity of 78.9 million annual passengers” for long-term decision making when the end of cheap oil and the revaluation of the dollar are considered in the projection.

Construction, in and of itself, is an activity which requires enormous earth resources. From the quantities of concrete and rock for runways, to the steel and glass for terminals, to the diesel and gasoline for trucks, tractors, cranes, and workmens’ commutes, building any modifications at LAX will produce significant greenhouse gas emissions, and use precious earth materials. It is up to us to assure that these resources are being *invested wisely*.

It is up to us to decide whether these resources are being spent for a fantasy future of paper projections, or to prepare us for the power-down future we will really experience.

“Power down,” means lifestyles using less power. That means less fossil fuels, less oil, less coal, less batteries, less fossil-derived electricity, less energy overall. Successfully powering down our citizenry will require reeducation. It will require reconfiguring our city layout to allow for more human-powered transportation. We will need our local undeveloped areas--such as the acres of LAX Northside and vacated areas of Manchester Square--to remain open for future uses like community gardens for small scale agriculture. Powering down will require bringing necessary services, such as localized power

**Environmental Change-Makers**

**6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777**  
**www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org**

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 7 of 12

generation, closer to the places where people live. Basic services like fire, police, and pumping water/sewage will all have to evolve.<sup>10</sup> This transformation will require *money, resources, and time to build the revised infrastructure.*

As with global warming, we have somewhat of a choice. If we start now we stand a chance of being prepared for the coming power-down lifestyle. If we continue with high-powered activities and “business as usual,” peak oil experts forecast severe hardship from shortages, infrastructure collapse, social upheaval, and civil unrest.

Forward thinking cities such as Portland, Oregon, are creating Peak Oil task forces. In March 2007, Portland’s task force issued a report which details the projected impacts on the city, its infrastructure, and its citizens.

Portland discovered they need to “prevent infrastructure investments that would not be prudent given fuel shortages and higher prices.” They need to “support land use patterns that reduce transportation needs.” They need to “reduce total oil and natural gas consumption by 50 percent over the next 25 years.” They need to “redesign the safety net and protect vulnerable and marginalized populations.”

What about Los Angeles? Without radical changes to city infrastructure and support systems, we are ill prepared to provide for the needs of our citizenry.

***Any major city expenditure at this point in time must prepare the city to better weather the effects of Peak Oil.***

The “Initial Study and Checklist,” Attachment A, Item XVIIc, promises that the “potential for the proposed project to result in significant adverse impacts on humans will be evaluated in the LAX SPAS EIR.” Changes and updates to our environmental agreements and our environmental setting have occurred since completion of the Master Plan EIR.

- The City of Portland Peak Oil Task Force found that they needed to “Engage business, government and community leaders to initiate planning and policy change.” The Draft EIR should examine whether the LAX Master Plan as a whole represents planning and policy change for energy and climate uncertainty.
- The Post Carbon Institute recommends that cities plan for fundamental changes and “make land use and transportation infrastructure decisions with 100-year timeframes.” The Draft EIR should examine how the LAX Master Plan as a whole fits into a 100-year viewpoint, and should include Peak Oil in this discussion.
- The City of Portland Peak Oil Task Force found that they needed to “prevent infrastructure investments that would not be prudent given fuel shortages and higher

**Environmental Change-Makers**

**6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777**  
**www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org**

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 8 of 12

prices.” The Draft EIR should explore whether infrastructure investment in the Yellow Light Projects is “prudent given fuel shortages and higher prices.”

▪ The Draft EIR should reveal how the LAX Master Plan of 2004 adheres to the U.S. Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement, with respect to each bullet point under Item C of that Agreement.

In summary, any Amendments made to LAX’s Master Plan must help orient the overall Plan toward the realities of our future. The proposed Amendments will be blatantly deficient if they do not address the following:

- fundamentally rethink our region’s transportation practices for an era of energy and climate uncertainty.
- provide radical targets and concrete action steps toward greenhouse gas neutrality of airport operations.
- require participating airlines and ground contractors to create and implement phase-in plans for carbon neutrality.
- provide for a substantial reduction of total oil and natural gas consumption (including electricity generation and water/sewage pumping).
- take into account the substantial decrease in airport demand and operations as the era of cheap oil comes to a close.
- preserve open land for future power-down uses, rather than seek to develop it for short-term fossil-intensive purposes.
- reallocate city resources away from “infrastructure that is not prudent given fuel shortages and higher prices,” toward infrastructure that will prepare our citizenry for energy and climate uncertainty.

