



A WORLD FOREVER CHANGED

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A crisis on the scale of COVID-19 permeates all aspects of society, for better or worse. We asked 12 Hamilton alumni and professors to share their predictions for what lies ahead.

Environment

Dan Becker '77, director of the Safe Climate Transport Campaign at the Center for Biological Diversity

COVID-19 is changing our environment and peoples' attitudes toward it. We've learned that air pollution worsens the virus' death rate, that people of color are at greater risk from the disease. We've confirmed that when we turn off polluting cars, factories, and power plants, air quality improves.

Science matters. Americans need to pay more attention to scientists' warnings about climate change, just as many have followed medical advice to shelter in place, social distance, and wear masks. We must demand more government action to protect us from carbon pollution that exacerbates droughts, floods, heat waves, and the spread of infectious disease vectors. The pandemic has demonstrated the necessity that governments at all levels act to protect their people. Unfortunately, our federal government fell down on the job.

The pandemic shows we're all in this together. It is striking that despite overwhelming attention focused on the outbreak, people have risen up to rally together against the infliction of police violence on African Americans. Young people of all races have

turned out to protest, demonstrating that with the disease of racism, like the virus, there is no place for American exceptionalism.

I find hope for the future in the grandchildren who wave through windows to cheer their relatives without infecting them and in the resilience of young protesters who demand an end to our nation's racism. Young people will be the most affected by the climate crisis and they know it. We need to follow their lead to secure the clean cars and clean energy that must be our future if we are to leave a safe climate to our children and their children.

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