

**The Week That Was: 2011-12-17 (December 17, 2011)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project**

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SEASONS GREETINGS

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SEASONS GREETINGS

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Please Note: There will be No TWTW next week. It will resume on Dec 31, 2011. Happy Holidays!

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Save the Date: January 23, 211 – SEPP / VA-SEEE Forum in Mathews, VA, 7 pm.

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Quote of the Week:

We'll fund additional research in cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn but from wood chips and stalks or switch grass. Our goal is to make this new kind of ethanol practical and competitive within six years." George W. Bush, 2006 State of the Union address

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Number of the Week: 250 million gallons v. 6.6 million

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THIS WEEK:

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

COP-17 – The Deal: Global warming / climate change alarmists are finding that the agreement to agree to an undefined, future agreement is as clear and solid as the global warming science upon which it rests. As of December 16, the final agreement reached at the 17th Conference of Parties (COP-17) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban has not been posted on the UNFCCC web site. Draft agreements have been posted.

Apparently, the deal is that members parties of Kyoto Protocol agree to extend Kyoto and its penalties for exceeding the carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions until 2020 (the US is not a member party). Canada is pulling out, not wishing to pay major penalties, China, India and other industrial developing nations have no penalties and obviously have everything to gain and nothing to lose. The developing nations will expand their coal fired electrical utility plants, and other means, to bring prosperity to their citizens as

many developed nations punish their citizens through expensive experiments in unreliable, expensive sources of electricity. Of course, international companies that are heavy users of energy will move to those parts of the globe where costs are least, namely Asia. Low energy and capital costs will become the attraction, not low labor costs.

According to British observer Philip Stott, the negotiators for BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) played a blinder – put on a magnificent display outclassing their counterparts from the West, especially the EU. The BASIC countries were negotiating to assure the continued economic growth for their citizens. Driven by ideology, the EU was negotiating to penalize growth for their citizens to which the BASIC countries agreed. Damian Carrington of the *Guardian* wrote that Chris Huhne, UK's secretary of state for energy and climate change, said in a telephone interview that the agreement is significant because: the Durban deal commits countries to review how to close the yawning gap between current targets for [carbon dioxide] emissions cuts and what the science says is needed to avoid dangerous climate change.

Closing this yawning gap between emissions and science may prove the EU negotiators too clever! Whose science? No doubt the EU negotiators assumed the science of the UN Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) as articulated in the Fourth Assessment Report (AR-4) and in the upcoming Fifth Assessment Report (AR-5). Readers of TWTW recognize that SEPP strongly questions IPCC science that CO2 emissions are the major cause of global warming / climate change, and that the 2008, 2009, and the 2011 publications of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC) articulate many of the IPCC problems.

More importantly for international agreements, many scientists in Russia openly question the IPCC as do, increasingly, scientists in China and India. Angered by the false claims of the IPCC and the arrogant dismissal of contradicting evidence by India's fine experts on the melting of Himalayan glaciers, India has formed its own national panel on climate change.

Unlike prior reports, the IPCC AR-5 is unlikely to be accepted by everyone as a definitive study. Perhaps, being forewarned, the IPCC may produce a superior, unbiased, study on the causes of climate change, both natural and human. But, what Roger Pielke Sr terms, the oligarchy remains firmly in control and it is difficult to overestimate the arrogance of international bureaucrats.

Underlying this agreement is the hidden agenda of the UN to build a world regulatory government with strong revenue collection powers, which Christopher Monckton well articulated in a link in last week's TWTW, repeated this week. Please see Article # 1 links under COP-17 and NIPCC Reports 2008, 2009, and 2011, respectively: http://www.sepp.org/publications/NIPCC_final.pdf, www.nipccreport.org, <http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/2011/2011report.html>.

Climategate II: The Climategate emails continue to reveal a number of questionable activities by “the hockey-stick team” to personally attack, or discredit, those who question their findings. This new batch of emails resulted in renewed efforts of the local police to find the leaker, including the seizure of computers and demand for email correspondence from service providers. This should have been expected.

What is unusual is a demand by the US Department of Justice for email correspondence from three bloggers who are well known skeptics, Donna LaFramboise (NFC) and Steve McIntyre (Climate Audit) in Canada and Roger Tattersall (Tallbloke) in England. What prompted the demand is not yet known. The US public would be better served if the Department of Justice was enforcing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to US government agencies such as NOAA and the Department of Energy, which funds the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia, a center for the Climategate tricks. The FOIs, such as one to NOAA by Chris Horner of the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) in January

2010, are requests of public records held by government agencies for which there is are no authority to withhold or stonewall.

These continuing developments give rise to further questions as to the principles held by the defenders of the University of Virginia in opposing the release of emails from Michael Mann. The defenders claim that such a release will be chilling to academic freedom. As of yet, they are not defending the academic freedom of independent researchers and investigators. Unless they do so, they will be presuming that employees of public universities working with public funds have a greater right, or privilege, to privacy than those who privately explore the same issues with private funds, often self-funded.

The latest release of emails is providing a further guide for global warming skeptics of what to expect and examine when they have the opportunity to review the global warming science that will appear in AR-5. Please see links under “Climategate Continued” and “Person(s) of Interest.”

Satellite Global Temperature Measurements: November 30 marked the 33rd year of the data record of using satellite data to calculate atmospheric temperatures. Published monthly, these data are the most comprehensive and rigorous collection of global temperatures in existence. When adjusted for volcanic cooling events and unusually strong El Niño warming events, the data from the lower troposphere show little global warming over the entire record. The lower troposphere is precisely where the climate models predict the warming should take place, especially above the tropics. The recorded warming is largely above 60 degrees North Latitude, especially the Arctic.

University of Alabama, Huntsville, scientists Roy Spencer and John Christy are to be congratulated and esteemed for their scientific efforts and scientific integrity in consistently publishing the results of their findings, regardless of short warming or cooling periods.

The notes accompanying the release of the data state: “While Earth’s climate has warmed in the last 33 years, the climb has been irregular. There was little or no warming for the first 19 years of satellite data. Clear net warming did not occur until the El Niño Pacific Ocean ‘warming event of the century’ in late 1997. Since that upward jump, there has been little or no additional warming.”

“Christy and other UA Huntsville scientists have calculated the cooling effect caused by the eruptions of Mexico’s El Chichon volcano in 1982 and the Mt. Pinatubo volcano in the Philippines in 1991. When that cooling is subtracted, the long-term warming effect is reduced to 0.09 C (0.16° F) per decade, well below computer model estimates of how much global warming should have occurred.”