“Present policies ... suggest that decision-makers do not appreciate the gravity of the situation,” writes NASA’s James Hansen. “We must begin to move now toward the era beyond fossil fuels. Continued growth of greenhouse gas emissions, for just another decade, practically eliminates the possibility of near-term return of atmospheric composition beneath the tipping level for catastrophic effects.”<sup>11</sup>

**Environmental Change-Makers**

6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777  
www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 9 of 12

In this day and age, it is unconscionable to craft a master plan for the next 10 years--or any amendments thereto--with plans for increased use of fossil fuels and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

It is unconscionable to apply city funds and resources toward building fancy terminals, bigger airport runways, and tower building developments, when we need those funds and resources for power-down infrastructure for our citizens' very real future.

The Portland Peak Oil Task Force called for engaging "business, government and community leaders to initiate planning and policy change." Here is our opportunity in Los Angeles. We can orient Los Angeles as a world leader in carbon cleanup, or stay the course as a world polluter.

Sincerely,

Joanne Poyourow

The Reverend Peter H. Rood, Jr.

Founders of The Environmental Change-Makers of Westchester

**Environmental Change-Makers**

**6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777**  
**www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org**

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

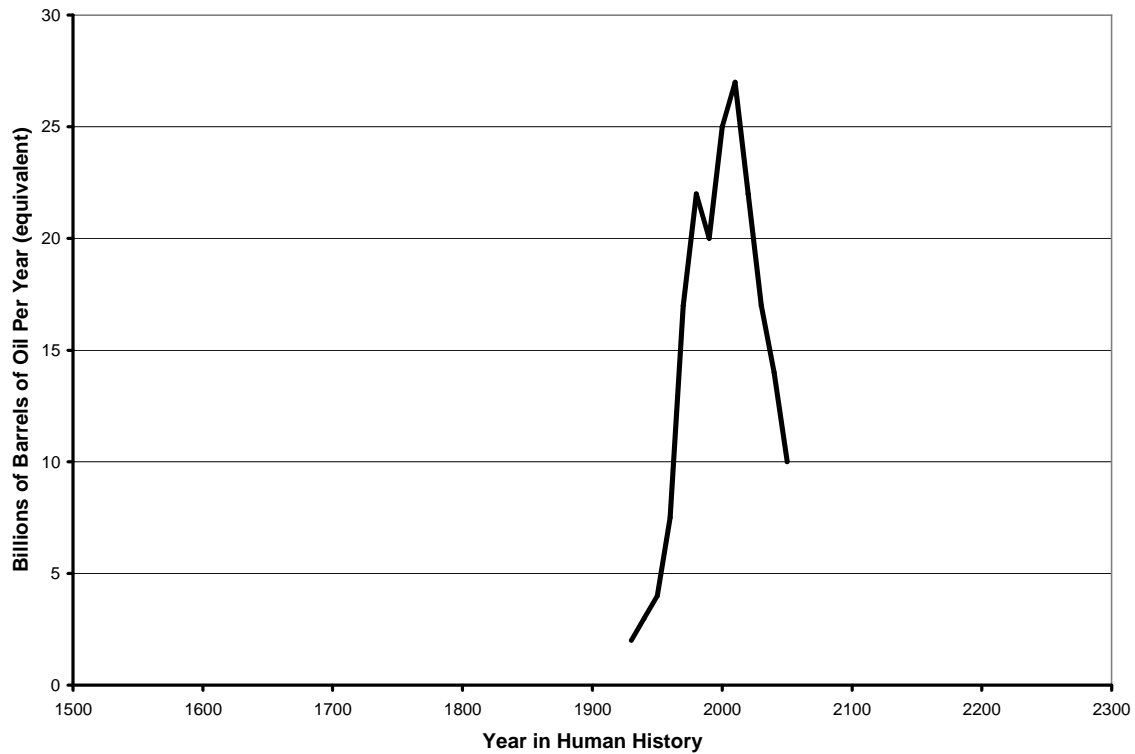
# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 10 of 12



