

The Week That Was: 2013-08-31 (August 31, 2013)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd.*—Voltaire [H/t J.A. Curry & P.J. Webster]

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Number of the Week: 22

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THIS WEEK:

By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)

Distortion of Science: The *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons* published an article by Richard Lindzen, MIT Professor of Atmospheric Sciences, emeritus, explaining how the climate establishment has distorted science to serve political purposes. Among other points, Lindzen states climate science has become a source of authority rather than a mode of inquiry. “The real utility of science stems from the latter; the political utility from the former.” He lists several features politicized science including: 1) powerful advocacy groups claiming morality and superior wisdom; 2) simplistic depictions of the science; 3) events claimed to promote a sense of urgency; 4) scientists flattered by the public attention and 5) scientists eager to meet the public demand.

In his discussion of climate science, especially that produced by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Lindzen produces two graphs of surface temperature increases and challenges the readers to identify which period the IPCC claims is caused by human emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide (CO₂), and which one is largely natural. One graph covers the period 1895-1946 and the other covers the period 1957-2008. The IPCC and the climate establishment declare that the latter period is significant, but, as Lindzen shows, the difference is trivial. The data provide no basis for the IPCC claims of Catastrophic Anthropogenic (human caused) Global warming (CAGW).

In what may be a complete definition of the climate establishment, Lindzen describes how scientists, advocates, and politicians benefit from each other’s claims and cites other examples of the politicization of science, which have been used to expand governmental power. In the end, both society and science suffer from such authoritarian expansions. Please see links under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

Model Overestimates: As posted by Judith Curry, in its Opinion & Comment section Nature Climate Change published a paper by three members of the climate establishment comparing observed surface warming with the results of 117 model runs of 37 models. The periods cover the last 20 years and the last 15 years. The authors write that for the 20 year period the models over-estimated decadal surface warming by more than 2 times and that for the 15 year period the models over-estimated decadal surface warming by more than 4 times. They state: “[S]uch an inconsistency is only expected to occur by chance once in 500 years, if 20-year periods are considered statistically independent.”

The results are not surprising for those who have questioned IPCC claims. What is surprising is that the study was reported by members of the IPCC climate establishment and that a study

questioning climate modeling was published by Nature Climate Change. Would the journal publish a similar study submitted by a scientist skeptical of the IPCC and its models?

The paper states: “In conclusion, we reject the null hypothesis that the observed and model mean trends are equal at the 10% level.” Theoretical physicist Richard Feynman may have found such statements strange, at best. As shown in the videos of some of his famous lectures, Feynman considered a hypothesis to be a guess that must be tested against all relevant data from experiments and observations. In this instance, the hypothesis would be that there exists a close association between model results and observations. If the hypothesis fails testing, the null is accepted. There is no close association between model results and observations. The quote is another example of how the IPCC climate establishment is distorting science. Please see links under Problems in the Orthodoxy.

The Pause: *Nature* published a study claiming the pause in global warming is being caused by ocean cooling, namely an increase in La Niñas, during which Pacific Ocean surfaces are cooler compared with its opposite sister, El Niños, during which Pacific Ocean surfaces are warmer. These occurrences are part of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). Of course, many in the climate establishment quickly picked this up as a compelling explanation for the pause.

This is doubly rich. Professor Bob Carter, a co-editor of the NIPCC reports, was a co-author of a paper on the frequency of El Niños influencing surface warming. The climate establishment ignored such suggestions. Now it finds it convenient to embrace the cooling effect, but not the warming effect.

A second richness comes from the current claims by some in the climate establishment that the warming is hiding in the deep ocean. A warming of the atmosphere, which is not occurring, passes to the deep oceans even though the surface of the vast Pacific Ocean is cooling!

On her web site, Judith Curry politely discusses some of the weaknesses in the study including that one must accept the assumption that climate models are useful for untangling natural from human causes of climate change. Further, she states that if one accepts the reasoning, one must accept the corollary that the PDO was a major and likely dominant cause of the warming in the last quarter of the 20th century. One of the authors of the study responded to such criticism by stating that the IPCC conclusion applies to centennial warming from 1880. This is a rather unusual reading of the meaning of the statements in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) which clearly refer to the last half of the 20th century. Will the upcoming IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) explain climate change since 1880?

On his web site, Luboš Motl dismisses the explanations of the pause, and points out that the climate establishment has frequently claimed that small changes in global mean temperature are important and predictable, which they are not. John Brignell suggests that the pause started when independent researchers, who understand such matters, started to question the collection and processing of the data.

Please see links under Challenging the Orthodoxy and Problems in the Orthodoxy.

Greenland: Using radar images gathered over decades by NASA, and others, international researchers discovered a large canyon in Greenland under the ice, which is up to 2 miles (3km) thick. Specifics are not yet clearly reported, but the canyon runs roughly from north-central

Greenland to the northwest coast. According to reports, the canyon is at least 470 miles long (800km), six miles (9.6km) across at its widest, and up to 2,600 feet deep (780) – reaching its widest and deepest points near the coast. The Grand Canyon, by comparison, is 277 miles long, 18 miles wide, and 6,000 feet deep.

As some of the reports state, the weight of the ice has forced the center of Greenland to about 650 feet (200m) below sea level. Except for along the coasts, Greenland is large bowl of ice, formed by tall mountains with few openings to the sea. What occurs on the coast does not reflect what occurs in the interior, which has an average altitude of about 7000 feet (2130m). In 1888, Fridtjof Nansen led a team of four Norwegians and two mountain Lapps on a ski trip crossing southern Greenland from east to west at about 64 deg. North latitude. He exposed many myths about Greenland, including one that the center of the island is warm and free of ice. It is amazing that many articles on Greenland and its potential contributions to sea level rise ignore 120 year old knowledge about its geography. Hopefully, the new geographic mapping will help reduce such ignorance. Please see links under Changing Earth.

False Precision: On her web site, Judith Curry discusses an interesting paper published in a journal of the American Statistical Society on the topic of overconfidence and false (over) precision. She uses examples from the IPCC to illustrate some important points and to explain the difference in the precision of weather forecasters compared with the false (over) precision of climate modelers. Please see link under Seeking a Common Ground.

Wildfires: In the US, the Climate Establishment has changed the name of forest fires to wildfires, giving a false sense of urgency to do something. TWTW reader Clyde Spencer provided a link to the National Interagency Fire Center, which reports the number of fires and the total acres burned to date for each year since 2004. As of Aug 30, 2013 there were 34,256 fires and with 3,784,499 acres burned. This are well below the ten year average to date of 54,910 fires and 5,950,332 acres burned. Also for both categories, 2013 is below every year since 2004. One wonders if there may be an error in the tables that are updated daily. Please see link under Seeking a Common Ground.

Number of the Week: 22. According to an article in *Sail World*, there are at least 22 yachts and other vessels in Arctic waters in and around the Northwest Passage. This week ice blocked the passage on both ends. How many vessels are equipped to spend the season in the ice – up to July? Before undertaking such adventures, the yachts owners should read the exploits of the Greenland skier Fridtjof Nansen and the adventures of the *Fram*, as relayed by Farley Mowat in **The Polar Passion**.

