

## **Precautionary Principle:**

The precautionary principle is used to apply the probability that harm may amount from an activity and therefore we should cease or limit that activity to avoid irreparable harm. This approach allows us to take into account the future impact on the environment that activities will have and mitigate the harm before it is too late.

There is controversy as to whether or not the precautionary principle should be applied however, the false prediction of harm is better than waiting till this harm actually occurs which may be costly or irreparable. Climate change causes devastating impacts such as extreme weather events, the spread of disease, sea level rise, increased food insecurity, as well as other disasters. These impacts are often catastrophic and are costly to businesses, families, and governments. By implementing the precautionary principle, we have the ability to mitigate catastrophic damages before they occur.

ESF endorses the ***Precautionary Principle*** which recognizes that delaying action until there is compelling evidence of harm will often mean that it is then too costly or impossible to avert the threat. Use of the principle promotes action to avert risks of serious or irreversible harm to the environment in such cases.

***The Precautionary Principle provides a fundamental policy basis to anticipate, avoid and mitigate threats to the environment.***