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In the book *Collapse*, Professor Jared Diamond asks, why do societies destroy themselves through disastrous decisions, even after they perceive the problem? Why, for example, did the denizens of Easter Island keep cutting down trees when they could not reforest? Diamond offers a series of answers that focus on the "tragedy of the commons" and the short-sightedness of leaders mired in self-interest and inaction.

Today, only about half of Americans believe that climate change is human-induced, and one of the two major political parties removed reference to the issue in its party platform. Scientists, as we know, overwhelmingly believe that climate change is real, happening now, and the result of human activities. When we reached this level of scientific consensus establishing that smoking causes cancer and HIV causes AIDS, the public and the media accepted those findings even though there was some amount of dissent. With climate change, the deniers have been so effective that until President Obama's recent speech, discussion of the science has been pretty much absent from public discourse for the past few years. So, how do we change that?

On Earth Day this year, Jerry Brown reminded people of the 1992 Statement of Scientists sponsored by the Union of Concerned Scientists, which began, "[h]uman beings and the natural world are on a collision course." The Governor then asked UC Berkeley Professor Anthony Barnosky and others to draft a 2013 version of a Statement of Scientists. The new statement , now signed by thousands, is no rosier than its predecessor: "Earth is rapidly approaching a tipping point. Human impacts are causing alarming levels of harm to our planet," but it also identifies solutions and actions.

Now, Governor Brown is bringing the scientific consensus into the political discourse. He is providing copies of the new statement to political and business leaders. He had it translated into Chinese and handed it personally to the President of China, Xi Jinping. The Governor is asking political and business leaders three questions about the statement: Do you agree with it? If not, why not? If you do, what are you doing about it?

Will this change the dialogue or move us beyond denier arguments? We'll see. It is

just one part of California’s effort to change the discussion, the perception, and the course of inaction.  In the next blog, I will talk about one game-changer in progress: electrification of transportation.