In hopes to reach the North Pole, Nansen had the *Fram* specially designed and built with a rounded hull to withstand the ice. When the ice closed, rather than crush it, the ice would raise the boat out of the water (and ice). In the summer of 1893 he and his crew deliberately drove the *Fram* into the ice. When the ocean currents failed to carry the *Fram* to the North Pole, Nansen left the vessel in charge of Otto Sverdrup, while he made an unsuccessful effort to reach the pole over the ice. After almost three years, the *Fram* was finally freed of ice. The voyage provided a great deal of scientific information about the Arctic Ocean, including its depth, which was speculated to be very shallow. Please see link under Changing Weather.

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see this week’s TWTW at: www.sepp.org. The articles are at the end of the pdf.

1. Study Shines Light on Tremors and Fracking in South Texas' Eagle Ford Shale

Removing Oil, Water From Ground Allows Surrounding Rock to Settle

By Tom Fowler, WSJ, Aug 27, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324906304579037181315480254.html?mod=W_SJ_hps_LEFTTopStories

[SEPP Comment: The tremors are from extraction of oil and water, not from hydraulic fracturing.]

2. California's Smoke Signals

San Francisco's power emergency is a warning about green mandates.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 26, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323407104579034680037579034.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

3. Giant Texas Refinery Battered by Accidents After \$10 Billion Upgrade

Fires, Leaks Cripple Largest Refinery in U.S. After Owners Shell and Saudi Aramco Invested to Double Capacity

By Ben Lefebvre and Alison Sider, WSJ, Aug 23, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323980604579030961699637196.html?mod=W_SJ_Energy

[SEPP Comment: No organization, private or public, is immune from mistakes. The issue is do the organizations learn from their mistakes.]

4. Fracking Debate Divides New York

By Erica Orden, WSJ, Aug 25, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323980604579030992603209018.html?mod=W_SJ_Energy_2_4_Right

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Challenging the Orthodoxy

MIT professor: global warming is a 'religion'

By Michael Bastasch, Daily Caller, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://dailycaller.com/2013/08/29/mit-professor-global-warming-is-a-religion/>

Link to essay: Science in the Public Square: Global Climate Alarmism and Historical Precedents

By Richard Lindzen, Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, Fall 2013

<http://www.jpands.org/vol18no3/lindzen.pdf>

Protecting the Environment

By Vincent Gray, NZ Climate Truth Newsletter No 314, Aug 28, 2013

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2013/08/protecting-environment.html>

If warmists would only tell the truth...

By Barry Brill, Quadrant, Aug 30, 2013

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2013/08/if-warmists-would-only-tell-the-truth>

Climate Deception: How The "Hottest" Temperature Game Is Played To Offset Prediction Failures

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Aug 24, 2013

<http://drtimball.com/2013/climate-deception-how-the-hottest-temperature-game-is-played-to-offset-prediction-failures/>

The zombie theory

By John Brignell, Number Watch, Aug 26, 2013

<http://www.numberwatch.co.uk/2013%20August.htm#zombie>

Pacific waters as an excuse for the warming hiatus

By Luboš Motl, Reference Frame, Aug 30, 2013

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2013/08/pacific-waters-as-excuse-for-warming.html#more>

Historical Temperature Trends in China

By Staff Writers, SPPI & CO2 Science, Aug 28, 2013

http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/originals/historical_temperature_trends_in_china.html

Link to pdf:

http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/originals/china_historical_trends.pdf

Medieval Warm Period in the Arctic

By Staff Writers, SPPI & CO2 Science, Aug 28, 2013

http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/originals/medieval_warm_period_in_the_arctic.html

Defending the Orthodoxy

Can UN scientists revive drive against climate change?

By Richard Ingham, AFP, Aug 25, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hHmcL4DZjT-PZWhEHO3VDb5gjsrA?docId=CNG.db54bf0fa84dd93ad7cf71578fe1dcef.681>

Climate leaks are 'misleading' says IPCC ahead of major report

By Matt McGrath, BBC, Aug 19, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-23755901>

Humans' complicity in climate change can't be ignored

Editorial, Washington Post, Aug 26, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/this-global-warming-warning-cant-be-ignored/2013/08/26/448eb232-0c39-11e3-9941-6711ed662e71_story.html

NEXT MONTH, the international arbiter of the scientific consensus on global warming will release its latest evaluation of the state of the research.

Climate: The sun's role is important, but it's just a cameo

By Freya Roberts, Carbon Brief, Aug 28, 2013

http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2013/08/suns-role-in-climate-small-compared-to-greenhouse-gases,-but-significant/?utm_source=Weekly+Carbon+Briefing&utm_campaign=849ea0cd39-Carbon_Brief_Weekly_18_7_137_18_2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ff5ea836a-849ea0cd39-215218249

[SEPP Comment: Contrary to the author's statements, the role of the sun is not limited to sunlight.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

The New York Times' Global Warming Hysteria Ignores 17 Years Of Flat Global Temperatures

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Aug 21, 2013

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2013/08/21/the-new-york-times-global-warming-hysteria-ignores-17-years-of-flat-global-temperatures/>

Climate Change Editorial by the Washington Post contains many mis-statements, half-truths, and omissions. Reply by a scientist is warranted

By Robert Endlich, Climate Depot, Aug 29, 2013

http://www.climatedepot.com/2013/08/29/retired-u-s-air-force-meteorologist-smacks-down-washington-post-for-editorial-full-of-mis-statements-half-truths-and-omissions/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+ClimateDepot+%28Climate+Depot%29

[SEPP Comment: Contrary to the author's statement, the change in sea level near Pevensey Castle may be due to local factors, not a decline in global sea level.]

High School Science Discredits The New York Times' Latest Global Warming Whopper

By Patrick Michaels, Forbes, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickmichaels/2013/08/29/high-school-science-discredits-the-new-york-times-latest-global-warming-whopper/>

Another Climate Embarrassment

By Steven Hayward, Power Line, Aug 28, 2013

<http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2013/08/another-climate-embarrassment.php>

[SEPP Comment: As the author states, the correct conclusion from the graph is Nothing.]

Global warming is 'no longer a planetary emergency'

By Christopher Monckton, WUWT, Aug 28, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/28/global-warming-is-no-longer-a-planetary-emergency/>

[SEPP Comment: Latest from the World Federation of Scientists.]

