

What Does the Chamber Think About Climate Change?

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Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce CEO David May and chamber board member Ethan Gannett from Hewlett Packard Enterprises have written pieces expressing opposition to a resolution that calls upon the city of Fort Collins to adopt the goal of achieving 100 percent renewable electricity by 2030.

To support their position, they cite a paper from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), the nation's premier science journal, which they believe demonstrates the infeasibility and unaffordability of achieving 100 percent renewable electricity. The article they cite critiques the work of Mark Jacobsen and co-authors from Stanford University, who propose that the entire U.S. energy sector can run on renewables by 2050-2055.

Unfortunately, in making this recommendation, May and Gannett seem to have conflated the terms "electricity" and "energy." Those aren't the same thing. By "energy sector" Jacobsen et al mean electricity, transportation, heating, cooling, industrial uses, etc. Everything. All of it. For the entire country.

The PNAS article cited by the chamber has nothing to do with the feasibility or affordability of the Fort Collins achieving 100 percent renewable electricity by 2030 while continuing to provide a reliable service to its business and residential customers.

Perhaps in its next opinion piece, representatives of the chamber could instead answer this question: What impacts do they believe climate change will have on our regional economy, our quality of life, and at what cost?

Clarifying the chamber's position on climate change would be more useful than citing journal articles irrelevant to local conditions.

Kevin Henry sits on the Steering Committee of the Fort Collins Sustainability Group (<http://fcsg.fccan.org>), which is a member of Fort Collins Partners for Clean Energy.