Of course, these measurements contradict the land surface measurements of temperatures so widely cited as proof of human-caused global warming. Please see links under “Challenging the Orthodoxy.”

December Hurricane Predictions: For 20 years, in December, William Gray and his associates, now Philip Klotzbach, have made quantitative predictions of hurricanes (major tropical storms) for the Atlantic basin for the upcoming year. This year they decided to delay the quantitative (numerical) prediction until April and use a qualitative (probability) estimate for this December. Klotzbach and Gray state several reasons for this change. Most importantly, the models they use track well using hindcast data, but no longer forecast well. The implied relationships in the past models no longer apply.

The greatest difficulty is estimating the phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) nine to twelve months out. In their judgment, no model exists with sufficient skill to do this. In April, Klotzbach and Gray will start with quantified estimates for the 2012 season using models emphasizing the phase of the ENSO and the strength of the Atlantic Thermohaline Circulation (THC), which is associated with the Atlantic Multi-Decadal Oscillation (AMO). The researchers are clear that they do not consider the change

in forecasting skill of the models to be the result of human caused climate change and that sea surface temperatures alone are totally inadequate in forecasting hurricane activity.

For those who know Gray, such a blunt admission of the failure of his models is characteristic of the man who suffers fools, poorly. Such an admission should be adequate scientific warning that hindcasting is not sufficient to validate models. Also, those who attempt to apply current models of atmospheric carbon dioxide to describe past climate regimes, such as ice ages, are fooling themselves.

In AR-4, the IPCC did not consider the THC and AMO as a possible cause of global warming / climate change. However, the IPCC continues to claim global warming will cause an increase in the intensity and number of hurricanes. Please see link under "Observations v. Models."

Number of the Week: 250 million gallons v. 6.6 million. In 2007 Congress passed and President Bush signed an energy bill mandating oil companies to blend 250 million gallons of cellulosic fuel into conventional gasoline by 2011. This year, the industry may produce 6.6 million gallons. Yet, the EPA is leveling fines on oil companies for not buying a fuel that does not exist in sufficient quantities. The belief that Congress can mandate technological advancements has long been a problem in Washington. Please see Article # 6.

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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. The mask slips

The Durban meeting shows that climate policy and climate science inhabit parallel worlds.

Editorial, Nature, Dec 14, 2011

http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v480/n7377/full/480292a.html?WT.ec_id=NATURE-20111215

[SEPP Comment: See comments by Fred Singer at the end of the article.]

2. Be thankful offshore wind hasn't taken off

By Charles Battig, VA-SEEE, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Dec 12, 2011

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/news/letters-to-the-editor/2011/dec/12/tdopin01-correspondent-of-the-day-ar-1536706/>

3. The Contrarians Have Better Data

By Lord Christopher Monckton, WSJ, Dec 15, 2011

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203518404577096250302846234.html?KEYWORDS=contrarians+have+better>

4. All the Hot Air in China

Cutting carbon emissions requires restructuring the economy. Which is why Beijing won't do it.

By Joseph Sternberg, WSJ, Dec 15, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204026804577098554224386314.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

5. Global Warming and Adaptability

Any carbon deal to replace Kyoto would have a negligible impact on climate in coming decades.

By Bjorn Lomborg, WSJ, Dec 12, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203413304577086361984880468.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0

6. The Cellulosic Ethanol Debacle

Congress mandated purchase of 250 million gallons in 2011. Actual production: 6.6 million.
Editorial, WSJ, Dec 13, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204012004577072470158115782.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop

To recap: Congress subsidized a product that didn't exist, mandated its purchase though it still didn't exist, is punishing oil companies for not buying the product that doesn't exist, and is now doubling down on the subsidies in the hope that someday it might exist. We'd call this the march of folly, but that's unfair to fools.

[SEPP Comment: In the text, the reporter confuses barrels with gallons – 1 barrel is 42 gallons US.]

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Science: Is the Sun Rising?

Solar activity and Svalbard temperatures

Jan-Erik Solheim, Kjell Stordahl, Ole Humlum
(Submitted on 14 Dec 2011)

<http://arxiv.org/abs/1112.3256>

[SEPP Comment: Svalbard is about 74 to 81 deg North Latitude – well within the Arctic.]

Climategate Continued

AR5 Loves Steig et al 2009

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Dec 13, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/12/13/ar5-loves-steig-et-al-2009/>

AR5 and Mike's "PNAS Trick"

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Dec 13, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/12/13/ar5-and-mikes-pnas-trick/#more-15212>

Watch the Pea – AR5 Chapter 10

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Dec 13, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/12/13/watch-the-pea-ar5-chapter-10/>

Climategate Bombshell: Did U.S. Gov't Help Hide Climate Data?

By Maxim Lott, Fox News, Dec 16, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/12/16/complicit-in-climategate-doe-under-fire/>

IPCC declares itself above the law

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Dec 14, 2011

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2011/12/14/ipcc-declares-itself-above-the-law.html>

Obama's Justice Department joins Britain's 'Climategate' leaker manhunt

By: Christopher C. Horner, Washington Examiner, Dec 15, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/2011/12/obamas-justice-department-joins-britains-climategate-leaker-manhunt/2006206#ixzz1gcYAgUtP>

Person(s) of Interest

Britain: Computer Equipment Seized in Climate E-mail Inquiry

By Staff Writers, AP, Dec 15, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/16/world/europe/britain-computer-equipment-seized-in-climate-e-mail-inquiry.html?ref=science>

Climategate 2: Follow the money to see who calls the shots.

By Tallbloke, His Blog, Dec 12, 2011

<http://tallbloke.wordpress.com/2011/12/12/climategate-2-follow-the-money-to-see-who-calls-the-shots/>

[SEPP Comment: Naming Robert Watson, Rajendra Pachauri and John Houghton. No wonder Tallbloke is a person of interest.]

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Testimony: Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, Parliament of Canada

By Ross McKittrick, Dec 15, 2011

http://www.rossmckittrick.com/uploads/4/8/0/8/4808045/mckittrick_testimony_dec15_2011.pdf

[SEPP Comment: Excellent summary of what is wrong.]

November 2011 University Of Alabama Analysis Of The Global Lower Tropospheric Temperature Analysis

By Roger Pielke Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Dec 16, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/12/16/november-2011-university-of-alabama-analysis-of-the-global-lower-tropospheric-temperature-analysis/>

[SEPP Comment: The globe depicting 33 years of temperature trends in the lower troposphere is particularly valuable.]