Another Paper Blames ENSO for the Warming Hiatus

By Bob Tisdale, Climate Observations, Aug 28, 2013

<http://bobtisdale.wordpress.com/2013/08/28/another-paper-blames-enso-for-the-warming-hiatus/>

Betting Against Apocalyptic Thinking

The Simon-Ehrlich Wager

By Roger Pielke Jr, Breakthrough Institute, Aug 28, 2013

<http://thebreakthrough.org/index.php/voices/roger-pielke-jr/betting-against-apocalyptic-thinking/>

Problems in the Orthodoxy

Overestimated global warming over the past 20 years

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc., Aug 28, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/08/28/overestimated-global-warming-over-the-past-20-years/>

Link to paper: Overestimated global warming over the past 20 years

By Fyfe, Gillett, and Zwiers, Nature Climate Change, Aug 28, 2013

http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/v3/n9/full/nclimate1972.html?WT.ec_id=NCLIMATE-201309

Pause tied to equatorial Pacific surface cooling

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc. Aug 28, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/08/28/pause-tied-to-equatorial-pacific-surface-cooling/>

Link to paper: Recent global-warming hiatus tied to equatorial Pacific surface cooling

By Yu Kosaka & Shang-Ping Xie, Nature, Aug 28, 2013

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nature12534.html>

Leading IPCC Scientist Concedes Oceans Have “Profound Effect On Average Global Surface Air Temperature”

GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel has issued a press release.

By P Gosselin, Trans, No Tricks Zone, Aug 26, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/08/26/leading-ipcc-scientist-concedes-oceans-have-profound-effect-on-average-global-surface-air-temperature/>

Spiegel: Scientists Hopelessly Stumped By Present Ocean Cooling, Still Insist They Are Certain About The Future!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Aug 29, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/08/29/spiegel-scientists-hopelessly-stumped-by-present-ocean-cooling-still-insist-they-are-certain-about-the-future/>

Pacific cooling explains break in global warming, study shows

By Alister Doyle, Reuters, Aug 28, 2013 [H/t Clyde Spencer]

<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2013/08/28/20233989-pacific-cooling-explains-break-in-global-warming-study-shows?chromedomain=te>

Pause politics

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc. Aug 30, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/08/30/pause-politics/#more-12782>

Global Warming Slowdown Data Sought in UN Climate Report

By Alex Morales, Bloomberg, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-08-29/global-warming-slowdown-data-sought-in-un-climate-report.html>

EU's Oettinger warns against Germany cutting renewable subsidies

By Christoph Steitz, Reuters, Aug 26, 2013

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/08/26/uk-renewables-eu-idUKBRE97P0FS20130826>

Seeking a Common Ground

Revisiting Wood's 1909 Greenhouse Box Experiment, Part II: First Results

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Aug 26, 2013

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2013/08/revisiting-woods-1909-greenhouse-box-experiment-part-ii-first-results/>

[SEPP Comment: Spencer continues with his basic test of the greenhouse effect. The test may make a good high school science fair project.]

Inadequate uncertainty analysis in climate change assessments

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc. Aug 30, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/08/30/inadequate-uncertainty-analysis-in-climate-change-assessments/#more-12741>

I know I'm right (?)

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc. Aug 26, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/08/26/i-know-im-right/#more-12660>

Who is on which 'side' in the climate debate, anyways

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc. Aug 24, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/08/24/who-is-on-which-side-in-the-climate-debate-anyways/#more-12697>

National Interagency Fire Center

By Staff Writers, NIFC, Aug 30, 2013 [H/t Clyde Spencer]

<http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/nfn.htm>

Questioning European Green

The Dangerous Greenies Are in Brussels, Not Balcombe,

By Christopher Booker, Sunday Telegraph, Aug 25, 2013

<http://www.thegwpf.org/christopher-booker-dangerous-greenies-brussels-balcombe/>

A little fractious

Why even shale gas may not reignite a flagging green movement

Editorial, The Economist, Aug 24, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21584014-why-even-shale-gas-may-not-reignite-flagging-green-movement-little-fractious>

Wind turbines clutter the north German countryside

By Steve Goreham, Washington Times, Aug 28, 2013

<http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/climatism-watching-climate-science/2013/aug/28/wind-turbines-clutter-north-german-countryside/>

BPI warns energy costs are deterring UK investment

By Staff Writer, Herald Scotland, Aug 28, 2013

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/business/company-news/bpi-warns-energy-costs-are-deterring-uk-investment.1377683192>

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?

People Don't Fear Climate Change Enough

By Cass R. Sunstein, Bloomberg, Aug 27, 2013

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-08-27/people-don-t-fear-climate-change-enough.html>

[SEPP Comment: The Harvard Law School professor believes we must create fear in the population to achieve the political goals he desires. This is an example of Lindzen's Iron Rice Bowl.]

Clanging of the bells on extreme weather change

By Bob Fernley-Jones, WTWT, Aug 28, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/28/clanging-of-the-bells-on-extreme-weather-change/>

[SEPP Comment: Statistical tricks in Australia.]

Fabricating Climate Doom – Part 3: Extreme Weather Extinctions Enron Style

An Illusion of Extreme Climate Disruption

By Jim Steel, WUWT, Aug 25, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/25/fabricating-climate-doom-part-3-extreme-weather-extinctions-enron-style/>

Spy satellite data reveal vulnerability of East Antarctica Ice Sheet

By Laura Poppick, Live Science, NBC, Aug 28, 2013

<http://www.nbcnews.com/science/spy-satellite-data-reveal-vulnerability-east-antarctica-ice-sheet-8C11027906>

[SEPP Comment: The data reveal change, not vulnerability.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Day of the ‘UnGreens’ – Dreaming up scary language to convince people global warming is really just like a scary movie

By Andrew Watts, WUWT, Aug 24, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/24/day-of-the-ungreens-dreaming-up-scary-language-to-convince-people-global-warming-is-really-just-like-a-scary-movie/>

Al Gore’s Global Warming Desperation

By Tom Blumer, Front Page, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://frontpagemag.com/2013/tom-blumer/al-gores-global-warming-desperation/>

[SEPP Comment: The article highlights Al Gore at his worst.]

Cook’s 97% climate consensus paper crumbles upon examination

By Bjørn Lomborg, WUWT, Aug 28, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/28/cooks-97-climate-consensus-paper-crumbles-upon-examination/>

[SEPP Comment: This 97% is getting smaller all the time.]

New York Times environmental journalist Justin Gillis is wrong

By Bjørn Lomborg, WUWT, Aug 24, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/24/lomborg-new-york-times-environmental-journalist-justin-gillis-is-wrong/>

[SEPP Comment: The lack of fact checkers at the NYT.]

James Hansen's many and varied furphies

By John Happs, Quadrant, Aug 26, 2013

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2013/08/james-hansen-s-many-and-varied-furphies>

[SEPP Comment: Furphy is Australian slang for rumor.]

Models v. Observations

The 200 months of ‘the pause’

By Christopher Monckton, WUWT, Aug 27, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/27/the-200-months-of-the-pause/>

Driessen, Legates: Guessing at Delaware’s ‘future weather’

By David Legates and Paul Driessen, ICECAP, Aug 28, 2013
http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/driessen_legates_guessing_at_delawares_future_weather/
[SEPP Comment: Some may disagree about the best time to measure enhanced greenhouse effect.]

Measurement Issues

Urban Heat Island - could it account for much of the century scale warming attributed to AGW?

