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NATIONAL

Will Renewables Replace Fossil Fuels? Leonardo DiCaprio Says Global Warming Provides US 'Biggest Economic Opportunity'

BY CLARK MINDOCK ON 12/19/16 AT 3:05 PM

Leonardo DiCaprio suggests progress on renewable energy technology has put the United States in position to take advantage of the "biggest economic opportunity" in history. The environmental activist and Academy Award winner said despite a very vocal minority that challenges the concept, most people have accepted the human role in climate change and that green technologies could provide an answer.

"There are a few very prominent people that still deny the overwhelming conclusions of the world's scientists that climate change is largely human-caused and needs immediate urgent attention," DiCaprio said Friday at a U.N. awards ceremony in New York, the Guardian reported.

But there's also a silver lining, he said. If the United States were to really attempt to take on the problem, replacing fossil fuels with technologies like wind and solar power present the nation with the potential for massive economic growth, he said.

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DiCaprio's remarks did not mention explicitly President-elect Donald Trump, with whom the award-winning actor met earlier this month. Trump has mocked and questioned the human role in climate change. The future president has also floated the idea of cutting tax credits for renewable energies and has cultivated a roster of cabinet appointees full of climate deniers. Despite those comments and appointments, DiCaprio said after his meeting in Trump Tower with the president-elect this month that they had talked about creating millions of jobs from the construction and operation of commercial and residential renewable energy generation.

"In less than 100 years of our pollution-based prosperity, we humans have put our entire existence in jeopardy," DiCaprio said last week.

DiCaprio released a documentary two months ago, "Before the Flood," which focuses on climate change's impact around the world. The film, which was available for streaming online for free before the November election, focused at least in part on DiCaprio's work for the United Nations as a messenger for peace with a focus on climate change, a post he has held since 2014.

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