When Sea Level Change is Not Sea Level Change

By Tim Ball, His Blog, Dec 9, 2011

<http://drtimball.com/2011/when-sea-level-change-is-not-sea-level-change/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Climate talks keep issue in focus

Editorial, Washington Post, Dec 14, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/climate-talks-keep-issue-in-focus/2011/12/13/gIQAPtkluO_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

Ignoring a global warning

Those in the U.S. who deny climate change have nothing on Nero.

Editorial, LA Times, Dec 9, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/opinionla/la-ed-climate-20111209,0,3826430.story>

Why do people still deny climate change?

2011 was plagued by droughts, floods and tornadoes. It's high time we take global warming seriously

By Gene Lyons, Salon, Dec 14, 2011

http://www.salon.com/2011/12/15/why_do_people_still_deny_climate_change/singleton/

[SEPP Comment: Asking the wrong question. It is not climate change but global warming caused by CO2 emissions.]

Energy balance points to man-made climate change

By James Lloyd, Physics World, Dec 7, 2011

<http://physicsworld.com/cws/article/news/48057>

A climate model based on the "global energy balance" has provided new evidence for human-induced climate change, according to its creators

This method relies on the ability of climate models to accurately simulate the response patterns to each forcing, and also assumes that the responses can be scaled and added. Furthermore, changes in the energy balance of the climate system are not explicitly considered

[SEPP Comment: The assumptions are highly questionable.]

COP-17 – The Deal

Durban: what the media are not telling you

By Christopher Monckton, WUWT, Dec 9, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/12/09/durban-what-the-media-are-not-telling-you/>

[SEPP Comment: The goal is a brave new world.]

UN climate change talks: full text of the Durban platform

Ministers reached a last-minute agreement on a new text known as the Durban platform for enhanced action

Editorial, Guardian UK, Dec 12, 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2011/dec/12/durban-climate-change-conference-2011-global-climate-talks?intcmp=239>

[SEPP Comment: May or may not be the agreed to text.]

The BASIC Truth About Durban

By Philip Stott, GWPF Dec 11, 2011

<http://thegwpf.org/opinion-pros-a-cons/4532-philip-stott-the-basic-truth-about-durban.html>

Global Warming: Has China Had a Change of Heart or Just a Change of Strategy?

By Marita Noon, Energy Tribune, Dec 15, 2011

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/9389/Global-Warming-Has-China-Had-a-Change-of-Heart-or-Just-a-Change-of-Strategy?>

Canada formally withdraws from Kyoto Protocol

By Staff Writers AFP Dec 13, 2011

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-12-13/developmental-issues/30511561_1_kyoto-protocol-global-emissions-climate

International Climate Science Coalition Supports Canada's Decision to Formally Withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol

Other Nations should follow Canada's lead and withdraw from flawed treaty before the end of 2011
Press Release, Tom Harris, ICSC, Dec 13, 2011

http://www.climate-science-international.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=602

Climate Deal Seen as Possible Turning Point

By Coral Davenport, National Journal, Dec 12, 2011 [H/t John McClaughry]

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/climate-deal-seen-as-possible-turning-point-20111212>

The UN Climate Change Summit in Durban

By Ileana Johnson Paugh, Canada Free Press, Dec 13, 2011

<http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/43170>

Durban Climate Conference Puts Green Deal On Ice

By Benny Peiser, GWPF, Dec 14, 2011

<http://www.thegwpf.org/opinion-pros-a-cons/4551-benny-peiser-durbans-climate-conference-puts-green-deal-on-ice.html>

Climate deal: A guarantee our children will be worse off than us

Getting a deal was a success, but a pitiful one. The world's climate debt is soaring and postponing action threatens an environmental austerity far greater than today's economic woes

By Damian Carrington, Guardian, UK, Dec 11, 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2011/dec/11/durban-climate-change-conference-2011-climate-change#start-of-comments>

[SEPP Comment: Wholehearted acceptance of the orthodoxy and the promise of green energy.]

Deal Or No Deal? The Climate Con Lives On In Durban

Editorial, IBD, Dec 12, 2011

<http://news.investors.com/Article/594567/201112121848/durban-conference-climate-change-warming-court.htm>

Questioning the Orthodoxy

How the IPCC Reports Mislead the Public, Exaggerate the Negative Impacts of Climate Change and Ignore the Benefits of Economic Growth

Study finds climate change panel ignores its own findings and pushes plans that will prolong poverty for developing nations

By Indur M. Goklany and Julian Morris, Reason Foundation, Dec 7, 2011

<http://reason.org/studies/show/how-the-ipcc-climate-change-reports>

To the Guardian: You cannot make good public policy on mistaken premises

By Indur Goklany, WUWT, Dec 15, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/12/15/to-the-guardian-you-cannot-make-good-public-policy-on-mistaken-premises/#more-53151>

“Methane Time Bomb in Arctic Seas – Apocalypse Not”

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Dec 16, 2011

<http://www.worldclimaterreport.com/index.php/2011/12/16/methane-time-bomb-in-arctic-seas-apocalypse-not/>

Questioning European Green

Renewable energy: Vision or mirage?

By Hugh Sharman, Bryan Leyland & Martin Livermore, Dec 12, 2011

<http://www.adamsmith.org/research/reports/renewable-energy-vision-or-mirage>

The government is spending enormous sums of money on renewable energy. This report assesses the economic and energy security cases for renewable energy subsidies, and finds that there is no prospect that renewable energy will be able to provide a substantial amount of Britain's energy needs.

The limits to renewable energy

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Dec 16, 2011

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/limits-renewable-energy>

No time to abandon energy density

Professor Colin McInnes FREng, Royal Academy of Engineering, Dec 15, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.ingenia.org.uk/ingenia/articles.aspx?Index=740>

Climate Change Committee Confirms Multi-Billion Pound Green Policy Costs

By Staff Writers, REF, Dec 15, 2011

<http://www.ref.org.uk/press-releases/244-climate-change-committee-confirms-multi-billion-pound-green-policy-costs>

Electricity bills to rocket by 25% because of 'green' targets, says Government

By Jason Groves, Daily Mail, Dec 15, 2011

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2074299/Electricity-bills-rocket-25-green-targets-say-Government.html>

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Low-sulfur jet fuel eyed as climate aid

By Staff Writers, UPI, Dec 14, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2011/12/14/Low-sulfur-jet-fuel-eyed-as-climate-aid/UPI-78431323902816/?spt=hs&or=sn

Mercury releases into the atmosphere from ancient to modern times

By Staff Writers, SPX, Dec 16, 2011

http://www.terraviva.com/reports/Mercury_releases_into_the_atmosphere_from_ancient_to_modern_times_999.html

The Volt Administration

By Mona Charen, Townhall, Dec 13, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/monacharen/2011/12/13/the_volt_administration

[SEPP Comment: The US Secretary of the Navy defends spending over \$15 per gallon for a substitute for jet fuel which sells for about \$4 per gallon.]