By Joseph D'Aleo, ICECAP, Aug 28, 2013
http://icecap.us/index.php/go/new-and-cool/urban_heat_island_could_it_account_for_most_warming_attributed_to_agw/

Changing Weather

North West Passage blocked with ice - yachts caught

By Douglas Pohl, Sail World, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t WUWT]
<http://www.sail-world.com/USA/North-West-Passage-blocked-with-ice%E2%80%94yachts-caught/113788>

Snowfall in South America

By Argiris Diamantis, WUWT, Aug 29, 2013
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/29/snowfall-in-south-america/>

Minimum Temperature Heat Wave Hits the Northwest!

By Cliff Mass, Weather Blog, Aug 29, 2013
<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2013/08/minimum-temperature-heat-wave-hits.html>
[SEPP Comment: Natural greenhouse gas warming – water vapor.]

The Great Labor Day Hurricane of 1935

By Donald Baucom, WUWT, Aug 29, 2013
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/29/the-great-labor-day-hurricane-of-1935/>
[SEPP Comment: Sandy does not come close.]

Changing Climate

Aulacomnium turgidum

By Daniel Mosquim, UBC Botanical Garden, Aug 20, 2013 [H/t Cork Hayden]
<http://www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/potd/2013/08/aulacomnium-turgidum.php>
[SEPP Comment: Buried under ice 400 to 615 years ago.]

Retreating Alaskan Glacier Reveals Remains Of Medieval Forest

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Aug 26, 2013
<http://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2013/08/26/retreating-alaskan-glacier-reveals-remains-of-medieval-forest/>

Climate change could make Greenland green by 2100

By John Von Radowitz, Independent, Aug 28, 2013
http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/climate-change-could-make-greenland-green-by-2100-8786840.html?utm_source=Weekly+Carbon+Briefing&utm_campaign=849ea0cd39-

[Carbon Brief Weekly 18 7 137 18 2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ff5ea836a-849ea0cd39-215218249](http://www.carbonbrief.org/Carbon-Brief-Weekly-18-7-137-18-2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ff5ea836a-849ea0cd39-215218249)

[SEPP Comment: For the fringes!]

Changing Seas

Ice sheet collapse,

By Rud Istvan, Climate Etc. Aug 30, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/08/30/ice-sheet-collapse/#more-12791>

[SEPP Comment: Issues with a recent study of the historic Western Australian shoreline suggesting a collapse of the Western Antarctic Ice Sheet. This report suggests it may have been a tectonic movement of the Australian plate.]

Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

Spreading out

Antarctic sea ice nears record extent once again

Total sea ice extent around Antarctica reach a record or near-record high in August 2013, part of a long-term trend.

By Staff Writers, The Antarctic Sun, Aug 22, 2013

<http://antarcticsun.usap.gov/science/contenthandler.cfm?id=2889>

[SEPP Comment: Near record Again?]

New paper finds the majority of East Antarctic glaciers have advanced in size since 1990

By Staff Writer, The Hockey Schtick, Aug 28, 2013

<http://hockeyschtick.blogspot.it/2013/08/new-paper-finds-majority-of-east.html>

[SEPP Comment: 63 percent retreated from 1974 to 1990, 72 percent advanced from 1990 to 2000, and 58 percent advanced from 2000 to 2010. Changes are on the warmer western South Pacific coast and no significant changes on the cooler Ross Sea coast.]

Changing Earth

Greenland has its own Grand Canyon deep under ice, study says

Greenland's 'grand canyon' was part of a large river system before an ice sheet covered it millions of years ago, a new study says. Now it appears to be a vital part of the island's plumbing

By Pete Spotts, Christian Science Monitor, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2013/0829/Greenland-has-its-own-Grand-Canyon-deep-under-ice-study-says>

Huge canyon discovered under Greenland ice

By Roger Harrabin, BBC, Aug 29, 2013

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-23866810>

Acidic Waters

Will earth experience extra warming as oceans acidify?

By Freya Roberts, Carbon Brief, Aug 25, 2013

http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2013/08/expect-extra-warming-as-oceans-acidify,-says-study?utm_source=Weekly+Carbon+Briefing&utm_campaign=849ea0cd39-

[Carbon Brief Weekly 18 7 137 18 2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ff5ea836a-849ea0cd39-215218249](http://www.carbonbrief.org/Carbon-Brief-Weekly-18-7-137-18-2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3ff5ea836a-849ea0cd39-215218249)

Link to paper: Global warming amplified by reduced sulphur fluxes as a result of ocean acidification

By Six, et al, Nature Climate Change, Aug 25, 2013

<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1981.html>

[SEPP Comment: Perhaps unbeknown to Roberts, waters with a pH range of 7.6 to 8.3 are alkaline, not acidic.]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

The Importance of Length-of-Record in Assessing Sea Level Change

Reference: Scafetta, N. 2013. Multi-scale dynamical analysis (MSDA) of sea level records versus PDO, AMO, and NAO indexes. *Climate Dynamics*: 10.1007/s00382-013-1771-3.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/aug/27aug2013a1.html>

"long-term sea level variations are driven by numerous coupled processes arising from an interaction of eustatic sea level rise and glacial isostatic subsidence, long-term tidal and solar cycles, oscillations of ocean circulation, variations in temperature and/or salinity and other factors that can be also characteristic of the specific geographical location."

[SEPP Comment: No matter how precise satellite measurements of sea levels are, they are subject to natural variability.]

Rainfall Measurements Throughout Northeast India: AD 1871-2008

Reference: Jain, S.K., Kumar, V. and Saharia, M. 2013. Analysis of rainfall and temperature trends in northeast India. *International Journal of Climatology* 33: 968-978.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/aug/27aug2013a4.html>

[SEPP Comment: No sign of any significant trend attributable to warming.]

The Multiple Impacts of "Ocean Acidification" on a Tropical Coral

Reference: Takahashi, A. and Kurihara, H. 2013. Ocean acidification does not affect the physiology of the tropical coral *Acropora digitifera* during a 5-week experiment. *Coral Reefs* 32: 305-314.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/aug/28aug2013a1.html>

Two Millennia of Climate Change on the Northern Tibetan Plateau

Reference: He, Y.-X., Liu, W.-G., Zhao, C., Wang, Z., Wang, H.-Y., Liu, Y., Qin, X.-Y., Hu, Q.-H., An, Z.-S. and Liu, Z.-H. 2013. Solar influenced late Holocene temperature changes on the northern Tibetan Plateau. *Chinese Science Bulletin* 58: 1053-1059.

