



Written by [James Murphy](#) on March 4, 2021

Study Claims World Needs Equivalent of Global COVID Lockdown Every Other Year to Meet Paris Climate Goals

The good news from 2020? Global carbon-dioxide emissions were down approximately seven percent over 2019, largely because of government lockdowns put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. The bad news? Similar cuts in emissions will be needed throughout the 2020s in order to meet the goal of the Paris Climate agreement to keep the world from warming more than the 1.5-2.0° C.

At least that's the assertion from a [study](#) published in *Nature Climate Change* on Wednesday.



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According to the study's lead author, Corinne Le Quere of the University of East Anglia, it's far past time for the governments of the world to put the type of effort into carbon-dioxide mitigation that they put into last year's effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. In fact, Le Quere believes that a reduction in CO2 levels similar to the 2020 reduction will be required once every two years in order to get on target for the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. However, the study's authors do not believe that lockdowns are the way to do it.

"We need a cut in emissions of about the size of the fall [from the lockdowns] every two years, but by completely different methods," Le Quere told *The Guardian*.

Instead of lockdowns, the study's authors would rather see a quick switch to so-called renewable energies such as wind and solar, improving energy efficiency of homes and businesses on a grand scale, and creating an electric-vehicle charging infrastructure.

Climate change, the study's authors believe, can no longer be treated as a side issue. Instead, all governments must base their entire economies and every decision they make subservient to the issue of climate change.

"We have failed to understand in the past that we can't have tackling climate change as a side issue. It can't be about one law or one policy, it has to be put at the heart of all policy," La Quere said. "Every strategy and every plan from every government must be consistent with tackling climate change."

The study's authors believe that the 2020 drop in global carbon-dioxide emissions that coincided with the pandemic will do little to affect long-term climate goals. They also fear a quick rebound of emissions unless all countries rapidly reduce the use of fossil fuels.

From the study: "Although the measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic will reduce emissions by about 7 percent in 2020, they will not, on their own, cause lasting decreases in emissions because these temporary measures have little impact on the fossil fuel based infrastructure that sustains the world economy."

This is because people want to get back to living their lives. Fossil fuels are efficient and work well as



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opposed to unreliable sources of power such as wind and solar, and we'll soon fall back into "bad" habits such as driving our vehicles and heating our homes.

"Emissions were lower in 2020 as fossil fuel infrastructure was less used," said Glen Peters of the CICERO Center for International Research, another of the study's co-authors. "When fossil fuel infrastructure is put into use again, there is risk of a big rebound in emissions in 2021, as was seen in the wake of the global financial crisis in 2009."

But even if we stopped using fossil fuels immediately, went back to living a pre-industrial lifestyle, and met every goal in the Paris Climate agreement, many fear that it will still not be enough to stop climate change from coming.

Currently, according to the [United Nations](#), the nationally determined contributions to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions as laid out in the Paris agreement are woefully inadequate to meet the goal of limiting warming to 1.5-2.0°C. Emissions, the UN report claims, must drop 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, "in order to be consistent with global emission pathways." The current emission goals, as chosen by each signatory of the Paris Agreement, will only lead to a less than one percent decline by 2030.

So it seems that lockdowns or not, we're nowhere near reaching the goals established by the Paris Climate Agreement. At this point, perhaps only some form of [vast Global Reset](#) will get us to where we need to be in terms of climate change.

And, of course, that's the message that a study such as this is intended to send. No matter what we do in terms of carbon-dioxide mitigation, it won't be enough.



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