

## Drawdown THEMATIC GUIDE

### Relationship to theme of community resilience

*Drawdown, in the context of cultural and economic critiques of our fossil fuel dependence, provides a hopeful map for investing in already existing solutions and scaling them up to a global scale over a 30 year period. This set of practical solutions works within the structure of a market-based economy and foregrounds a market analysis that demonstrates how the solutions can be economically competitive with carbon-based energy production.*

### Author and Publisher Information

*Paul Hawken, business owner and social entrepreneur, is the author of several best-selling books that emphasize the intimate relationship between economics and ecological sustainability. His latest work with Project Drawdown is a part of an evolutionary effort to gather the collective wisdom of our species and put it to work for the good of communities worldwide. He is a public intellectual who strives for mutual understanding*

*Hawken as editor has assembled an impressive team of research fellows, essayists, and board of directors.*

### Intersections with other books of the year

*Drawdown provides a proactive alternative to the critical analysis of Naomi Klein's This Changes Everything, which slaps the invisible hand of fundamentalist capitalism and advocates for a new economic system.*

*Drawdown provides a practical complement to Winona LaDuke's series of case study narratives written from an indigenous perspective of serving on the frontline against colonial, capitalist, carbon-centered development projects. Drawdown offers a series of explainers and participates in a form of technological optimism but also draws on the collective wisdom that includes indigenous relationships to land across parts of the globe.*

### Book Summary

*Although Project Drawdown takes its title from a military metaphor, to drawdown troops, it consciously turns aside from the language of battle to embrace innovative solutions for reversing the build up of greenhouse gases. The book's subtitle "The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming" echoes the hopefulness of the film Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope. And in the same spirit it shows how a better understanding of climate science and economics might lead to a scaling of already existing solutions.*

*The contributors to the project (70 people from 22 countries) mark “drawdown” as the moment when greenhouse gases peak and begin to decline. This heavily vetted set of solutions presents the escalation of greenhouse gases as an opportunity rather than an inevitability. Now is the opportune moment because the cost of managing climate problems is on the rise, turning the cost of solutions into a net savings. Climate is not portrayed as the enemy but as a feedback loop, and readers are called in to listen. That level of listening and attention do less to persuade readers of the right answers and more to assuage feelings of fatalism. The project and the book create an opening to pool individual commitment and innovation and to organize it in a way that makes available a collective and practical wisdom, all in the hope of sparking a movement that will catch and grow on a global scale.*

*The book is not prescriptive but descriptive and experimental in spirit. It does not propose new ideas about what people ought to be doing in the future but describes what people are already doing. It maps, measures, and models existing solutions on a global 30 year scale. The solutions are technological, ecological, and social, some destined to fail while others succeed. The authors combine systems thinking and data analytics, scaling CA solutions to a global level.*

## **Book Organization**

*The book provides meaningful front matter and back matter to explain the project’s motivation and design, its method and analysis, and the fundamental relationships between numbers and language as ways of knowing. The primary content consists of 80 current solutions and 20 upcoming attractions or potential solutions on the horizon. The solutions are divided into seven sectors: energy, food, women & girls, buildings & cities, land use, transport, and materials. Embedded among the scientific and quantitative solutions are seven additional essays that explore ideas and questions from the humanities (history, philosophy, language), examining the roles and responsibilities of planetary stewards.*

*The solution rankings are based on the drawdown of greenhouse gases, either avoiding or reducing them. Each solution lists the net cost for implementation (to purchase, install, and operate) and the net savings over a span of 30 years. While the solutions could be ranked by the most cost-efficient, they are not. In the back matter, the top 15 solutions are slightly rearranged according to plausible levels, drawdown levels, and optimum levels.*

*The vetting process sought to go beyond confirmed biases. Some of the findings reinforce what we might expect while others are more surprising. Women & Girls is the*

*smallest sector, with just three solutions, but two of them rank in the top ten. Educating girls and family planning, two solutions that go hand-in-hand, would have a great impact on lowering carbon dioxide. Energy is the largest sector with three solutions ranked in the top 10 and five in the top 20. Surprisingly, neither Buildings & Cities nor Transport have solutions ranked in the top 20. The Materials sector claims the top ranked solution, refrigerant management, but no others in the top 20. Food is a significant sector because three food solutions rank in the top 10, and eight solutions are ranked in the top 20. Land Use has one solution ranked in the top 10 and four in the top 20. The sections on Land Use and Food sectors also contain two essays each, portraying our relationship to land and food are inherently social. The Coming Attractions section contains two of the most philosophical essays on caring for our common home and on the meaning of reciprocity.*

### **Reader-friendly features for comprehension**

*As we learn from the front section on Language, the authors are committed to public communication. They recognize that few people actually understand climate science, so they deliberately set out to bridge the climate communication gap between experts and citizens, choosing carefully their words, analogies, and metaphors while avoiding jargon, acronyms, and military language.*

*Each section begins with a large print one-paragraph overview of the sector. Readers could scan these eight paragraphs very quickly to gain a comprehensive blueprint of the book. Each solution is 1-3 pages long. At the top right of the page for each solution, readers will find a table that includes the number of gigatons in CO<sub>2</sub> reduced; the net cost for scaling and implementing the solution; and the net savings over a 30 year period. Readers can compare those numbers by overall ranking or by sector in the back matter of the book, doing their own cost-benefit analysis if they wish. Each solution ends with a brief impact statement in italics. Readers could start with the impact statement if they want a big picture before diving into the solution. Each solution includes historical background information, definitions of key concepts, and a reasoned explanation and analysis of how it works. The writing tends to work from ideas familiar to general readers toward concepts that may be less familiar to readers.*