<http://nipccreport.org/articles/2013/aug/28aug2013a3.html>

Litigation Issues

Federal Court Allows Public Nuisance Lawsuits Even When Power Plants Comply with Air Permits

By Sonal Patel, Power Mag, Aug 28, 2013

http://www.powermag.com/federal-court-allows-public-nuisance-lawsuits-even-when-power-plants-comply-with-air-permits/?hq_e=el&hq_m=2737000&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e660500d0

Exclusive: UN ruling puts future of UK wind farms in jeopardy

Tribunal warns that the Government acted illegally by denying public participation

By Margareta Pagano, Independent, UK, Aug 27, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/exclusive-un-ruling-puts-future-of-uk-wind-farms-in-jeopardy-8786831.html>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Switzerland plans radical solar subsidy cuts

By Sandra Enkhardt, PV Magazine, Aug 23, 2013

http://www.pv-magazine.com/news/details/beitrag/switzerland-plans-radical-solar-subsidy-cuts_100012484/#axzz2crfI3xba

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Energy Dept. unveils new efficiency regs

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Aug 29, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/319507-energy-dept-unveils-new-efficiency-regs>

[SEPP Comment: Government agencies believe they have the power and the ability to determine how consumers and businesses can best save energy.]

Energy secretary defends ‘social cost of carbon’ boost

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Aug 26, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/318777-moniz-defends-social-cost-of-carbon-boost>

Feds change endangered species law rules despite GOP protest

By Julian Hattem, The Hill, Aug 26, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/regwatch/pending-regs/318829-gop-protest-change-to-endangered-species-law>

Feds launch ‘Bakken Blitz’ of oil-by-rail inspections

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Aug 29, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/319459-feds-launch-bakken-blitz-of-oil-by-rail-inspections>

Energy Issues – Non-US

Energy Department: World oil use hit new high in 2012

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Aug 26, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/318749-energy-dept-world-oil-use-hit-new-high-in-2012>

Link to Report: World petroleum use sets record high in 2012 despite declines in North America and Europe

By Staff Writers, EIA, Aug 26, 2013

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=12691>

Making Energy Access Meaningful

By Roger Pielke Jr. His Blog, Aug 28, 2013

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2013/08/making-energy-access-meaningful.html>

Link to paper by same name

By Morgan Bazilian and Roger Pielke, Jr. Issues in Science and Technology, Summer 2013

http://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/admin/publication_files/2013.22.pdf

It’s a ‘fracking’ good opportunity

By G. Parthasarathy, The Hindu, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/g-parthasarathy/its-a-fracking-good-opportunity/article5072070.ece>

[SEPP Comment: A perspective on the changing geopolitical considerations with the US development of oil and natural gas from shale.]

U.S. fracking is transforming the geopolitical landscape

By Rob Cox and Christopher Swann, Reuters, Aug 28, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/us-fracking-is-transforming-the-geopolitical-landscape/article14003303/>

Why Is Vladimir Putin Acting So Crazy?

By Brian Bremner, Bloomberg Businessweek, Aug 29, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-08-29/can-vladimir-putin-survive-americas-energy-boom>

Reports: Future Coal and Nuclear Prone to Market Forces, Gas Expansion

By Sonal Patel, Power Mag, Aug 27, 2013

http://www.powermag.com/reports-future-coal-and-nuclear-prone-to-market-forces-gas-expansion/?hq_e=el&hq_m=2737000&hq_l=3&hq_v=5e660500d0

Estonia Becomes Self-Sufficient on Shale Gas Boom

By Ambrose Evans-Prichard, Daily Telegraph, via GWPF, Aug 26, 2013

<http://www.thegwpf.org/estonia-self-sufficient-shale-gas-boom/>

[SEPP Comment: The headline is misleading. The shale must be heated to produce kerogen. This is not the same as oil from shale.]

Energy Issues -- US

Obama administration announces plan to boost NJ Transit energy grid

By Keith Laing, The Hill, Aug 24, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/public-transit/318751-obama-administration-announces-plan-to-boost-nj-transit-energy-grid>

[SEPP Comment: What is the source of highly reliable electric power during storms – wind power?]

Washington's Control of Energy

Decision on Keystone pipeline likely delayed until 2014

By Sean Lengell, Washington Examiner, Aug 26, 2013

http://washingtonexaminer.com/decision-on-keystone-pipeline-likely-delayed-until-2014/article/2534717?utm_source=Washington%20Examiner:%20Politics%20Today%20Reoccurring%20-%2008/27/2013&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Washington%20Examiner:%20Politics%20Today

[SEPP Comment: Washington has plenty of jobs. Except for oil rich North Dakota and Texas, it is the rest of the country that is hurting.]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

North America: An Oil and Gas Powerhouse

By Marita Noon, Energy Tribune, Aug 28, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/78963/north-america-an-oil-and-gas-powerhouse#sthash.JulQMe4O.dpbs>

America's shale revolution is providing significant economic and environmental benefits; CO2 per capita lowest since 1964

By Mark Perry, AEIdeas, Aug 26, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

http://www.aei-ideas.org/2013/08/americas-shale-revolution-is-providing-significant-economic-and-environmental-benefits-co2-per-capita-lowest-since-1964/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+aei-ideas%2Fposts+%28AEIdeas+Posts%29&utm_content=Bloglines

EOG Resources' Shale Oil Secrets: Rail Lines And Sand Mines

By Christopher Helman, Forbes Staff, Jul 24, 2013

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2013/07/24/eog-resources-shale-oil-secrets-rail-lines-and-sand-mines/>

[SEPP Comment: The interesting statistics include \$7.5 million per well and estimated 8% recovery rate for oil from shale.]

Here Are the Facts about Fracking

By Robert Mair, Daily Telegraph, via GWPF, Aug 27, 2013

<http://www.thegwpf.org/prof-robert-mair-facts-fracking/>

Large methane hydrate deposits likely in Sea of Japan

By Staff Writers, Asahi Shimbun, Aug 28, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://ajw.asahi.com/article/economy/business/AJ201308280046>

Why Sand Is The Latest Front In The War On Fracking (Yes, Sand)

By Christopher Helman, Forbes Staff, Aug 22, 2013 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2013/08/22/a-new-target-for-fracking-opponents-sand-mines/>

The Resurgence of American Exports: Manufacturing and Natural Gas

By William O'Keefe, Fuel Fix, Aug 23, 2013

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2013/08/23/the-resurgence-of-american-exports-manufacturing-and-natural-gas/>

Return of King Coal?

Sorry Apple, There's Still Coal In The Green iPhone

By Mark Mills, Energy Facts Weekly, Aug 28, 2013

<http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=8a1c319197&e=>

King Coal Gets Fatter, While The US Goes on a Diet

By Robert Rapier, Energy Tribune, Aug 26, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/78923/king-coal-gets-fatter-while-the-us-goes-on-a-diet#sthash.obFOEgXv.dpbs>

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Entergy to Shutter its Vermont Nuclear Plant

Competition from Natural Gas is a Key Factor

By Ken Silverstein, Energy Biz, Aug 27, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.energybiz.com/article/13/08/entergy-shutter-its-vermont-nuclear-plant>

Japan notifies IAEA of Fukushima Daiichi level 3 INES rating

By Staff Writers, IAEA, Aug 28, 2013

<http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/2013/ines3.html>

[SEPP Comment: The rating denotes a 'serious incident.']

