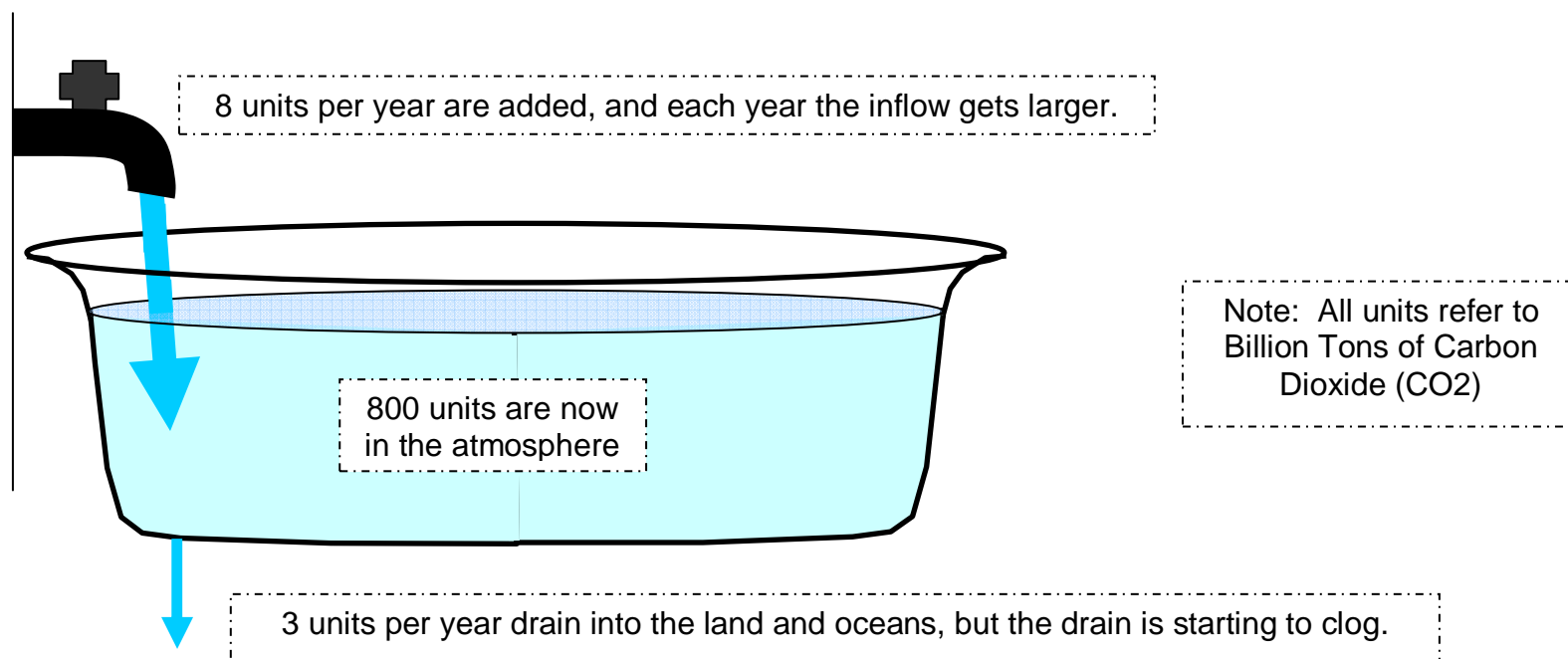


The CO2 Bathtub

This drawing describes a simple version of global carbon dynamics. It is adapted from “The Necessary Revolution” p. 29 by Peter Senge et al. An interactive version is available at www.sustainer.org/tools_resources



The level of the tub is rising by 5 units every year.
The level is already higher than at any time in the last 650,000 years.
Some scientists believe that the level is too high now, and must be reduced by ~10% as quickly as possible.
Others believe that the level could rise another 10% (in 16 years, at present rates), before irreversible catastrophe.
Regardless of whether the shift must occur immediately, or in 16 years, the basic conclusion is the same:

unless we reduce the inflow by ~80%, the tub will overflow.

To date, most carbon emission “reduction” programs have held local CO₂ emissions steady, in spite of the rising population & growing economy. True reductions of 80% are feasible, & will require significant cultural changes.

Levin Nock