The Brief Era of Oil<sup>12</sup>

# The Environmental Change-Makers

Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study

April 15, 2008

Page 11 of 12

The NOP page 1 states that the EIR will "identify potential mitigation measures." Potential energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions mitigation measures may be found in the full text of the following documents:

- City of Portland Peak Oil Task Force, "Descending the Oil Peak: Navigating the Transition from Oil and Natural Gas"
  - Executive Summary (enclosed)
  - Full report at [www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=ecije](http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=ecije)
- Union of Concerned Scientists, "Our Changing Climate: Assessing the Risks to California" (enclosed).
- "Peak Oil Primer," Energy Bulletin [www.energybulletin.net/primer.php](http://www.energybulletin.net/primer.php)
- "Oil Depletion Protocol," which has been adopted by the cities of San Francisco and Portland. <http://www.oildepletionprotocol.org/theprotocol>
- "Post Carbon Cities: Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty," from the Post Carbon Institute
  - Executive Summary (enclosed)
  - full report at <http://postcarboncities.net/guidebook>

Cc: Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa  
Councilmember Bill Rosendahl  
Assemblymember Curren Price  
Assemblymember Ted Lieu  
Representative Maxine Waters  
Congresswoman Jane Harman  
Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Los Angeles Times  
1 Sky  
350.org  
Sierra Club Legislative Office  
Union of Concerned Scientists West Coast Office

**Environmental Change-Makers**

**6700 West 83rd Street ♦ Los Angeles, CA 90045 ♦ (310) 670-4777**  
**www.EnviroChangeMakers.org ♦ info@EnviroChangeMakers.org**

(This document was printed on recycled paper)

# The Environmental Change-Makers

## Of Westchester / Los Angeles

LAX Specific Plan Amendment Study  
April 15, 2008  
Page 12 of 12

The Environmental Change-Makers are a group of community members based in the Westchester area of Los Angeles. We focus on the many positive solutions available for our environmental problems. Our monthly meetings draw environmentally-minded citizens from the greater Los Angeles area.

---

<sup>1</sup> Per AirportWatch.org.uk <http://www.aef.org.uk/downloads//Howdoesairtravelcompare.doc>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, Item A. <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/>

<sup>3</sup> 25% statistic is explained at <http://www.1sky.org/about/1sky-solutions>

<sup>4</sup> 80% statistic is explained at <http://stepitup2007.org/article.php?id=466>

<sup>5</sup> Hansen, J., Sato, M., Kharecha, P., Beerling, D., Masson-Delmotte, V., Pagani, M., Royer, D., Zachos, J., "Target Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>: Where Should Humanity Aim?" [www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TargetCO2\\_20080407.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TargetCO2_20080407.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), Working Group III Report, "Mitigation of Climate Change," November 2007, Table SPM-4. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, 2005. <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/>

<sup>8</sup> "UN Expert Calls Biofuel 'A Crime Against Humanity'", Associated Press, 27 October 2007, <http://www.livescience.com/environment/071027-ap-biofuel-crime.html>

<sup>9</sup> summarized at "Peak Oil Primer," from Energy Bulletin <http://www.energybulletin.net/primer.php>

<sup>10</sup> Source: the Transition movement, documented in works such as Rob Hopkins' *The Transition Handbook: From oil dependency to local resilience*, Green Books, Ltd, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Hansen, J., Sato, M., Kharecha, P., Beerling, D., Masson-Delmotte, V., Pagani, M., Royer, D., Zachos, J., "Target Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>: Where Should Humanity Aim?" [www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TargetCO2\\_20080407.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TargetCO2_20080407.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Source data for 1930 to 2050 is from Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas, "Oil and Gas Production Profiles, ASPO 2006 Scenario," <http://www.energybulletin.net/primer.php>