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

The Wind Farms That Generate Enough Power to make a Few Cups of Tea

By Robert Mendick, Sunday Telegraph, via GWPF, Aug 25, 2013

<http://www.thegwgf.org/wind-farms-generate-power-cups-tea/>

Harbor windmills are no bargain for Massachusetts residents

By Diana Furchtgott Roth, Washington Examiner, Aug 27, 2013

http://washingtonexaminer.com/harbor-windmills-are-no-bargain-for-massachusetts-residents/article/2534777?utm_source=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest%20Recurring%20-%2008/29/2013&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest

Green Energy Needs to be Cheaper

So let's invest in R&D instead of subsidies.

By Bjørn Lomborg, Slate, Aug 25, 2013

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/project_syndicate/2013/08/green_energy_subsidies_for_solar_and_wind_power_aren_t_helping_let_s_invest.html

[SEPP Comment: Subsidizing inferior electrical generation is not investing.]

California Dreaming

Renewables Scam

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Aug 30, 2013

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2013/08/30/renewables-scam/>

Court to hear challenges to cap-and-trade auction

By Christopher Arns, Sacramento Business Journal, Aug 27, 2013 [H/t Junk Science]

<http://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/news/2013/08/27/cap-and-trade-emissions-challenges.html>

[SEPP Comment: Obligatory propaganda photo for an article on invisible CO₂ – a chimney billowing dark smoke – probably steam taken under special lighting or taken with special lenses.]

Oh Mann!

Mann: Reality and threats of climate change are clear

By Michael Mann, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Aug 24, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

http://www.timesdispatch.com/opinion/their-opinion/columnists-blogs/guest-columnists/mann-reality-and-threats-of-climate-change-are-clear/article_1983741c-cb17-5764-af49-3814d2dc87f0.html

Environmental Industry

Fossil Fuel Self-Defense

By Alex Epstein, Master Resource, Aug 30, 2013

<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/08/fossil-fuel-self-defense/#more-27366>

[SEPP Comment: A series of columns suggesting ideas on how to address environmental zealots such as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. who claims Coal is a Crime and a poison. Kennedy promoted the discredited idea that childhood vaccinations cause autism, based on a single study subsequently

withdrawn. Now, he is New York Governor Cuomo's go to man on the science of hydraulic fracturing of shale! Please see Article # 4.]

Today's Scores From The Arctic – Russian Coastguard 1 Greenpeace 0

By Tory Aardvark, His Blog, Aug 27, 2013

<http://toryaardvark.com/2013/08/27/todays-scores-from-the-arctic-russian-coastguard-1-greenpeace-0/>

Other Scientific News

Odds Are, It's Wrong

Science fails to face the shortcomings of statistics

By Tom Siegfried, Science News [H/t Clyde Spencer]

http://www.sciencenews.org/view/feature/id/57091/description/Odds_Are_Its_Wrong

UA Astronomers Take Sharpest Photos Ever of the Night Sky

By Daniel Stolte, AU, University Communications, Aug 20, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://uanews.org/story/ua-astronomers-take-sharpest-photos-ever-of-the-night-sky>

Other News that May Be of Interest

Yosemite Smoke Affects the Northwest and the Rest of the U.S.

Cliff Mass, Weather Blog, Aug 26, 2013

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2013/08/yosemite-smoke-affects-northwest-and.html>

When life gives you fracked water, make methane hydrate

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Aug 28, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/08/28/when-life-gives-you-fracked-water-make-methane-hydrate/>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Vanishing ocean smell could also mean fewer clouds

By John Upton, Grist, Aug 27, 2013

<http://grist.org/news/vanishing-ocean-smell-could-also-mean-fewer-clouds/>

World-first pilot plant to turn carbon dioxide into rock

By Dan Cox, ABC, AU, Aug 23, 2013 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/technology/news/article/-/18627282/world-first-pilot-plant-to-turn-carbon-dioxide-into-rock/>

With An 'All-Out' Federal Renewable Energy Strategy, How Long Before We Could Be 100% Renewably Powered?

Probably 20-30 years to get to 70-80%, but 80 years to get the last 20-30%.

By Mark Rogowsky, Forbes, Aug 22, 2013 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2013/08/22/with-an-all-out-federal-renewable-energy-strategy-how-long-before-we-could-be-100-renewably-powered/>

[SEPP Comment: What planet is he on?]

Why the U.S. Power Grid's Days Are Numbered

By Chris Martin, Mark Chediak, and Ken Wells, By Bloomberg Businessweek, Aug 22, 2013 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-08-22/homegrown-green-energy-is-making-power-utilities-irrelevant>

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ARTICLES:

1. Study Shines Light on Tremors and Fracking in South Texas' Eagle Ford Shale

Removing Oil, Water From Ground Allows Surrounding Rock to Settle

By Tom Fowler, WSJ, Aug 27, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324906304579037181315480254.html?mod=WJ_hps_LEFTTopStories

[SEPP Comment: The tremors are from extraction of oil and water, not from hydraulic fracturing.]

So much oil and water is being removed from South Texas' Eagle Ford Shale that the activity has probably led to a recent wave of small earthquakes, according to a study that appears in the online edition of the journal Earth and Planetary Science Letters.

The Wall Street Journal reviewed the findings in advance of publication. The peer-reviewed study's authors suggest that taking oil and water out of the ground allows surrounding rock and sand to settle, triggering small tremors that are typically too weak to be noticed on the surface.

Environmental and community groups have expressed concerns about a link between earthquakes and hydraulic fracturing, a method of injecting water into dense shale formations in order to crack them open and tap into trapped oil.

The new study doesn't find much evidence that the man-made fracturing is causing earthquakes all by itself.

The connection is more indirect, the study found: New wells are extracting nearly 600,000 barrels of oil a day and a considerable amount of water as well. Given the scale at which oil is now being removed, enough liquids are being disturbed that rocks are settling and faults slipping, causing the small earthquakes.

The cause of the earthquakes in South Texas is similar to what occurred around the city of Long Beach, Calif., last century, said Cliff Frohlich, one of the study's authors and an associate director at the University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Geophysics.

Oil production and groundwater wells caused much of the area to sink nearly 30 feet over many years.

The Eagle Ford findings contrast with an earlier study of earthquakes in North Texas' Barnett Shale by the same authors. The earlier study cited wastewater injection wells as the likely cause of small seismic events.

Other studies have previously linked injection wells and increased seismic activity, including a 2012 U.S. Geological Survey report and a study by Ohio state regulators. The current study is the first large study to link oil reservoir depletion with an increase in earthquakes.

Mr. Frohlich said he expected to find a tie between earthquakes and injection wells in the Eagle Ford study as well. That didn't turn out to be the case. "Science is seldom that simple," he said.

Possible explanations for the different root causes of Eagle Ford and Barnett tremors is that oil and gas has been produced in the Eagle Ford region for many more years, Mr. Frohlich said. Small earthquakes were first regularly noticed in 1970 near the tiny town of Fashing, Texas.

Mr. Frohlich hasn't received funding for research from the oil and gas industry, but has done work on man-made earthquakes for firms that do consulting work for energy companies.

