

The Dawn of Planetary Patriotism: A Citizens' Call to Climate Defense
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Abstract

Do you know how to survive on a transformed planet? That's how scientists describe the Earth in coming decades unless we take immediate action to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Our government, however, is ignoring climate crisis—and putting the entire planet in peril. Elected leaders and agency officials view protection of the atmosphere as a political choice. Americans have to change that. This book, *The Dawn of Planetary Patriotism*, invokes the ancient legal principle known as the public trust doctrine to define the duty and responsibility of government to protect natural resources for present and future generations. Under venerable decisions expressed by courts throughout history, sovereigns hold natural resources in trust for present and future generations. Citizens are the beneficiaries of Nature's Trust, which includes the atmosphere and other vital resources. Just as private trustees don't have discretion to sit back and allow damage to the financial accounts they manage, neither do governmental officials have discretion to bankrupt the natural account that supports our very survival and prosperity. In short, protecting our atmosphere against catastrophic climate change is not a political choice, but rather a fiduciary obligation. Government's failure to protect our national atmospheric property is akin to sitting idle during an attack on American soil. The urgent task is to mobilize citizen beneficiaries so that they will hold their trustees accountable at all levels of government. This book explains how American citizens can invoke their trust to mobilize a global atmospheric defense effort—and in doing so, inspire planetary patriotism worldwide.