

The Week That Was: 2011-10-08 (October 8, 2011)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Climate Change Reconsidered: 2011 Interim Report

S. Fred Singer, Craig Idso, Robert M. Carter – August 29, 2011 Published by Heartland Institute

Summary: <http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/2011/pdf/FrontMatter.pdf>

Chapter Review and Full Report <http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/2011/2011report.html>

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Quote of the Week:

'Oil and gas will be important for the next few years. But we need to go on to green and alternative energy. [Energy] Secretary [Steven] Chu has assured me that within five years, we can have a battery developed that will make a car with the equivalent of 130 miles per gallon.' President Obama in response to a comment by shale oil developer Harold Hamm

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Number of the Week: \$4.65 Billion

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THIS WEEK:

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

SEPP / VA-SEEE FORUM: October 22 from 11 am to 1 pm. SEPP and VA-SEEE will be hosting a Forum in Richmond at Virginia Commonwealth University. Topics include Fred Singer's latest research on the failure of IPCC models, UN and US efforts to control local land use, energy issues, climate change myths and distortions, benefits of carbon dioxide, EPA litigation and the changing winds on Capitol Hill. The Forum will be held in the Commons Theater in the University Student Commons at 907 Floyd Street. A parking garage is across the Main Street with a charge no more than \$5.00.

The Forum is open to the public with no charge. Donations accepted.

<http://www.maps.vcu.edu/monroepark/univcommons/>

The Oil and Gas Revolution: The technology of extracting oil and natural gas from dense shale and oil sands is giving difficulty to those who desire control of these fuels. The false claim of peak oil or the high price of natural gas no longer can be used to justify programs of generating electricity from inefficient, unreliable, and expensive sources. Many in Washington, Brussels, and London are trying to stop the revolution by using special regulations that are not justifiable by science, economics, or public health.

However, cracks are appearing. Poland has made it clear it will veto any European Union (EU) regulations on extraction of natural gas from shale. The government of Poland simply does not wish to be dependent on Russia for this critical fuel. It has agreements with private companies to develop its promising natural gas resources. Other Central European nations are expressing similar views for developing natural gas resources in their countries. They have witnessed what Russia will do when it manipulates the supply of natural gas from government controlled companies for political, rather than economic, purposes.

George Osborne, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, has announced that Britain will not lead the EU in reducing carbon dioxide emissions at a faster rate than the rest of the EU. According to reports, Britain's Climate Change Act requires that Britain cut emissions by 34 percent by the end of the decade. The rest of the EU must cut emissions by 20 percent. It appears that the British government does not wish the nation to commit economic suicide by continually driving up the cost of electricity in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through the use of wind power and other alternative means of generating

electricity. No doubt, the reports of the discovery of extensive deposits of gas bearing shale in northwest England make the government's position, prior to Osborne's announcement, less tolerable to the public.

President Obama's comment, quoted above, indicates the administration will not promote the oil and gas revolution and would rather wait for a great technological breakthrough in automobile batteries, a breakthrough the world has been waiting for since electric automobiles were first developed over 100 years ago. The administration's actions confirm this position – ignore the current technological breakthrough in oil and gas and wait for technological breakthroughs in solar, wind, and batteries. Please see Article # 1 and links under "Questioning European Green."

Skinning the Cat: In 2010, President Obama's prized cap-and-trade bill failed to pass the Senate, which was controlled by Democrats. Mr. Obama famously stated there are other ways to skin the cat. Subsequently, the EPA has announced a wide range of intensified regulations to control emissions from electrical utilities, refineries, cement plants, and other facilities that emit large amounts carbon dioxide (CO2). EPA is making many dubious claims about the health benefits of such regulations. The Republicans on Capitol Hill are showing unusual resolve in fighting these regulations. And in some cases, such as the ozone rule, the administration is backing down. It appears that the Republicans in the House may actually demand that the EPA substantiate its claims of health benefits from these regulations, many of which are based on highly questionable statistical manipulations.

