

Supreme Court Restricts EPA, Intensifying Climate Crisis - Experts Urge Ecosystem Restoration to Cool the Planet

The Supreme Court's new restrictions on EPA to limit power plant emissions has elevated an urgent call for ecorestoration to cool communities and the planet.

CAMBRIDGE, MA, UNITED STATES, July 5, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Last week, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) curtailed the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. This decision is a significant setback for communities working hard at the local, state, and federal levels to reduce emissions and reach agreed upon targets by 2030 and beyond. It jeopardizes efforts to reduce planetary warming that is already harming people, wildlife, and the earth and denies the right to a clean and healthy environment.

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In just two weeks, the court has acted to erase reproductive health freedom, flood our public places with more deadly weapons and, now, to let our planet burn.”

Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House

While environmental groups that focus on federal policy strategize on how to rectify the impacts of this decision,

community groups and local governments can include and scale strategies that restore ecosystems and biodiversity to cool the climate locally and globally, in addition to local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is particularly urgent in light of the recent SCOTUS decision.

“Our land and water management practices are contributing to and even causing local regions and the planet to get warmer,” says Jim Laurie, restoration ecologist at Biodiversity for a Livable Climate. “When we destroy forests, wetlands, grasslands, soil and eliminate wild animals from the land, we destroy the earth's ability to cool itself,” explains Laurie.

Nature's ecosystems have an inherent mechanism for cooling the surface of the earth through the small water cycles. Water moves from the soil through the plants and into the atmosphere as water vapor through evapotranspiration. The water vapor carries the heat into the atmosphere where it condenses into clouds and releases the heat. This process cools the surface of the earth. The clouds release the water as rain and snow which are absorbed into the soil and the water cycle begins again.

Plants effectively cool an area through their role in the water cycle. When sunlight strikes bare ground, asphalt or buildings, its energy is absorbed and then reradiated as heat. But when vegetation is abundant, plants use the sun's energy to move water via roots, trunks, stems, and out through leaves as water vapor without raising the temperature.

"The impressive potential of evapotranspiration in plants to cool an area is evident," states Adam Sacks, executive director of Biodiversity for a Livable Climate. "It's much hotter standing on asphalt or lying on a sandy beach than under a tree or in a forest. It is the forests, grasslands, wetlands, and healthy soils that keep the surface of the earth cool."

Logging and clear-cutting forests, modifying wetlands, degrading soil so it no longer absorbs and holds rainwater - these practices destroy the earth's ability to cool itself. Hunting wild animals to near extinction disrupts nature's strategy for replenishing the soil with nutrients and microbes from animal wastes.

Making matters worse, the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers on lawns, farms, and in forestry management programs further destroys the soil, including its vital network of fungi and microbes, as well as all other forms of life and biodiversity vital for ecosystems to thrive at their optimal level, maximizing their cooling potential.

To address such damage there are many remedies. For example, convert lawns to native plants, apply compost to the soil, implement cover cropping, capture rainwater in swales on the land where it falls, cover all bare ground with vegetation, plant mini-forests in parks, and create habitats for the return of pollinators and other varieties of insects and wildlife. Furthermore, using microbes and nutrients instead of chemicals to fertilize the soil has many benefits, including reducing toxicity and improving soil and human health.

The good news is that these strategies work not only to cool communities and lands worldwide, but also to minimize or even reverse other impacts of climate change, including drought, flooding, and wildfires. Throughout the world these solutions are already being implemented, with impressive results. For a couple of examples, see [Ecosystem Restoration Camps](#) working on the ground to restore over seven million acres of land throughout the world by 2030; and [Regenerate Earth](#), which promotes nature's rich potential to cool and restore the planet.

Nature's solutions to global warming are available to everyone, everywhere. While the Supreme Court is out of step with the work of communities throughout the country to reduce emissions, initiatives to restore ecosystems can be scaled quickly to cool the planet.

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate is a non-profit working to change the mainstream climate conversation by demonstrating the power of ecosystem restoration to cool the earth. Videos are available including an [Introductory Playlist](#) on the Power of Eco-Restoration. Inquiries welcome.

Adam Sacks

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

+1 781-674-2339

[email us here](#)

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