

ADAPTATION

Bill Gates: We will overshoot 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming, nuclear can be ‘super safe’ and fake meat will eventually be ‘very good’

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Catherine Clifford
@IN/CATCLIFFORD/
@CATCLIFFORD

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KEY POINTS

The world will not be able to avoid overshooting the goal established in the 2015 Paris Climate Accord to limit global warming to, ideally, 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-Industrial levels, Bill Gates told Reddit users on Wednesday.

While it’s “great” if people want to be vegan, Gates doesn’t think most people will do that and thinks that alternative meat products will “eventually” be “very good.”

Individuals who want to contribute to climate change mitigation can do things like vote, buy an electric car and stay optimistic.



The world will not be able to avoid overshooting the goal established in the [2015 Paris Climate Accord](#) to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-Industrial levels, according to [Bill Gates](#).

The billionaire philanthropist and [Microsoft](#) co-founder [answered questions from Reddit users](#) on Wednesday and a handful of the questions revolved around climate change. Gates made his fortune launching the software company Microsoft, but he has since launched the nuclear innovation company TerraPower and an investment firm, [Breakthrough Energy](#), to back various climate change innovations, and has written a book about climate change, [How to Avoid a Climate Disaster](#).

“The pace of innovation is really picking up even though we won’t make the current timelines or avoid going over 1.5,” Gates wrote in response to a question about how well the world is responding to climate change.

Gates is hardly alone in his view. A report out at the end of October from the United Nations Environment Program found [“no credible pathway to 1.5° Celsius in place.”](#)

Gates also said bedraggled climate mitigation efforts will “slow down the progress we make on improving the human condition.” He pointed out that in some parts of the world more than 10% of kids die before the age of five and more than 30% don’t have enough to eat.

Despite Gates’ dour outlook, he also maintains some amount of optimism: “I still believe we can avoid a terrible outcome,” he said.



VIDEO 10:37

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The advanced nuclear reactors TerraPower are building use liquid sodium as the coolant and uranium as a fuel source.

“We are making excellent progress,” Gates said, while also acknowledging that the [Ukraine war has thrown a wrench in TerraPower’s plans](#) because the reactors planned to operate with fuel coming from Russia and that relationship is no longer viable.

TerraPower’s first plant is slated for Wyoming and due to be online by 2030, Gates said. “This can make a huge contribution to climate challenges since it will be low cost and super safe,” Gates wrote.

Where making electricity is responsible for 27% of emissions, growing things like plants and animals is responsible for 19% of emissions, according to a [breakdown Gates provided in his own climate book](#).

Gates has backed several companies working to make meatless meat products, including [Beyond Meat](#) and [Impossible Foods](#), he told Reddit users. And he’s also backed Memphis Meats (which has since rebranded under the name [Upside Foods](#)), Gates said, and which takes cells from an actual animals and grows the products in laboratory environments.

“I think eventually these products will be very good even though their share is small today,” Gates told Reddit. It’s important to innovate alternative ways to produce meat alternatives and climate conscious ways because, “for people who want to go Vegan that is great but I don’t think most people will do that,” Gates said.

Beyond diet, Gates generally supports the thesis that creating cost-effective clean-energy alternatives is the best way to fight climate change. “The key on climate is making the clean products as cheap as the dirty products in every area of emission — planes, concrete, meat etc,” Gates said on Reddit. “This is the only way we can ask all the countries in the world to change. If it costs a lot extra we won’t succeed.”

While innovation is the primary tool humans have to address climate change, according to Gates, everyone can contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change, he said.

“You are a voter, a consumer, a giver and a worker. In every one of those roles you can help,” Gates wrote.

Buying an electric car is something individuals can do, as are options to pay “a bit extra” to offset emissions generated when you travel, which Gates does for all of his emissions for himself and his family.



“We need support on climate from both parties in the US and in all countries,” Gates said. Also, “staying hopeful is a good thing!”



VIDEO 21:22

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