No doubt, a major factor in the Republican resolve is the current economic stagnation. Passed with great promises two and one-half years ago, the Stimulus Bill has failed. President Obama is promoting a second such bill but seems to be garnering little support, even among Democrats. Republicans tried to force a vote on the bill in the Senate. This week, using a highly controversial procedure, the Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid, managed to avoid the vote, which may have been embarrassing to the President.

It appears that economic stagnation will be a major issue, if not the defining issue, of the 2012 election. It is becoming increasingly apparent to many that the issues of the environmental movement, such as global warming, are secondary and that proposals to implement these issues are damaging to the economy. For the first time in a presidential election, some candidates are openly questioning the findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Of course, those who long stated the science is settled are labeling those candidates who question the science as anti-science. Advancement in science comes from skepticism and questioning. Those who unquestioningly accept the findings of the politicized IPCC, and label the skeptics as anti-science, are better describing themselves.

EPA Endangerment Finding: As stated in prior TWTWs, SEPP is a participant. in the group called the Coalition for Responsible Regulation, et al. in its litigation against the EPA for its "Endangerment Finding (EF)" that GHG, especially carbon dioxide, endanger public health and welfare. Several TWTWs discuss some of the highly questionable claims of the EPA.

Perhaps the most outrageous claim is the title of a subsection of EPA's latest court filing: "Climate models have been properly validated." This may come as a shock to IPCC expert reviewer Vincent Gray from New Zealand. He has successfully argued that the IPCC cannot label the results of the models as predictions – because the models have never been validated. The IPCC uses the term "projections," rather than "predictions." The EPA is claiming greater rigor in the models than even the IPCC claims.

Further, in NIPCC vs. IPCC [Singer 2011], Fred Singer demonstrates that under the present circumstances the models cannot be validated at all because of inherent chaotic uncertainties. First, in efforts to show consistency between observations and the model results, error bounds have been extended to the point they become almost meaningless. Second, all the models are non-linear chaotic models. They produce different results each time they are run. No one run, or even a few runs, can be used to establish a

mean for the runs. At least 10 runs, or more appropriately, 20 runs are needed to establish a mean. The model with the greatest number of published runs is the one from Japan with five runs – each showing strikingly different results with each run. Many models have been run only once or twice. A mean from these various models is statistically meaningless. Third, the surface temperature data from 1979 to 1997, which is used to establish the models, reports a warming trend that may not exist. It cannot be found in the records from six independent methods including radiosonde, satellite, and proxy data.

In addition, Table 2.11 in an appendix of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) assesses the level of understanding of the sixteen Forcing Factors found in the models. Some Forcing Factors that may be important, such as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) are not considered. Of the 16 considered, the level of understanding of 11 (69%) is ranked as “low” or “very low.” For the EPA to claim the models are valid is similar to a government agency certifying that a passenger aircraft is reliable after the engineers state that the reliability of 69% of the components is low to very low, and some important components may be missing.

Please see http://www.sepp.org/science_papers/ICCC_Booklet_2011_FINAL.pdf

Keystone Pipeline: The battle of whether or not to build the Keystone Pipeline is becoming intense. The pipeline is designed to bring over 700,000 barrels of oil per day from the oil sands of Alberta to refineries in Texas. Some of the refineries are processing crude from Venezuela – hardly a friend of the US. Many opposing the pipeline are using the tried and true method of claiming they want the pipeline but not where it is sited. Of course, no place is suitable. Others are making various false claims such as the pipeline can contaminate the entire Ogallala aquifer. Of course, the aquifer is currently crossed by many roads and pipelines.

Jim Goeke, professor emeritus in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, reports he has spent 40 years studying the Ogallala Aquifer including drilling over 1000 test holes. Among other things, he reports the Ogallala Formation is sloped from west to east. Thus it would be difficult for a leak in a pipeline in the eastern part to contaminate water in the western part. Please see Article # 2 and links under energy issues.