Seeking a Common Ground

Politics is about acting alike, not thinking alike

By Roger Pielke, JR, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Dec 15, 2011

<http://thebulletin.org/web-edition/roundtables/when-politicians-distort-science#rt8959>

[SEPP Comment: Pielke's final comments in a roundtable discussion between Pielke, Robert Socolow, and Randy Olson on the issue of "When politicians distort science.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate?

Merkel: nuclear exit will create more jobs than destroys

By Staff Writers, AFP, Dec 13, 2011

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Merkel_nuclear_exit_will_create_more_jobs_than_destroys_999.html

[SEPP Comment: According to her, driving up the cost of living creates prosperity.]

Models v. Observations

Qualitative Discussion of Atlantic Basin Seasonal Hurricane Activity for 2012

By Philip J. Klotzbach and William M. Gray, CSU, Dec 7, 2011 [H/t Anthony Watts, WUWT]

<http://hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu/forecasts/2011/dec2011/dec2011.pdf>

Changing Weather

Hurricane Reality Check

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Dec 16, 2011

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/>

Is Global Warming Really Harming Africa's Sahel Region?

By James Taylor, Forbes, Dec 14, 2011

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2011/12/14/is-global-warming-really-harming-africas-sahel-region/>

Changing Climate

Comment On Andy Revkin's Post "More On The 'Sensitive' Climate Question" Specifically With Respect To His Interview With Andreas Schmittner

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Dec 14, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/12/14/comment-on-andy-revkins-post-more-on-the-sensitive-climate-question-specifically-with-respect-to-his-interview-with-andreas-schmittner/>

He does, not however, emphasize another really major distinction between today's climate system and that 18000 years ago. The presence of high continental ice sheets in the Northern Hemisphere would substantially alter the wind circulations, including ancient versions of ENSO, the PDO, the NAO ect. Any comparison with a "climate sensitivity" based on a surface global average temperature anomaly tells us little of scientific use in terms of how added CO₂ and other greenhouse gases would alter our climate in the coming decades.

Moreover, running global climate models with such a landscape configuration, including a more extended coastline due to the lower sea level, is not a satisfactory comparison with climate change predictions for the current climate system.

Global sea surface temperatures provides new measure of climate sensitivity

By Staff Writers, SPX, Dec 13, 2011

http://www.terradyaily.com/reports/Global_sea_surface_temperatures_provides_new_measure_of_climate_sensitivity_999.html

[SEPP Comment: See link immediately above concerning the physical changes during ice ages.]

'High Glaciers Safe From Warming'

By Christopher Pala, IPS, Dec 15, 2011 [-H/t GWPF]

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=106227>

[SEPP Comment: The article attributes late 20th century warming to carbon dioxide.]

Changing Earth

GPS Reveals 2010 Spike In Greenland Ice Loss Lifted Bedrock

By Pam Frost Gorder, SPX, Dec 12, 2011

http://www.terradyaily.com/reports/GPS_Reveals_2010_Spike_In_Greenland_Ice_Loss_Lifted_Bedrock_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The response seems to be unusually quick.]

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

The Contribution of Fossil Fuels to (a) Feeding Humanity and (b) Habitat Conservation?

By Indur Goklany, WUWT, Dec 11, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/12/11/the-contribution-of-fossil-fuels-to-a-feeding-humanity-and-b-habitat-conservation/>

Litigation Issues

The EPA vs. the Constitution

The Supreme Court prepares to hear a major Fifth Amendment case.

By Damon Root, Reason, Dec 15, 2011
<http://reason.com/archives/2011/12/15/the-epa-vs-the-constitution>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Banks Curb Carbon Trading

With progress slow on climate talks, banks withdraw from the industry

By Ben Sills, Business Week, Dec 15, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/banks-curb-carbon-trading-12152011.html>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Danes decline oil, gas, coal and nuclear

Denmark, holder of the next EU Presidency, goes for 100% decarbonisation

By Frede Vestergaard, EER, Dec 12, 2011

<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=3417>

[SEPP Comment: Another grand plan to be financed by electricity consumers and the export of yet to be created electric cars and yet to be developed smart grid technologies.]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

MISO Approves Plan for 215 New Midwestern Transmission Projects Amid EPA Rule Concerns

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Dec 14, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4236.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2345638&hq_l=7&hq_v=5e66050d0

CAFE Spells RIP for Trucks

By Eric Peters, American Spectator, Dec 13, 2011

<http://spectator.org/archives/2011/12/13/cape-spells-rip-for-trucks>

[SEPP Comment: That is the objective for the EPA.]

Energy Issues

Canada Releases Rules for Offshore-Arctic Drilling

By Edward Welsch, WSJ, Dec 16, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204026804577100762112504738.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

[SEPP Comment: Realistic rules. May be behind a paywall.]

Why U.S. is still king for Canadian oil

By Claudia Cattaneo, Financial Post, Dec 15, 2011

<http://business.financialpost.com/2011/12/15/why-canada-needs-u-s-for-its-oil/>

Household electricity bills skyrocket

Electric bills have skyrocketed in the last five years, a sharp reversal from a quarter-century when Americans enjoyed stable power bills even as they used more electricity.

By Dennis Cauchon, USA Today, Dec 13, 2011 [H/t SPPI Blog]

<http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/energy/story/2011-12-13/electric-bills/51840042/1?loc=interstitialskip>

[SEPP Comment: The administration is achieving one of its goals.]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Kinder's Major Bet on a Boom in Fracking

By Clifford Krauss, NYT, Dec 15, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/16/business/energy-environment/kinder-morgans-big-bet-on-fracking-boom.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=th25

[SEPP Comment: The comments by NRDC regarding a tax break have no basis. Nothing prevents a wind farm from being a partnership except special tax breaks corporate wind farms receive.]

