

With a new decade upon us, clean energy is as simple as following the science

It's hard to believe, but a new decade is upon us. (We wrote the decade and nuclear power in our post earlier this year celebrating 10 years of blogging.) As the decade comes to a close, 2019 seems to be the year that climate change is finally being taken seriously, all led by a very unlikely champion. After all, who would have thought that a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Sweden would become not only a voice for a new generation, but a global leader in speaking truth to power on the importance of taking action to address climate change?

This is a young woman who has taken a stand. Starting her journey as a single protester sitting in front of the Swedish parliament less than two years ago, she has now met with world leaders and inspired the largest climate strike in history. She acknowledges that as a 16-year-old girl, she does not have the answers, and as such, does not advocate for any one solution, nor claim to be smarter than anyone else. Her message is simple – this a climate crisis – and today's adults are not taking it seriously enough. Her recommendation to those older than her who do have the power, is to please do something and when choosing what to do, follow the science.

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PERSON *of the* YEAR

TIME

**GRETA
THUNBERG**

—
THE POWER
OF YOUTH



time.com

Time Person of the year

We have also been seeing one of the other less positive developments in the world over the last decade, trolling and personally attacking those we disagree with. In the case of

Greta Thunberg, the vitriol has been vicious and relentless. From world leaders such as Donald Trump who recently said she needed to work on her “anger management problem” to Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro who called her a brat, to countless others whose attacks are so vicious that we wouldn’t repeat them. Her ability to respond with grace and humour when confronted with these attacks shows the strength of a new generation that cannot easily be bullied by those older than them.

When it comes to energy, criticism is nothing new for those of us in the nuclear industry. Recent polling has suggested that the younger generations are open to hearing more about nuclear power as it can be a part of the solution to the existential threat of their generation. But once again, there is conflict. On the one hand, there are those that believe nuclear is good. It is low carbon, nonpolluting, economic and provides an abundance of reliable energy to benefit all of us. Then there are those that believe that nuclear is dangerous. That it pollutes with dangerous waste products and is just the next accident away from destroying the world. These people believe that no benefits are worth taking such a risk. Our challenge in the new decade is to resolve this conflict with straight forward messaging. After all, the science is clear.

The reality is that nuclear power has been the largest contributor to carbon avoidance of any other technology in advanced countries and is a close second to hydro when considering the world as a whole. It has proven safe, having the best safety record of any form of energy generation. 2019 was the year this message started to resonate. From the important IEA report issued at the Clean Energy Ministerial meeting in Canada in June, to governments accepting nuclear as a clean energy source and undertaking the NICE (Nuclear Innovation: Clean Energy Future) initiative, to the recent MOU signed here in Canada between the Premiers of Saskatchewan,

Ontario and New Brunswick, to pursue and commercialize Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), the tide is turning.

It would be easy to leave this decade dismayed and worried about the future. It is a time when anything we disagree with is fake news and some say the very basic values of our liberal democracy are at risk. But we choose to enter the next decade full of hope. Yes, we have many challenges, one of them to protect the planet for future generations; while we want everyone—including the world's poorest—to have access to cheap, reliable energy. And yes, there are many who try to divide us; or we can listen to a new generation that are calling for us all to work together for the good of the planet with a compelling simple message – “follow the science”.

Once again, thank you for reading our blog. Wishing you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2020!