Number of the Week: \$4.65 Billion. That is the amount the Chinese oil company, Sinopec, paid for the stake ConocoPhillips had in the Alberta oil sands.

Corrections and Amplifications: SEPP Director Tom Sheahan pointed out that last week the Number of the Week failed to give the proper units. The units are megawatt hour of production. For example, for 2007 the Energy Information Administration estimated the subsidies for natural gas production of electricity amounted to \$0.25 megawatt hour of production while the subsidies for wind were \$23.37 per megawatt hour of production, and solar were \$24.34 per megawatt hour of production.

The September 24 TWTW provided a link to Steve McIntyre’s post “Brian Hoskins and the Times Atlas” but failed to annotate its importance: [Imperial College professor and Fellow of the Royal Society] Brian Hoskins was one of the first people that [journalist] Fiona Fox went to for a [testimonial](#) to the supposed rigor of the execrable Oxburgh inquiry [of Climategate]. Hoskins, presently [former RS publicity chief] Bob Ward’s supervisor at the [climate-alarmist] Grantham Institute, shamelessly called the Oxburgh inquiry “thorough and fair.” Please see the link under “Climategate Continued.”

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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. How North Dakota Became Saudi Arabia

Harold Hamm, discoverer of the Bakken fields of the northern Great Plains, on America's oil future and why OPEC's days are numbered.

By Stephen Moore, WSJ, Oct 1, 2011 [H/t George Nicholas]

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204226204576602524023932438.html>

2. Local View: A science-based approach to the Ogallala Aquifer

By Jim Goeke, Journal Star, Sep 24, 2011 [H/t Joe Herring]

http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/article_40586032-0597-5375-815a-8f91284a5fbf.html

Jim Goeke is a research hydrogeologist and professor emeritus in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

3. Let's Let Rigorous Science Prevail

By J.E. Murray, Letter, WSJ, Oct 4, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204226204576599213811303294.html?mod=ITP_opinion_1

4. Five Truths About Climate Change

During the decade that Al Gore dominated the environmental debate, global carbon-dioxide emissions rose by 28.5%.

By Robert Bryce, WSJ, Oct 6, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203388804576612620828387968.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

5. Solar-Panel Firms' Outlook Dims

By Cassandra Sweet, WSJ, Oct 4, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204612504576610941400628636.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204831304576596770729824868.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTTopOpinion

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Commentary: Is the Sun Rising?

When Science Isn't

By Paul Greenberg, Townhall, Oct 5, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/paulgreenberg/2011/10/03/when_science_isnt/page/full/

Climategate Continued

Brian Hoskins and the Times Atlas

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Sep 22, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/09/22/brian-hoskins-and-the-times-atlas/>

Seminar on Penn State "Inquiry"

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Oct 4, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/10/04/seminar-on-penn-state-inquiry/>

According to Steve, Clive Crook elegantly summarized the Penn State process at the Atlantic Monthly: "The Penn State inquiry exonerating Michael Mann — the paleoclimatologist who came up with "the hockey stick" — would be difficult to parody."

78 Names

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Oct 1, 2011 [H/t Bud Bromley]

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2011/10/01/78-names/>

“The scientists whose names appear below have not only been examining one of the world’s most important questions for the IPCC. They have a documented, public relationship with professional lobbyists who have a strong interest in influencing this matter.”

EPA: the Endangerment Finding was not a “highly influential scientific assessment.”

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Oct 4, 2011

<http://climateaudit.org/2011/10/04/epa-the-endangerment-finding-was-not-a-highly-influential-scientific-assessment/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

IPCC Predictions (Scenarios) Always Wrong Therefore Science Wrong.

By Tim Ball, His Blog, Oct 4, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://drtimball.com/2011/ipcc-predictions-scenarios-always-wrong-therefore-science-wrong/>

Warmists Think We're Stupid

By Ross Kaminsky, American Spectator, Oct 4, 2011 [H/t Debbie Wetlaufer]

<http://spectator.org/archives/2011/10/04/warmists-think-were-stupid>

[SEPP Comment: Rebutting an article in the New York Times.]

