

# Technology changing the climate debate

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This year could well go down in history as the moment when technology transformed the debate about climate change.

Instead of an argument about "the science" indicating "anthropogenic global warming," the really intractable disagreement concerns the policy - what, if anything, our public officials should require of us as a result of their interpretation of the science.

While Americans have argued over the policy, worsening an already unimaginative and stagnant political climate, our best technologists have begun to lay the groundwork for [scientific advancements](#) that can upend stale debates about capping emissions and the like.

For years, the problem with [solar power](#) was straightforward: Our technology could not absorb, or store, enough energy from the sun. Now, however, thanks to the likes of Elon Musk, those days are all but over.

Together, through Tesla and a separate company called SolarCity, Musk and his cousin Lyndon Rive have achieved advancements in solar cells and battery storage sufficient to attract the attention of some of America's biggest companies. Wal-Mart wants to use their technology to power its huge stores, and Apple wants to use it to go completely "clean" in its energy use.

But wait, there's more. Thanks to technology, superficially outlandish ideas that could revolutionize climate policy are now headed from science fiction to science fact. Musk's "hyperloop" idea for ultrafast

mass transit is now in the hands of a crack team of experts who are taking their company public this year.

Elsewhere, the scientists our government cares about most have broached the idea of tweaking our climate the way Google's Nest thermostat keeps a handle on your Heating, Venting and Air Conditioning. In a study sponsored by the CIA, NASA and the Department of Energy, the National Academy of Sciences has called for experiments in geoengineering - until now, seen as a kooky lark.

Officeholders and officials should be on notice: In light of these developments, the climate policy debate of the rapidly approaching future isn't about how we need to live, but how we want to live.

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