Green Groups' Attack On Fracking Based On Bad Science

Editorial, IBD, Dec 12, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://news.investors.com/Article.aspx?id=594555&p=1>

Add Quakes to Rumbblings Over Gas Rush

By Henry Fountain, NYT, Dec 12, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/13/science/some-blame-hydraulic-fracturing-for-earthquake-epidemic.html?ref=science>

Administration's Control of Oil and Gas

Return to Gulf: Big Oil Grabs Leases

First Auction of Deep-Water Blocks Since BP Disaster Draws \$337.6 Million in Winning Bids

By Tom Fowler, WSJ, Dec 15, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203893404577098773281211592.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

[SEPP Comment: There is a big difference between leases giving the right to explore for oil and permits to drill for oil. According to the article the US direct employment in the oil and gas industry has increased from 157,800 in April 2010 to 183,600 in November 2011. But this is from on drilling, largely on private lands. The rig count in the Gulf of Mexico has fallen from 52 to 39. May be behind a pay wall.]

Return of King Coal?

Exxon's Energy Outlook: A 50 Page Hypothesis

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts Weekly, Dec 15, 2011

<http://www.energy-facts.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=cSw2bFp5Sis%3d&tabid=100>

[SEPP Comment: Taking exception to Exxon's forecast of low coal use in the future.]

Oil Spills & Consequences

New report criticizes industry, regulators in Gulf oil spill

By Neela Banerjee, LA Times, Dec 14, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/environment/la-me-gs-new-report-blasts-fed-regulators-on-gulf-oil-spill-20111214,0,3290326.story?track=rss>

[SEPP Comment: Great photo of a Kemps Ridley turtle swimming away from a horde of would be human rescuers attempting to rehabilitate it.]

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Cold Shutdown Conditions Declared at Fukushima

By Peter Kaisner, IAEA, Dec 16, 2011

<http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/2011/coldshutdown.html>

Scientists Assess Radioactivity in the Ocean from Japan Nuclear Power Facility

By Staff Writers, SPX, Dec 15, 2011

http://www.terradaaily.com/reports/Scientists_Assess_Radioactivity_in_the_Ocean_from_Japan_Nuclear_Power_Facility_999.html

France's Areva sees 2011 loss of up to 1.6 bn euros

By Staff Writers, AFP, Dec 12, 2011

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/France's_Areva_sees_2011_loss_of_up_to_16_bn_euros_999.html

Small reactors called U.S. nuclear future

By Staff Writers, UPI, Dec 13, 2011

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2011/12/13/Small-reactors-called-US-nuclear-future/UPI-36121323820780/?spt=hs&or=sn

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy

Sun burned

German solar insolvency is latest sign of collapse of the green-energy bubble. Ontario is set to cut tariff rates

By Terence Corcoran, Financial Post, Dec 14, 2011

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/12/14/terence-corcoran-sun-burned/>

Bird advocates urge mandatory standards for wind energy projects

By Louis Sahagun, LA Times, Dec 14, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/environment/la-me-gs-bird-advocates-urge-mandatory-standards-for-wind-energy-projects-20111214,0,2978806.story?track=rss>

[SEPP Comment: The article states that according to federal wildlife authorities wind farms kill about 440,000 birds each year. A search of the web failed to identify a source for the claim although Fish and Wildlife states tens of millions of birds are killed each year by other human related causes including domestic cats. Fish and Wildlife reported that in the year following the Gulf Oil Spill it found 2308 dead birds with visible oil.]

The Wind Power Pipe Dream

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Dec 12, 2011

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/>

Lawrence Livermore ramps up wind energy research

By Anne M Stark for LLNL News, SPX, Dec 16, 2011

http://www.winddaily.com/reports/Lawrence_Livermore_ramps_up_wind_energy_research_999.html

Jet Fuel-Gate Is Obama's New Solyndra

Editorial, IBD, Dec 13, 2011

<http://news.investors.com/Article.aspx?id=594703&p=1>

Carbon Schemes

Vattenfall's Jämschwalde Demo Is Latest in String of CCS Projects Shelved

By Staff Writers, Power News, Dec 14, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4233.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2345638&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e660500d0

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Recent Reflections on Sea-Level Rise Reflect Poorly on the IPCC

Reference: Lee, E.M. 2011. Reflections on the decadal-scale response of coastal cliffs to sea-level rise. *Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology* 44: 481-489.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/dec/13dec2011a1.html>

Climate Model Failures in the Southeast Pacific Ocean

Reference Zheng, Y., Shinoda, T., Lin, J.-L. and Kiladis, G.N. 2011. Sea surface temperature biases under the stratus cloud deck in the Southeast Pacific Ocean in 19 IPCC AR4 coupled general circulation models. *Journal of Climate* 24: 4139-4164.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/dec/14dec2011a3.html>

The Medieval Warm Period in Southern South America

Reference: Neukom, R., Luterbacher, J., Villalba, R., Kuttel, M., Frank, D., Jones, P.D., Grosjean, M., Wanner, H., Aravena, J.-C., Black, D.E., Christie, D.A., D'Arrigo, R., Lara, A., Morales, M., Soliz-Gamboa, C., Srur, A., Urritia, R. and von Gunten, L. 2011. Multiproxy summer and winter surface air temperature field reconstructions for southern South America covering the past centuries. *Climate Dynamics* 37: 35-51.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/dec/14dec2011a4.html>

The Warming of South Korean Cities: 1954-2008

Reference: Kim, M.-K. and Kim, S. 2011. Quantitative estimates of warming by urbanization in South Korea over the past 55 years (1954-2008). *Atmospheric Environment* 45: 5778-5783.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/dec/13dec2011a3.html>

Environmental Industry

Oxfam—Betraying its Roots and Sabotaging its Own Mission

By Indur Goklany, WUWT, Dec 13, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/12/13/oxfambetraying-its-roots-and-sabotaging-its-own-mission/>

Big Green's endangered species money machine

By: Ron Arnold, Washington Examiner, Dec 15, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/12/big-greens-endangered-species-money-machine/2007566>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Climate change blamed for dead trees in Africa

By Staff Writers, SPX, Dec 15, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Climate_change_blated_for_dead_trees_in_Africa_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Technically true, the Sahara has been drying since the monsoon rains stopped reaching it thousands of years ago.]