This is 90% certainty? Really? (Yet another paper shows the hot-spot is missing.)

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Oct 3, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/10/this-is-90-certainty-really-yet-another-paper-shows-the-hot-spot-is-missing/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

EU urges roadmap this year on climate action

By Staff Writers, AFP, Oct 2, 2011

http://www.terraviva.com/reports/EU_urges_roadmap_this_year_on_climate_action_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The gathering of the cult.]

Group Urges Research Into Aggressive Efforts to Fight Climate Change

By Cornelia Dean, NYT, Oct 4, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/04/science/earth/04climate.html?_r=1

“We are doing it accidentally, but the Earth doesn’t know that,” she said, adding, “Going forward in ignorance is not an option.”

France withdraws shale gas permits: minister

By Staff Writers, AFP, Oct 3, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/France_withdraws_shale_gas_permits_minister_999.html

Fossil fuel subsidies rising despite reform effort

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Oct 4, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/185291-fossil-fuel-subsidies-rising-despite-reform-effort>

[SEPP Comment: Does not necessarily apply to US. Agree with IEA and OECD: Phase out all subsidies of energy production. Disagree: “removing inefficient subsidies would raise national revenues and reduce **greenhouse-gas emissions.**” Boldface added.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Climate sceptics are today's radical rebels

By Brendan O'Neill, The Australian, Oct 8, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/climate-sceptics-are-todays-radical-rebels/story-e6frg6zo-1226161595881>

[SEPP Comment: According to Scientific American those challenging the orthodoxy are white, conservative males.]

Chinese sceptics see global warming as US conspiracy

By John Garnaut, Sydney Morning Herald, Oct 8, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/chinese-sceptics-see-global-warming-as-us-conspiracy-20111007-1ld11.html>

[SEPP Comment: Maybe not every climate skeptic / denier is a white, conservative male. See above link.]

Questions for the Chief Scientist

Australia's Chief Scientist provides high-level "independent" advice to the Prime Minister and other Ministers on matters relating to science, technology and innovation.

By Michael Kile, Quadrant, Oct 4, 2011

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2011/10/questions-for-the-chief-scientist>

Questioning European Green

Lessons From Lemmings: The EU's Green Power Folly

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Oct 4, 2011

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2011/10/04/lessons-from-lemmings-the-eus-green-power-folly/>

The Osborne Doctrine

By Fraser Nelson, The Spectator, Oct 7, 2011

<http://www.thegwpf.org/opinion-pros-a-cons/4047-fraser-nelson-the-osborne-doctrine.html>

[SEPP Comment: Has a bit of realism penetrated the British Cabinet's mad dash for alternative energy? The comments by the Chancellor of the Exchequer indicate perhaps it has.]

What happened to the Conservatives' green agenda?

Chancellor's attack on environment laws at conference is a far cry from the Tories' 2006 rebrand as an eco-conscious party

By Damian Carrington and Allegra Stratton, Guardian, UK, Oct 6, 2011 [H/t Cooler Head Digest]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/06/david-cameron-green-agenda-fades?newsfeed=true>

Shale Gas & the Re-Shaping of European Power Politics

By Peter C. Glover & Michael J. Economides, Energy Tribune, Oct 6, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/8769/Shale-Gas--the-Re-Shaping-of-European-Power-Politics>

Carbon credits tarnished by human rights 'disgrace'

By Staff Writers, EurActiv, Oct 4, 2011 [H/t Mark Duchamp]

<http://www.euractiv.com/climate-environment/carbon-credits-tarnished-human-rights-disgrace-news-508068>

Problems within the Orthodoxy

Al Gore is doing a disservice to science by overplaying the link between climate change and weather

To claim that we are causing meteorological events that would not have occurred without human influence is just plain wrong

By Myles Allen, Guardian, UK, Oct 7, 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/07/al-gore-science-climate-weather?INTCMP=SRCH>

Productivity of land plants may be greater than previously thought

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Sep 29, 2011

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/09/110929122804.htm>

[SEPP Comment: More than a little hick-up to those who claim that human CO2 emissions will stay around for a thousand years.]

