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Image from [NASA](#) Deep Space Climate Observatory

## **Science - Missing from the U.S. Presidential Election**

**Steve Gill**

As I watched the most disgusting presidential election I can remember I am in despair. The Earth is facing serious (understated) environmental challenges and the presidential election evolved into name calling and personal attacks unworthy of publication. One man is mostly responsible for this, the narcissistic demagogue Donald Trump who is unfit for any leadership role but who is now President-Elect.

Look at our world, it is an amazing story of 4.5 billion years of evolution. In front of the 4.5 billion years of planetary evolution is another 9.2 billion years of evolution of the universe starting with the Big Bang. The events which have taken place during the 13.7 billion years of universe and planetary evolution to create Earth, a planet sustaining a self-regulating environment supporting life, are almost beyond comprehension. In fact, we cannot find another planet like Earth within our limited means to look.

Today, Earth is faced with so many environmentally critical issues that its ability to sustain the mechanisms supporting higher forms of life are in danger. Yet, science is being politicized for

the benefit of profit. I cannot possibly list all the threats here but there are a couple of examples that stand out.

Human generated CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is causing heating of Earth and [acidification of the oceans](#). This results in climate change and loss of land and marine biodiversity. As CO<sub>2</sub> is absorbed by the ocean the ocean becomes more acidic. This change in pH impairs marine reproduction and growth affecting the delicate balance of marine life. As a result, the interdependent mechanisms that supply oxygen and life support for the earth are damaged.

[Overfishing of the oceans is rampant and will lead to the loss of a major food source for an exponentially growing population](#). There is no effective mechanism to prevent this due to the limitations of imposing international marine law and the short sighted economics of maximizing profits.

[Every day many species go extinct. Extinction is a natural phenomenon; it occurs at a natural "background" rate of about one to five species per year. Scientists estimate we're now losing species at 1,000 to 10,000 times the background rate, with literally dozens going extinct every day.](#)

It concerns me that every day I see couples having children expecting them to have a future, yet environmental concerns are not among the top rated topics of concern. In fact, there is an entire political party whose job it seems is to discredit science. Science is not politics and I believe is poorly understood. Science is based in provable facts. It takes agreement among a large majority of scientists to validate statements, theories and facts. Scientists are skeptics by nature and convincing a large majority takes exceptional proof.

[A survey of peer-reviewed studies found 97% of climate scientists agreed that global temperatures have increased during the past 100 years](#); in their research [Farnsworth and Lichter](#) found among scientists in the earth, space, atmospheric, oceanic or hydrological sciences, 84% say they personally believe human-induced warming is occurring, and 74% agree that "currently available scientific evidence" substantiates its occurrence.

Earth's population and our level of consumption are still growing exponentially. There are seven billion people on the planet and one billion automobiles. [The current world population of 7.3 billion is expected to reach 8.5 billion by 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100, according to a new UN DESA report, "World Population Prospects."](#)

How can we keep up? We cannot but we must do all we can to save our rare and fantastic planet. It's time to accept science. Doing things such as claiming the science of climate change is a hoax propagated by the Chinese is ignorant beyond comprehension and dangerous. Disbanding the EPA and opening all federal lands to drilling is grossly irresponsible.

The United States is only a part of the world and we can only do so much. However, we must lead! We are one of the largest polluters and consumers of resources; it is our responsibility to lead. Funds to save the planet are more important than new nuclear weapons and environmental degradation is the greatest threat we face. Yet, funding for environmental agencies is minuscule.

Science is based on provable fact and observations. Political statements to the contrary are based on hot air and we all know hot air rises and disappears. Please support more science in politics and support politicians that believe in science and encourage them to do all they can to save the planet. Nothing is more important.

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