US mulls tax break for space 'burials'

By Staff Writers, AFP, Dec 12, 2011

http://www.space-travel.com/reports/US_mulls_tax_break_for_space_burials_999.html

[SEPP Comment: A politician in Virginia has proposed a state tax break to promote tourism at the launch site in Virginia.]

Study finds climate changes faster than species can adapt

By Staff Writers, SPX, Dec 14, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Study_finds_climate_changes_faster_than_species_can_adapt_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Using unverified models to project future global warming.]

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ARTICLES:

1. The mask slips

The Durban meeting shows that climate policy and climate science inhabit parallel worlds.

Editorial, Nature, Dec 14, 2011

http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v480/n7377/full/480292a.html?WT.ec_id=NATURE-20111215

[SEPP Comment: See comments by Fred Singer at the end of the article.]

It says a lot about the outcome of the UN climate talks in South Africa at the weekend that most of the immediate reports focused on the wrangling that led to an agreement of sorts, rather than the contents and implications of the agreement itself. Late-night talks, later-night arguments and early-morning pacts between battling negotiators with the apparent fate of the world resting on their shoulders give the process a melodrama that is hard to resist, particularly for those who experienced it first hand in the chaos of the Durban meeting (see [page 299](#)).

Such late finishes are becoming the norm at these summits. Only as nations abandon their original negotiating positions and reveal their true demands — throwing international differences into stark relief — does a sense of urgency develop and serious negotiation take place. Combined with the consensus nature of the talks, which demands that everyone agrees to everything, the result is usually a cobbled-together compromise that allows as many countries as possible to claim victory and, most importantly, provides them with a mandate to reconvene in 12 months' time.

So it was this time. In the search for a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, we now have the Durban Platform, which comes on the heels of the Bali Road Map and the Copenhagen Accord.

It takes a certain kind of optimism — or an outbreak of collective Stockholm syndrome — to see the Durban outcome as a significant breakthrough on global warming, as many are claiming. Outside Europe — which has set itself binding emissions goals over the short and long term beyond what it will inherit under its stated plan to carry on with unilateral cuts under an extended Kyoto — there will be no obligation for any nation to reduce soaring greenhouse-gas emissions much before the end of the decade. And that is assuming that all flows smoothly in future UN talks, and that a global deal with binding commitments proves easier to find in talks due to start in 2015 than it has so far.

The Durban deal may mark a success in the political process to tackle climate change, but for the climate itself, it is an unqualified disaster. It is clear that the science of climate change and the politics of climate change, which claims to represent it, now inhabit parallel worlds.

This has always been true up to a point, but surely the mask of political rhetoric has now slipped so far, to reveal the ugly political reality underneath, that it can never be replaced. How can politicians talk now with a straight face of limiting global warming to 2 °C? How will campaigners frame this result as leaving yet another 'last chance' to save the planet?

That does not make the political process redundant — far from it. Introducing policies to curb emissions was never about saving the planet or not, or stopping global warming or not. It is about damage limitation — the 3 °C or 4 °C of average warming the planet could experience in the long term, according to some analyses of the Durban outcome doing the rounds, is clearly much worse than the 2 °C used as shorthand for dangerous at present. But it is preferable to the 5 °C or 6 °C that science suggests is possible if emissions continue to rise unabated.

To prevent that outcome will be just as difficult politically as was the now abandoned attempt to find a global successor in time to follow Kyoto. But it remains possible — and there were at least encouraging signs in Durban that previously obstinate countries recognize that it is necessary, even if it is delayed. Those, including this journal, who have long argued the scientific case for the need to control greenhouse-gas emissions should back this new political mood to the hilt. But as the Durban Platform crowds with politicians, the climate train they wait for has left the station

Fred Singer said:

The *Nature* editorial (Dec 15; The Mask Slips) talks about science and policy in “parallel” universes. Quite correct – if you mean ‘separate’ and ‘disconnected.’ COP 17 was never about climate, let alone science. It was all about money: (1) How to assure continuing government careers for 200 delegations, with annual vacations paid by taxpayers. (2) How to transfer \$100 billion a year from industrialized nations to LDCs (or more precisely, to their kleptocratic rulers), using “climate justice” or “climate guilt” (depending on who is doing the talking). (3) How to gain a national advantage by setting differential emission limits.

By now it should be obvious that (1) the enshrined temperature limit of +2 degC is based on fiction and has no scientific basis. As an annual global average, climate models tell us, it will mean warmer winter nights in Siberia and Canada; perhaps -35deg instead of -40; and little warming in the tropics. (2) It should also be obvious that even strenuous and economy-killing efforts at mitigation, will have little effect on atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, let alone on climate. If a demonstration is needed, just look at the lack of warming since 1998, in spite of rapidly rising levels of greenhouse gases.

So, yes, I would agree with the editorial, if properly expanded.

2. Be thankful offshore wind hasn't taken off

By Charles Battig, VA-SEEE, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Dec 12, 2011

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/news/letters-to-the-editor/2011/dec/12/tdopin01-correspondent-of-the-day-ar-1536706/>

As the year draws to a close, it is appropriate to look back and give thanks for our mixed blessings such as the recent Dominion Virginia Power (DVP) electric-rate determinations by the State Corporation Commission.

Consumers are thankful that a meager 10.9 percent will have to suffice as a DVP profit margin rather than the 12.5 percent requested. They should be thankful that the half-percentage-point incentive for meeting the state's renewable energy target was not larger. This relic from former Gov. Tim Kaine's 2007 energy plan lives on as part of Gov. Bob McDonnell's "all-of-the-above" 2010 Virginia Energy Plan. Section 6 of that document is sprinkled with the language of government favoritism and distortions of the free-market process for energy. Renewable portfolio standards and renewable electric-generating facilities are matched with legislated "enhanced rates of return" to participating utilities. There is a biofuels production incentive fund and income tax credits for undefined green jobs. Grants are offered for manufacturers producing solar panels in Virginia (son of Solyndra?). The Virginia Offshore Wind Development Authority stands ready to "assist development of an offshore wind industry in Virginia."

Consumers can be thankful that the offshore wind industry has not taken off. The April 2011 Energy Information Administration's levelized cost estimate for offshore wind is 25 cents per kWh, even more than solar at 22 cents per kWh. Traditional coal? 10 cents per kWh. Consumers would be on the hook to pay exorbitant energy costs to support politically favored industries.

Consumers should be thankful that current Republican members of Congress and some presidential candidates have seen the folly of governmental subsidies for energy. Crony capitalism is a dirty word these days. The political aspirations of McDonnell are burdened by "all-of-the-above" — just ask Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney.