Planet 'far away' on climate goals: study

By Staff Writers, AFP, Oct 4, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Planet_far_away_on_climate_goals_study_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Of course, the “planet’s goals” are created by international alarmists.]

China population to become world's biggest polluters

China's carbon emissions for each member of its population could overtake that of Britain as early as the end of next year, it has been revealed.

By Peter Foster, Telegraph, UK, Sep 28, 2011 [H/t Des Moore]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8793269/China-population-to-become-worlds-biggest-polluters.html>

Seeking a Common Ground

Double standards

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Sep 29, 2011

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/double-standards>

The climate change debate: Man versus nature

By Staff Writers, Physorg.com, Oct 3, 2011 [H/t Joe Bast]

<http://www.physorg.com/print236850210.html>

[SEPP Comment: As seen in the History of Malaria in Finland (TWTW Oct 1, 2011) the comments on global warming endangering health are unsubstantiated. In many countries in the tropics malaria rates were plummeting with the indoor spraying of huts with DDT, until EPA banned DDT in the US and environmental groups demanded that other countries adopt these bans. When they did, malaria rates exploded. Now many of the same environmental groups blame global warming as spreading malaria.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate?

Science controversies past and present

Reactions to the science of global warming have followed a similar course to those of other inconvenient truths from physics.

By Steven Sherwood, Physics Today, Oct, 2011 [H/t Ed Berry]

http://physicstoday.org/resource/1/phtoad/v64/i10/p39_s1?bypassSSO=1

[SEPP Comment: Another highly selective account of history. Among other issues, the author does not recognize, or admit, that Galileo’s contemporaries, Aristotelian scientists, railed against Copernicus and Galileo’s use of observations as evidence. Which group is demanding empirical evidence from the mainstream scientists? Certainly not the alarmists!]

A Map of Organized Climate Change Denial

By Andrew C. Revkin, NYT, Oct 2, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/02/a-map-of-organized-climate-change-denial/>

Chart: How the Climate Change Deniers Won

By Josh Harkinson, Mother Jones, Sep 22, 2011

<http://motherjones.com/blue-marble/2011/09/chart-climate-change-spin-cycle>

[SEPP Comment: The chart for the above Revkin article.]

Map: The Climate Change Scare Machine — the perpetual self-feeding cycle of alarm

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Oct 6, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/10/map-the-climate-change-scare-machine-the-perpetual-self-feeding-cycle-of-alarm/>

[SEPP Comment: See counter chart for above claim and the Revkin article.]

Who's Bankrolling the Climate-Change Deniers?

By Byran Walsh, Time, Oct 4, 2011

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2096055,00.html#ixzz1a1HoKgFu>

[SEPP Comment: Apparently, the journalist never heard of Climategate.]

Who's Bankrolling the Climate Change Fanatics?

By Rebecca Terrell, New American, Oct 5, 2011 [H/t SPPI Blog]

<http://www.thenewamerican.com/tech-mainmenu-30/environment/9271-whos-bankrolling-the-climate-change-fanatics>

[SEPP Comment: Rebuttal to Harkinson article.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Seattle PI fabrication: “We’ve lost one to two months of spring snowpack since the early 1970s”

By Staff Writers, ICECAP, Sep 28, 2011

<http://icecap.us/index.php/go/they-said-it/seattle-pi-fabrication-weve-lost-one-to-two-months-of-spring-snowpack-since/>

Models v. Observations

New Article Highlights Deficiencies In The Global Climate Models – Luo Et Al 2011

By Roger Pielke Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Oct 5, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/10/05/new-article-highlights-deficiencies-in-the-global-climate-models-luo-et-al-2011/>

“This article illustrates that not only have the global models shown NO skill at predicting changes in climate statistics over multi-decadal time scales, they still do not even skillfully simulate important components of the current global climate.”