2. California's Smoke Signals

San Francisco's power emergency is a warning about green mandates.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 26, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323407104579034680037579034.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

Governor Jerry Brown on Friday called a "state of emergency" in San Francisco because a distant wildfire threatens the city's electricity supply. Like so many other emergencies in California, this one is government-made and a warning about its green political obsessions.

The Rim Fire, which is slashing and burning through the Yosemite region, forced the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to shut down two Hetch Hetchy hydropower plants and the transmission lines that power its municipal buildings. While a government shutdown in San Francisco might have salutary effects, the city's hospital, port and airport would also be affected. Hence the emergency.

The utility commission assured residents over the weekend that it doesn't anticipate service interruptions because it can purchase power on the open market—though so far at a \$600,000 premium. The bigger disaster, according to the utility, is that it "has been unable to generate and transmit clean, greenhouse gas-free hydroelectric power" and must rely on natural gas-fired plants. This contravenes the utility's 100% renewable-energy goal.

The utility procures 97% of its power from Hetch Hetchy's 400-megawatt hydroplants via roughly 150-mile transmission lines. New-generation renewables such as solar and biogas supply a mere 10 megawatts of municipal power because they require more space and capital to bring to scale. Trouble is, long transmission lines are at high risk to disruption in natural disasters.

Most San Francisco residents and businesses get their power from PG&E, PCG +0.22% a private utility, so they don't have to worry about this risk now. But they shouldn't rest easy. Renewables make up 20% of PG&E's portfolio and under California law must comprise a third by 2020, and many state politicians want a 100% goal like San Francisco's.

To hit the renewable mandate, utilities are building long transmission lines to deliver power from distant solar and wind projects to population centers. Most large-scale solar plants in California are being built in dry, sunny desert and valley regions. Wind farms are concentrated in the mountains. Both are fire-prone.

Take San Diego Gas & Electric, which last year completed a 120-mile transmission line from Imperial County wind and solar farms at a cost of \$1.9 billion. According to a 2008 draft Environmental Impact Report, "there were 33 reported power outages resulting from 16 distinct

wildfire or lightning events" between 1986 and 2005 along an existing transmission line running through the valley.

The Little Hoover Commission, the state's oversight agency, warned last year that the closure of the San Onofre nuclear plant leaves Southern California "vulnerable to brownouts during heat waves" or "if a wildfire took out a key transmission line." California has usually had excess generating capacity to pick up the slack when transmission lines are downed. However, the excess capacity is declining as more renewables come online and gas-fired plants, which are located along the coasts near cities, are retired.

California may soon have a lot more fires to put out if Sacramento blazes ahead with its renewable mandates.

3. Giant Texas Refinery Battered by Accidents After \$10 Billion Upgrade

Fires, Leaks Cripple Largest Refinery in U.S. After Owners Shell and Saudi Aramco Invested to Double Capacity

By Ben Lefebvre and Alison Sider, WSJ, Aug 23, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323980604579030961699637196.html?mod=W_SJ_Energy

[SEPP Comment: No organization, private or public, is immune from mistakes. The issue is do the organizations learn from their mistakes.]

The biggest oil refinery in the U.S. is largely out of service after several fires over the past two weeks damaged equipment at Motiva Enterprises LLC's plant in Port Arthur, Texas.

The fires are the latest in a series of mechanical failures at the refinery, which doubled in size last year after a \$10 billion expansion paid for by Royal Dutch Shell and Saudi Arabia Oil Co., also known as Saudi Aramco—the two companies that own Motiva.

The 600,000 barrel-a-day plant has turned into an economic headache that analysts have said has cost the two companies hundreds of millions of dollars in repairs and lost fuel sales.

The joint-venture refinery is ranked among the top 10 world-wide by its oil-processing capacity.

After the fires, Motiva had to take offline its 325,000 barrel-a-day crude distillation unit—the first step in fuel production—and various other units, according to Genscape Inc., an energy information service that uses flyovers and infrared sensors to detect activity at refineries. Motiva declined to comment on mechanical problems.

Accidents started occurring almost immediately after the May 2012 opening ceremony in Port Arthur, where chief executives of Shell and Saudi Aramco turned a ceremonial pipeline spigot. A week later, an accidental chemical release corroded a new crude distillation unit, forcing much of the expansion offline for the next six months, the company said at the time.

In December, the same unit was shut down again for several weeks after a small fire broke out and fluid leaks were found, according to regulatory filings and information provided by the company at the time. Another leak forced the company to repair key diesel-production equipment in June.

For Shell, the problems at the Port Arthur refinery have created "an economic disaster," said Oppenheimer & Co. energy analyst Fadel Gheit. "This thing started on the wrong foot and it continues to really limp."

The refinery's poor performance adds to Shell's series of setbacks in North America. The Anglo-Dutch oil giant was forced in the second quarter to write down \$2 billion of U.S. shale gas assets that had not been as profitable as the company initially hoped. In February, it canceled plans to drill for oil in the Arctic during the summer months after special drilling rigs it planned to use for the project were damaged.

Shell spokeswoman Destin Singleton said Motiva continued to invest in the refinery but declined to comment on the specifics of mechanical problems there. The company declined to say how much gas, diesel and jet fuel the refinery is producing.

For Saudi Aramco, the expansion was intended as a way to help the big Saudi Arabia energy company increase its exports to the U.S. But the refinery has imported only 1% more crude from that country over the last 12 months, or an average total of 200,000 barrels a day, according to an analysis of data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Saudi Aramco didn't respond to requests for comment.

Although the refinery accounts for more than 3% of total U.S. refining capacity, according to EIA figures, its extensive operational problems during the past 16 months have limited its impact on fuel markets, said Morningstar equity analyst Allen Good.

"It never really had the [market] impact everyone thought it would have," Mr. Good said of the refinery.

Wholesale gasoline prices in the U.S. Gulf Coast region have risen 1% since the latest fire at the Port Arthur refinery, to \$2.96 a gallon, according Platts, an energy-price information service.

4. Fracking Debate Divides New York

By Erica Orden, WSJ, Aug 25, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323980604579030992603209018.html?mod=W_SJ_Energy_2_4_Right

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, facing a politically fraught decision on whether to allow fracking in New York state, has dispatched top administration officials from coast to coast in the past year in search of advice and information on its health and environmental impacts.

His deliberative approach on hydraulic fracturing, even as neighboring Pennsylvania and other states have quickly adopted such drilling for natural gas, has drawn praise from environmentalists and some communities that oppose fracking. But it has frustrated many upstate New York residents and local officials, who have embraced fracking as a source of energy-industry jobs in a region suffering from population and employment losses.

That discord was on display Friday in economically struggling Binghamton, N.Y., where an appearance by President Barack Obama sparked renewed pressure on his fellow Democrat to

address the matter, particularly in light of Mr. Obama's June remarks praising "cleaner-burning natural gas."

Fracking opponents and backers, including local landowners, flooded the area surrounding Binghamton University, where Mr. Obama spoke, hoping to influence Mr. Cuomo's decision on a matter that has been under review by state regulators since before he assumed office in 2011. It isn't clear when Mr. Cuomo will make a decision.