3. The Contrarians Have Better Data

By Lord Christopher Monckton, WSJ, Dec 15, 2011

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203518404577096250302846234.html?KEYWORDS=contrarians+have+better>

Prof. Michael E. Mann writes ("Climate Contrarians Ignore Overwhelming Evidence," Letters, Dec. 5) that his 1999 "hockey stick" graph "showed that average temperatures today are higher than they have been for at least the past 1,000 years."

But Mr. Mann's paper only covered the northern hemisphere. It included the questionable use of annual bristlecone-pine tree rings for temperature reconstruction. Even then, it replaced some tree-ring data with estimates. Tree-ring series that showed a 20th-century uptick were given 390 times the weighting of other series, according to a 2005 study by Ross McKittrick, an environmental economist at the University of Guelph. Mr. Mann and his fellow Climategate emailers used what they called "Mann's Nature trick" to "hide" the mismatch between late-20th-century warming and the cooling the tree-rings showed.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mann has often refused to supply programs and data to researchers wishing to verify his work. The 2006 Wegman report for the U.S. House of Representatives showed that many of the papers supporting Mr. Mann's results, which appeared shortly after Mr. McKittrick and his colleague Stephen McIntyre published their exposé of his graph, were written largely by Mr. Mann's associates and co-authors.

The National Academy of Sciences did not, as Mr. Mann says, "affirm" his conclusions, for the data were insufficient. Papers by scientists from all over the world show the medieval warm period that Mr. Mann's work appeared to abolish was real, global and warmer than today.

Mr. Mann's questionable result casts doubt on the scientific standards of the Climategate scientists and the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

4. All the Hot Air in China

Cutting carbon emissions requires restructuring the economy. Which is why Beijing won't do it.

By Joseph Sternberg, WSJ, Dec 15, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204026804577098554224386314.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

China made ripples earlier this month when its lead climate negotiator suggested that Beijing would be willing to strike a deal on carbon emissions. It hardly matters that this willingness won't kick in until at least 2020, which is one reason the U.N. conference on climate change held in Durban, South Africa, flopped last week. Those who care about such things (we aren't among them) are nonetheless parsing the outcome for signs of whether Beijing really is serious now.

Hint: The current regime is not serious about emissions and is not likely to get serious, ever. The reasons are worth contemplating because this is at heart a business and political-economy story, not a carbon story.

The optimistic strand of conventional wisdom holds that Beijing will one day be willing to sign on to limits on carbon emissions. The theory is that China simply needs some more time as a heavy polluter to grow itself to a level of prosperity where it can afford greener technologies. Cutting emissions is expensive.

Then again, Beijing is willing to invest billions of dollars in green technologies already. A Wall Street Journal article last week noted that China increasingly is a more receptive market for American clean tech than America is.

Perhaps some factor beyond cost is at play. Japan offers a clue as to what that factor might be. A couple of prime ministers ago, Yukio Hatoyama pledged to cut his country's emissions by some 25% from their 1990 levels by 2020. It was a particularly foolish idea for an economy that, thanks to decades of high oil prices and strict regulation, already boasts manufacturers that are among the most efficient in the world in carbon emissions per unit of production.

After one has made every last power plant, jet engine, assembly line and car as efficient as they can possibly be given today's technology, one either hopes for an energy-boosting technological miracle or else starts restructuring the economy. The question is whether the regulatory structure of an economy as a whole allows, let alone encourages, business to make efficient decisions about energy usage and by extension emissions.

In Japan, long accustomed to an array of government supports for exporting manufacturers at the expense of other industries, the answer was uncomfortable, which is why Tokyo lost its appetite for pressing the carbon issue. Japan was not among the deal enthusiasts at Durban.

Imagine the questions Beijing would face if China really were to get serious about carbon. Would it make sense to continue extending cheap credit to state-owned heavy manufacturers at the expense of greener private-sector start-ups? Might allowing freer communication over the Internet hasten the arrival of less-polluting service companies, an area in which China noticeably lags? Would it be feasible for China to shelter domestic green "champions" with various protectionist measures, or would the country be better off importing top-of-the-line green tech immediately?

China probably is closer to crunch time on such issues than is commonly assumed. While the country's existing power generation, manufacturing, transport and the like are all generally less carbon-efficient than those found elsewhere, China is adding new capacity at breakneck speed and the new stuff is at the technological frontier already. Reform, not technological investment, will soon be the only way forward.

Take aviation. The challenge facing American Airlines, say, is how to retrofit or retire an aging, fuel-inefficient fleet. But Chinese carriers are in the process of acquiring large numbers of new planes from scratch as they add capacity. Those planes already will boast the least-carbon-emitting engines available anywhere.

As a result, much of any carbon efficiency gains in Chinese aviation would have to come from regulatory reform. Beijing would be forced to consider whether it makes sense to allow the politically powerful military to control some 80% of China's airspace, leaving only narrow, idiosyncratically shaped corridors for commercial use and thereby requiring planes to follow circuitous, excess-fuel-burning routes to their destinations.

Would leaders in Beijing, atop a delicately balanced authoritarian system, have the stomach to take on the military in the name of helping the aviation industry meet a global carbon emissions target? Not any more than those leaders would have the stomach to take on politically powerful large industries, let alone to

tolerate the economic disruption that would accompany a shift to a potentially greener, market-determined balance between services and manufacturing.

Those who are justifiably skeptical about man-made climate change might still allow that carbon usage is one indicator of overall economic efficiency. Beijing seems to recognize this, too, which is the real reason not to hold your breath for a climate deal.

5. Global Warming and Adaptability

Any carbon deal to replace Kyoto would have a negligible impact on climate in coming decades.

By Bjorn Lomborg, WSJ, Dec 12, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203413304577086361984880468.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0

The Durban pit-stop in the endless array of climate summits has just ended, and predictably it reaffirmed the United Nations' strong belief that the most important response to global warming is to secure a strong deal to cut carbon emissions.

What is almost universally ignored, however, is that if we want to help real people overcome real problems we need to focus first on adaptation.

The Durban agreement is being hailed as a diplomatic victory. Yet it essentially concedes defeat, leaving any hard decisions to the far end of the decade when other politicians will have to deal with it. For nearly 20 years, the international community has tried to negotiate commitments to carbon cuts, with almost nothing to show for it.