Measurement Issues

GAO report on the poor quality of the US climate monitoring network

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 30, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/09/30/gao-report-on-the-poor-quality-of-the-us-climate-monitoring-network/>

Erroneous Information In The Report “Procedural Review of EPA’s Greenhouse Gases Endangerment Finding Data Quality Processes”

By Roger Pielke Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Oct 5, 2011

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2011/10/05/erroneous-information-in-the-report-procedural-review-of-epas-greenhouse-gases-endangerment-finding-data-quality-processes/>

[SEPP Comment: Challenging the EPA's claim that that the temperature records (from CRU, NOAA, and NASA are independent and valid.)]

Changing Sea Ice

Arctic Ice Loss: Portent of Doom or Reason to Rethink IPCC Climate Sensitivity Assumptions?

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming.org, Oct 3, 2011

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2011/10/03/arctic-ice-loss-portent-of-doom-or-reason-to-rethink-ipcc-climate-sensitivity-assumptions/>

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Climate: Act now to diversify crops at risk, say scientists

By Staff Writers, AFP, Oct 3, 2011

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Climate_Act_now_to_diversify_crops_at_risk_say_scientists_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Alarmism at its international best.]

The Political Games Continue

White House Likely to Veto Bills Delaying CSAPR, Boiler Rules

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Oct 5, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4075.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2297764&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e66050d0

Sen. Alexander targets energy subsidies, says political furor over climate might ease

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Oct 5, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/185593-sen-alexander-targets-energy-subsidies-says-climate-political-furor-may-ease>

“I’ve devised a plan for seven mini-Manhattan Projects for energy independence: solar, batteries, green building, capturing carbon, fusion, making fuels from crops we don’t eat and finding better ways to deal with nuclear fuel,”

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Court rules in favor of European Union emissions trading

By Keith Laing, The Hill, Oct 7, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/aviation/186227-court-rules-in-favor-of-european-union-emission-trading->

FERC Says Merger Would Further Entrench Duke Energy Monopoly

By Paul Chesser, National Legal and Policy Center, Oct 7, 2011

<http://nlpc.org/stories/2011/10/06/ferc-says-merger-would-further-entrench-duke-energy-monopoly>

[SEPP Comment: After spending millions lobbying for cap-and-trade, Duke Energy did not buy any friends in Washington. Was it because Duke’s chairman declared that, by its lobbying, Duke would make \$1 Billion per year if cap-and-trade was passed?]

Kill carbon dioxide regulations

Harper still rolling out rules that will waste billions

By Tom Harris, Financial Post, Oct 5, 2011

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/10/05/kill-co2-regulations/>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Wind industry: Rep. Stearns 'misunderstands' us

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Oct 7, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/186281-wind-industry-rep-stearns-misunderstands-us>

[SEPP Comment: *We are misunderstood and need subsidies.*]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

EPA's Mission Leap

Editorial, IBD, Oct 3, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/586825/201110031849/EPAs-Mission-Leap.htm>

Shocking Costs Of Environmentalism

Editorial, IBD, Oct 7, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/587431/201110071819/Shocking-Costs-Of-Environmentalism.htm?>

The EPA Gets Caught in a Big Fat Lie

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Oct 1, 2011

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2011/10/epa-gets-caught-in-big-fat-lie.html>

The EPA's Endangerment Finding Is Very Endangered

By Patrick Michaels, Forbes, Sep 30, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickmichaels/2011/09/30/the-epas-endangerment-finding-is-very-endangered/>

Oil sands environmental impact unknown: Canada audit

By Staff Writers, AFP, Oct 4, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Oil_sands_environmental_impact_unknown_Canada_audit_999.html

EPA Takes a Looser Stance on Power-Plant Emissions

By Deborah Solomon and Ryan Tracy, WSJ, Oct 7, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203476804576615162802642504.html?grcc=88888&mod=WSJ_hps_sections_news

Energy Issues

Salazar to enviros: Give Obama credit on energy

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Oct 5, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/185635-salazar-to-enviros-give-obama-credit-on-energy>