Fracking poses an uncomfortable political issue for Mr. Cuomo as he heads into his re-election campaign in 2014, and as his name continues to be floated as a 2016 presidential candidate, with voters statewide split over a practice that is growing nationwide.

Mr. Cuomo didn't attend Mr. Obama's speech in Binghamton, but earlier in the week he nodded toward the president's position on natural gas. At the same time, he said he wanted to further examine the environmental impact of fracking, which the energy industry says has been proven safe and which environmentalists call a threat to drinking water.

"It has obvious economic benefits. Every area that has participated in fracking will tell you that it has increased commercial activity and it has an economic-boost effect," Mr. Cuomo said in a radio interview.

"The question is, is there a cost to the environment, to health, etc.? And that's what has to be assessed, and that's what has to be weighed," Mr. Cuomo said, adding, "But the president's point—that fracking has economic benefits, energy benefits for this country—that's inarguable."

New York state Sen. Tom Libous, a Binghamton Republican and staunch fracking backer, said last week, "I'm not a fan of President Obama. I'm not a fan of Obamacare. I'm not a fan of a lot of things that he stands for. However, he supports environmentally safe drilling, and so do I."

"Hopefully, people who listen to him on other issues will listen to him on this issue," Mr. Libous added. "And hopefully, Gov. Cuomo will listen, too."

Mr. Cuomo's administration has repeatedly delayed ruling on whether to allow drilling in Binghamton and elsewhere in the state's Southern Tier, which sits atop the Marcellus Shale rock formation and is across the border from Pennsylvania's fracking boom. The governor's administration says more time is needed for the Department of Health to complete a review.

In recent months, state health Commissioner Nirav Shah and department representatives have traveled the country seeking input from health experts who have studied the practice. In October, the state sent health and environmental-conservation department representatives to Canada, where they sat down with Quebec officials to discuss drilling in the province.

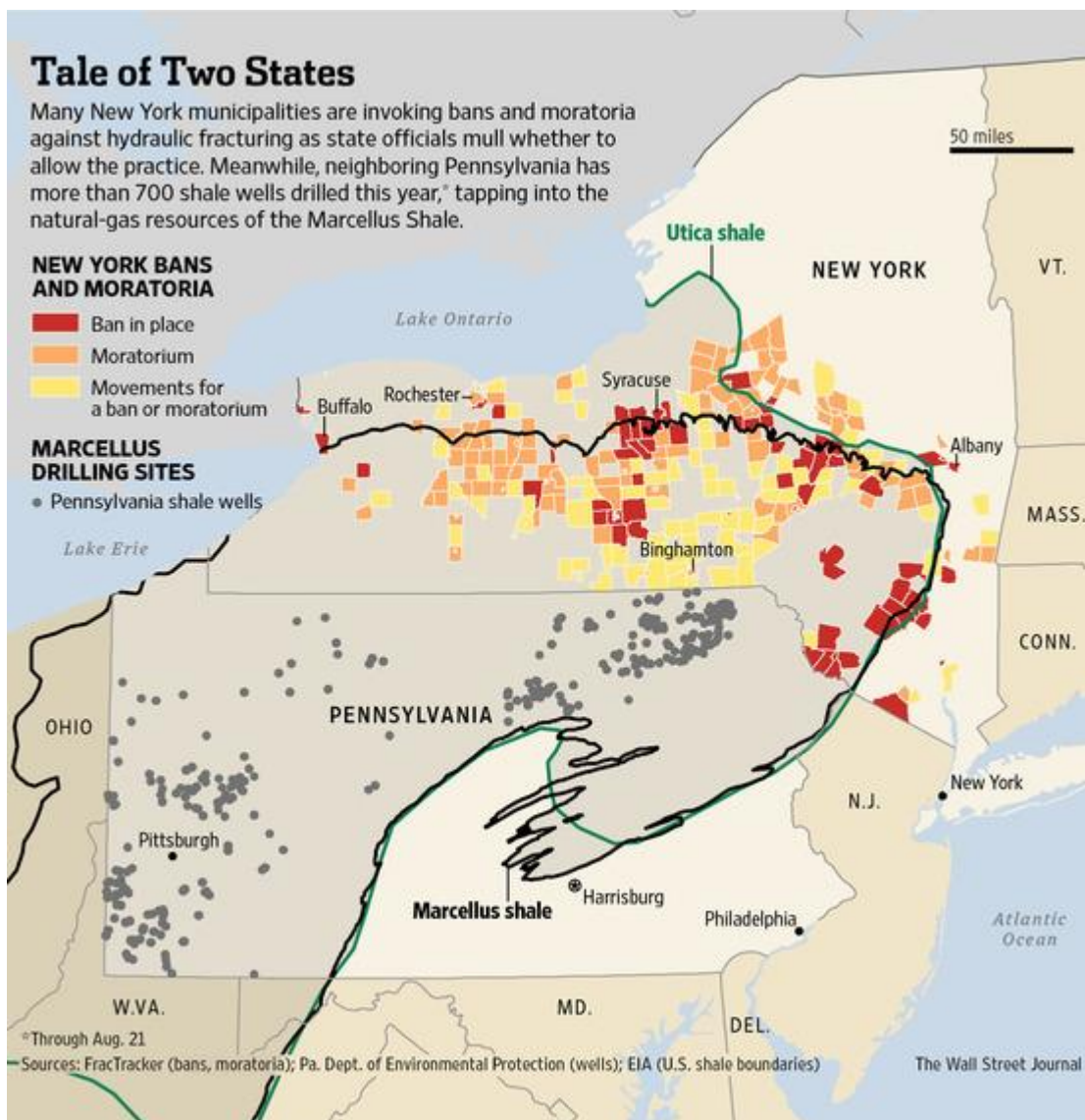
In January, Dr. Shah visited drill and water-acquisition sites in Pennsylvania. In March, he met with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency representatives in Washington, D.C., to discuss the agency's study of the effect of shale gas on water resources. And in July and August, he conducted site visits and met with researchers and state regulators in California, Texas and Illinois.

In Binghamton, those exploratory efforts do little to appease such landowners as Neil Vitale, 65 years old, who gathered with about 150 others on Friday to advocate for fracking on his 500-acre organic dairy farm in Woodhull.

"It's the only thing that is going to help small family farms survive in upstate New York," he said. "We're under the gun, because we're paying the highest property taxes on agricultural land of any farmers in the country. And this activity, when it comes to a farm, will secure the finances of that farm for generations."

Chris Lacey, 62, whose family owns 80 acres of land on the Marcellus Shale in Chenango, said: "Life has risks. And yes, any industry has risks. But on the other hand, this community is dying, and we need the jobs."

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., an environmental attorney whom Mr. Cuomo appointed during his first year in office to an advisory panel on fracking, countered, "I think he's taking an intelligent approach, which is to wait and see." Mr. Kennedy added, "Everybody else has jumped in and said, 'Let's get our share,' and he's saying, 'Wait a second, this isn't going to go away.'"



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