Even most rich countries don't want to cut fossil fuels, because the alternatives are considerably more expensive. China, India and other emerging economies certainly do not want to, because putting the brakes on growth means consigning millions to poverty.

But even if such intractable issues could be magically resolved, any deal would have a negligible impact on climate. Even if we were to cut emissions by 50% below 1990-levels by 2050—an extremely unrealistic scenario—the difference in temperature would be less than 0.2 degrees Fahrenheit in 2050.

This goes against everything that carbon campaigners tell us. When Hurricane Katrina or other weather disasters devastate communities, we're told by advocates such as Al Gore that the effects of climate change are already being felt and it's time to commit to drastic carbon cuts.

It is worth noting that often these arguments are exaggerated for effect. Since Hurricane Katrina, the global accumulated cyclone energy index has declined to almost the lowest level since we started measuring such phenomena in the early 1970s. Global warming will probably make hurricanes slightly stronger but slightly less frequent, leaving the overall impact murky.

What we can say clearly is that if we want to help New Orleans or other at-risk areas, cutting emissions will have virtually no impact for many decades. Bolstering hurricane defenses through improved levees and wetlands could, however, make a world of difference.

This is even more true for hurricane impacts in Third World countries. When Hurricane Andrew hit Florida, it cost 10% of the state's GDP and killed 41 people. But when the similar-sized Hurricane Mitch hit Honduras, it cost the country two-thirds of its GDP and killed more than 10,000. Tackling hurricane

impacts in developing countries is not about cutting carbon but about adaptation and economic growth to improve resilience.

This is true whether we look at hurricanes or at other problems exacerbated by global warming. It is often—correctly—pointed out that global warming will hit developing countries hardest. Malaria cases, for instance, will increase along with mosquito populations, while food production in many developing countries will decrease.

6. The Cellulosic Ethanol Debacle

Congress mandated purchase of 250 million gallons in 2011. Actual production: 6.6 million.

Editorial, WSJ, Dec 13, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204012004577072470158115782.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop

To recap: Congress subsidized a product that didn't exist, mandated its purchase though it still didn't exist, is punishing oil companies for not buying the product that doesn't exist, and is now doubling down on the subsidies in the hope that someday it might exist. We'd call this the march of folly, but that's unfair to fools.

[SEPP Comment: In the text, the reporter confuses barrels with gallons – 1 barrel is 42 gallons US.]

We'll fund additional research in cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn but from wood chips and stalks or switch grass. Our goal is to make this new kind of ethanol practical and competitive within six years."

—George W. Bush, 2006 State of the Union address

Years before the Obama Administration dumped \$70 billion into solar and wind energy and battery operated cars, and long before anyone heard of Solyndra, President Bush launched his own version of a green energy revolution. The future he saw was biofuels. In addition to showering billions of dollars on corn ethanol, Mr. Bush assured the nation that by 2012 cars and trucks could be powered by cellulosic fuels from switch grass and other plant life.

To launch this wonder-fuel industry, the feds under Mr. Bush and President Obama have pumped at least \$1.5 billion of grants and loan subsidies to fledgling producers. Mr. Bush signed an energy bill in 2007 that established a tax credit of \$1.01 per gallon produced.

Most important, the Nancy Pelosi Congress passed and Mr. Bush signed a law imposing mandates on oil companies to blend cellulosic fuel into conventional gasoline. This guaranteed producers a market. In 2010 the mandate was 100 million barrels, rising to 250 million in 2011 and 500 million in 2012. By the end of this decade the requirements leap to 10.5 billion gallons a year.

When these mandates were established, no companies produced commercially viable cellulosic fuel. But the dream was: If you mandate and subsidize it, someone will build it.

Guess what? Nobody has. Despite the taxpayer enticements, this year cellulosic fuel production won't be 250 million or even 25 million gallons. Last year the Environmental Protection Agency, which has the authority to revise the mandates, quietly reduced the 2011 requirement by 243.4 million gallons to a mere 6.6 million. Some critics suggest that even much of that 6.6 million isn't true cellulosic fuel.

The EPA has already announced that the 2012 mandate of 500 million gallons is unattainable, so it is again expected to lower the mandate to fewer than 12 million gallons for next year.

One reason the mandates can't be met is the half-dozen or so companies that received the first round of subsidies to produce cellulosic fuel never got off the ground. Some 70 million gallons, or 70% of the cellulosic supply to meet the 2010 mandate, was supposed to come from Alabama-based Cello Energy. Incredibly, those projections were made before Cello had built its plant to produce the fuel and before the technology was proven to work.

In 2009 a jury in a civil fraud case ruled that Cello had lied about how much cellulosic fuel it could produce. Some of the fuel that Cello showed to investors was derived from petroleum, not plants. The firm produced little biofuel and in October 2010 it declared bankruptcy.

It gets worse. Because there was no cellulosic fuel available, oil companies have had to purchase "waiver credits"—for failing to comply with a mandate to buy a product that doesn't exist. In 2010 and this year, the EPA has forced oil companies to pay about \$10 million for these credits. Since these costs are eventually passed on to consumers, the biofuels mandate is an invisible tax paid at the gas pump.

And for what? An October 2011 report on biofuels by the National Academy of Sciences concluded that the mandates "may be an ineffective way to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions." Because production is so low, advanced cellulosic fuels also do very little to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil. The report notes that "currently, no commercially viable biorefineries exist for converting cellulosic biomass to fuel."

Why? Because of what the National Academy report calls "the high cost of producing cellulosic biofuels compared with petroleum-based fuels, and uncertainties in future biofuel markets." The report does say that technological breakthroughs could make cellulosic fuels cost-competitive in the future, but that same leap of faith has driven subsidies to alternative energy for 40 years.

Still, the subsidies roll on. In August 2011 the Obama Administration funded a \$510 million program in partnership with the Navy to produce advanced biofuels for the military. In September the feds loaned \$134 million to Abengoa Bioenergy to build a cellulosic plant in Kansas. The optimistic forecast is that this plant will produce about 23 million barrels a year—a fraction of what Washington promised in 2006. In September the Department of Energy provided POET, which advertises itself as the "world's largest ethanol producer," a \$105 million loan guarantee for cellulosic.

To recap: Congress subsidized a product that didn't exist, mandated its purchase though it still didn't exist, is punishing oil companies for not buying the product that doesn't exist, and is now doubling down on the subsidies in the hope that someday it might exist. We'd call this the march of folly, but that's unfair to fools.

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