The Keystone Pipeline, Again in the News

By Michael J. Economides, Energy Tribune, Oct 3, 2011

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/8727/The-Keystone-Pipeline-Again-in-the-News>

Warren Buffett, the Keystone Pipeline, and Crony Capitalism

By Joe Herring, American Thinker, Oct 6, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/10/warren_buffett_the_keystone_pipeline_and_crony_capitalism.html

[SEPP Comment: *The association with Warren Buffett appears contrived.*]

Good For Canada And Us

Editorial, IBD, Oct 4, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=586983&p=1>

“The Natural Resources Defense Council has warned that Keystone XL ‘undermines the United States commitment to a clean energy future.’”

Rushing headlong over the cliff

By Marita Noon, Global Warming . org, Oct 3, 2011

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2011/10/03/rushing-headlong-over-the-cliff/>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

The End isn’t Nigh

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Oct 7, 2011

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2011/10/07/the-end-isn%E2%80%99t-nigh/>

Using the energy in oil shale without releasing carbon dioxide in a greenhouse world

By Staff Writers, SPX, Oct 05, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Using_the_energy_in_oil_shale_without_releasing_carbon_dioxide_in_a_greenhouse_world_999.html

[SEPP Comment: An answer to the thirty year old dream?]

Administration’s Control of Oil and Gas

What the Frack is Going on Here?

By Paul Driessen, Townhall, Oct 1, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/pauldriessen/2011/10/01/what_the_frack_is_going_on_here

Return of King Coal?

Why Asia Relies On Coal

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts Weekly, Oct 3, 2011

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=380b586e50&e=>

Oil Spills & Consequences

Scientists Identify Microbes Responsible for Consuming Natural Gas in Deepwater Horizon Spill

By Staff Writers, SPX, Oct 07, 2011

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Scientists_Identify_Microbes_Responsible_for_Consuming_Natural_Gas_in_Deepwater_Horizon_Spill_999.html

At Deepwater Horizon, Basic Research Was Applied

By Lonny Lippsett, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Oct 7, 2011

<http://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/viewArticle.do?id=116709§ionid=1000>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy

Is China’s Green Energy a Myth?

By Staff Writers, Institute for Energy Research, Oct 3, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2011/10/03/is-china%E2%80%99s-green-energy-a-myth/>

[SEPP Comment: Not a myth, but a clever marketing ploy.]

Green Energy Industry Staggers

Walter Russell Mead, American Interest, Oct 1, 2011 [H/t Real Clear Politics]

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/10/01/green-energy-industry-staggers/>

DOE Finalizes Seven Loan Guarantees Before Program Deadline

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Oct 5, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4079.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2297764&hq_l=11&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: For a total of \$5.9 Billion.]

Bursting the Big Green Bubble

By Amy Oliver Cooke and Michael Sandoval, Townhall, Oct 3, 2011

http://finance.townhall.com/columnists/amyoliver/2011/10/03/bursting_the_big_green_bubble

Ontario's Power Trip: The \$4,000 electricity bill

Electricity rates will double, making them among the highest in the developed world

By Glenn Fox and Parker Gallant, Financial Post, Oct 4, 2011

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/10/04/ontarios-power-trip-the-4000-electricity-bill/>

[SEPP Comment: Who cares if it costs more, the consumer will pay!]

Peltier: 'Chart a New Course' (POWER magazine editor rejects windgas for gas)

By Robert Bradley Jr, Master Resource, Oct 5, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/10/peltier-rejects-gaswind-generation/#more-16940>

[SEPP Comment: Without an inexpensive, practicable means of storing electricity on a commercial scale, wind power is unsustainable.]

Fuzzifying -fossil subsidies

Oil and gas will beat green energy with or without subsidies

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Oct 4, 2011

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/10/04/peter-foster-fuzzifying-%C2%ADfossil-subsidies/>

[SEPP Comment: Another attack by the IEA and OEC (following the climate agenda) on fossil fuel subsidies in an effort to justify even greater subsidies for unreliable, inefficient, and costly wind and solar.]

