

## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

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### **Another important message for our teachers**

I wish to commend Russ Babcock for his letter entitled, "A message to teachers of our children" (Trail Times, 6 May 2021). I agree that carbon dioxide (aka "CO<sub>2</sub>", "carbon emission") plays an undetectable role in moderating the temperature of the Earth.

However, CO<sub>2</sub> plays a vital role in greening the planet! It is as important as oxygen, water, and sunlight in sustaining life for, without it, the Earth would be a dead planet devoid of all plant and animal life.

Through the process of photosynthesis, plants use CO<sub>2</sub> as plant food and emit oxygen as a waste product. Animals breathe in oxygen and exhale air containing 4 to 5% CO<sub>2</sub>, thereby enriching our CO<sub>2</sub>-starved atmosphere (0.04%).

Historically, photosynthesis was responsible for raising the oxygen content of the atmosphere to a level necessary to support animal life. This symbiotic relationship between CO<sub>2</sub> and all life is truly one of Mother Nature's elegant marvels known as "the carbon cycle".

It is far more than a coincidence that carbon is the main building block of all life on earth. It's also the reason that the carbon cycle is of absolute necessity to all life on earth.

Regretfully, I must report that the planet's store of this life-giving gas is being gradually depleted by natural processes to form sedimentary rocks. Since the dinosaur era, atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> has declined from about 0.25% to a current level of 0.04%, which is very close to the survival threshold for vegetation (0.015%).

Consequently, it is important that we cherish carbon dioxide and recognize the importance of allowing the carbon locked in coal, oil, & natural gas to return to its origins; that is, the atmosphere as CO<sub>2</sub>. Because 98% of our CO<sub>2</sub> is stored in the oceans, such enrichment will be a meagre 0.01%; that is, from 0.04% to 0.05% CO<sub>2</sub>.

Nevertheless, the good news is that these carbon emissions will be extending the planet's green period by millions of years.

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