

While I appreciate your work in keeping the spotlight on the global heatwave (World on fire: the rise of the 50C city, G2, 13 August), I'm scared by the emphasis of your correspondents and leader writers on "adapting" to climate change (Letters, 11 July). You don't "adapt" to a raging fire, do you? You have to stop it. And the first thing you need to do is stop pouring fuel on it.

Leading scientists worldwide now agree that the main cause of the climate crisis is the burning of fossil fuels, and leading economists agree that the solution is to price fossil fuels out of the market. Until that happens, we will be paying - with our health, our lives and our children's future.

Why don't we hear more about this? Two main reasons, perhaps: our economy is largely run on fossil fuels, and those on low incomes suffer most from higher energy prices. Yet there's a solution.

It's over six years since the leading scientist Dr James Hansen - in a historic TED talk on climate change, which laid out how his warnings had been suppressed in his 30-year tenure as director of Nasa's Goddard Institute - memorably declared that "the greatest tragedy is that it would be so easy to stop it".

What is needed, he said, is a substantial, rising fee on fossil fuels, imposed at the source (oil well, coal pit, port of entry) - with the revenue not kept by the government but returned to every citizen in equal shares.

This would not only ease the transition for those on low incomes but promote every kind of green behaviour, as well as incentivising the development and deployment of alternative energy sources. It's an elegant solution - easy to implement, transparent in its operation, immediate in its effect, and fair.

We should spread the word that there is a solution. Telling our friends and writing our MPs are actions we can take today. And we may still have a tomorrow.

Concerns about 50C cities are timely given that gas escapes from previously frozen deposits could easily outweigh reductions from human activities, so overall levels will still rise.

Geoengineering like solar radiation management is risky but possible, yet suppose such measures were rejected or ineffective - what would happen in hotter countries, especially to the less well-off? The question of who will take climate change refugees needs urgent discussion, especially given attitudes in Europe, the US, Australia and some other wealthy countries.

Source: theguardian