

it's gettin' **HOT** in here!

DOOMSDAY CLOCK

The Doomsday Clock has been featured on every cover of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, an academic magazine, since 1947. The Doomsday clock was originally created to measure humanity's proximity to nuclear war, but has since expanded to consider factors such as energy, politics and climate sciences. The Doomsday Clock was set at 17 minutes from midnight in 1991, after the Cold War, but has steadily gone down since. This year, the clock was set at 89 seconds from midnight, the closest humanity's ever been to a potential apocalypse. Scientists cited multiple reasons for the clock having moved closer: 2024 was the hottest year on record, the global temperature has risen by about two degrees Fahrenheit since the 20th century and President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Accord. Another pressing factor is war, especially with the use of drones and artificial intelligence in militaries across the world. In addition, the spread of Avian influenza could spell disaster mirroring the COVID-19 pandemic and test humanity's resilience and patience for potential quarantine once again. However, former Colombian president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Juan Manuel Santos said that the clock is reversible. In fact, he said there is a chance that the hands of the clock will be turned back next year, but only if world leaders take progressive steps towards a peaceful future. Although the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists only offers vague solutions, they generally urge people to be optimistic.

HOW TO HELP

Although the threat of climate change can seem hopeless, there are ways to help.

The district has already built charging stations at the San Mateo High School bus parking lot. Some electric buses are already in rotation. Additionally, Aragon is planning to build more solar panels.

"Our roofs already have solar panels," said Greg Moretti, a member of the district sustainability committee and science teacher. "[This] summer, they're going to put solar panels on the student parking lot, [kind] of like at San Mateo High School."

Aragon is also addressing the issue of plastic by participating in a district-wide petition to ban the sale of single-use plastic bottles on campus. Individual students can also help, like by joining local organizations.

"I [volunteer] at this local nonprofit called Peninsula Precious Plastics," said Sophomore Brandon Lin. "They recycle plastic and process it into useful items."

Clubs at school like the One World Club educate about climate issues.

"[We have] posters about sorting trash [and] pass out reusable bottles [and utensils] in center court," said Lauren Tazbaz, a senior and president of One World Club.

Students can now make use of the new tri-color trash bins around the center court to recycle and compost conveniently and help the environment.

"Food scraps that go in the trash end up at the Ox Mountain landfill," Moretti said. "They get buried and decompose, [producing] methane, [which is] 25 times more potent [than] carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas."

Students can reduce the amount of greenhouse gases they emit by walking, biking, carpooling or using public transportation to get to school or travel.

GOVERNMENT

The election this past November was a pivotal one for the future of American climate policy.

In general, the Trump administration plans to deprioritize environmental concerns in favor of economic interests by increasing fossil fuel production, ending former president Joe Biden's environmental protections, slowing climate research and much more. Trump has used the slogan "drill, baby, drill!" many times, including during his campaign and in his inaugural speech, to express his fervent support of drilling for fossil fuels.

Considering the current conservative-dominated national government, climate policy seems to be in jeopardy with little support. Elon Musk, Tesla founder and Trump's senior advisor, was once a staunch advocate of climate action but has recently adopted a less urgent stance on it — the Economist's analysis of Musk's tweets found that climate change went from his most talked-about political issue to his least from 2019 to 2024, being replaced by immigration and free speech.

Trump himself is known for his skepticism on the causes and existence of climate change, calling it a "hoax" or "scam" on several occasions and joked in a 2024 "Fox & Friends" interview that rising sea levels meant nothing but more beachfront property.

Most members of Trump's cabinet have expressed similar views — some outright deny the existence of climate change, some downplay its severity, some see it as a political ploy — very few of them see it as a real threat.

MARS

According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Mars is one of the only planets where life may have existed. As NASA explores different technologies to allow astronauts to eventually live and work on Mars by the 2030s, the effects of climate change on Earth pose a pressing reason for regular civilians to migrate to Mars in the long term. However, traveling to Mars presents a challenge as it is between 33 million to 249 million miles from Earth. Additionally, temperatures on Mars can range from -284 degrees to 86 degrees Fahrenheit, gravity on Mars is 38% of Earth's and 96% of the atmosphere is made up of carbon dioxide. Currently, NASA is developing ways to produce oxygen from the Martian atmosphere, initiate plant growth on space stations and create life systems that can recycle food, air and water. SpaceX's Starship spacecraft, a two-stage fully reusable launch vehicle, also presents a reusable transportation system designed to carry both crew and cargo to Mars.

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