Solargate Opens Wide

Editorial, IBD, Sep 30, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/586618/201109301851/Solargate-Opens-Wide.aspx>

Doubling Down On Solyndra

Editorial, IBD, Oct 7, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/587510/201110071913/Doubling-Down-On-Solyndra.htm?>

[SEPP Comment: There is a difference between a bet and financial responsibility. Responsible leaders do not bet with the peoples' money.]

Why Wind Power Blows

By Steven F. Hayward, The American, Oct 5, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://blog.american.com/2011/10/energy-fact-of-the-week-why-wind-power-blows/>

“While the installed capacity of wind power on paper—that is, assuming the wind is blowing at the right speed—looks impressive, in the real world grid operators can count on only about 8 to 13 percent of that capacity being available during peak times.”

US unlikely to hit Renewable Fuel Standard for cellulosic biofuels

By Staff Writers, SPX, Oct 06, 2011

http://www.biofueldaily.com/reports/US_unlikely_to_hit_Renewable_Fuel_Standard_for_cellulosic_biofuels_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Given the reserves of oil and gas in the country, there is no reason why it should.]

Say No to the Keystone XL

Editorial, NYT, Oct 2, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/03/opinion/say-no-to-the-keystone-xl.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha211>

“...it should be clear, from many studies, that the best hope for long-term job creation will come from the development of renewable and alternative energy sources.”

A U.S.-Backed Geothermal Plant in Nevada Struggles

By Eric Lipton and Clifford Krauss, NYT, Oct 2, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/03/business/a-us-backed-geothermal-plant-in-nevada-struggles.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha25

Carbon Schemes

Flagship green energy project faces axe

Carbon plan to be shelved over funding shortage as fears grow for Tories' green agenda after chancellor's 'austerity' remark

By Terry Macalister and Damian Carrington, Guardian, UK, Oct 6, 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/06/carbon-energy-green-agenda>

[SEPP Comment: A carbon capture and storage (CCS) plan was just too expensive!]

California Dreaming

California Supreme Court Clears Way for Cap-and-Trade Rulemaking

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Oct 5, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4076.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2297764&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e66050d0

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Getting Back to Basics: Atmospheric Blocking

Reference: Scaife, A.A., Wollings, T., Knight, J., Martin G. and Hinton, T. 2010. Atmospheric blocking and mean biases in climate models. *Journal of Climate* 23: 6143-6152.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/oct/4oct2011a1.html>

A Ray of Light Cutting Through the Dark Pall of Flood Damages

Reference: Gong, G.-C., Liu, K.-K., Chiang, K.-P., Hsiung, T.-M., Chang, J., Chen, C.-C., Hung, C.-C., Chou, W.-C., Chung, C.-C., Chen, H.-Y., Shiah, F.K., Tsai, A.-Y., Hsieh, C.-h., Shiao, J.-C., Tseng, C.-M., Hsu, S.-C., Lee, H.-J., Lee, M.-A., Lin, I-I and Tsai, F. 2011. Yangtze River floods enhance coastal ocean phytoplankton biomass and potential fish production. *Geophysical Research Letters* 38: 10.1029/2011GL047519.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/oct/4oct2011a5.html>

Warming of the Tropical Upper Troposphere

Reference: Fu, Q., Manabe, S. and Johanson, C.M. 2011. On the warming in the tropical upper troposphere: Models versus observations. *Geophysical Research Letters* 38: 10.1029/2011GL048101. <http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/oct/5oct2011a1.html>

“Fu et al. state that in addition to greatly overestimating the tropical surface temperature trend, "it is evident that the AR4 GCMs exaggerate the increase in static stability between [the] tropical middle and upper troposphere during the last three decades," which findings do not bode well for the climate-modeling enterprise that is the foundational basis of the IPCC's unsupported claims of CO₂-induced climate change.”

The Effects of Climate Change on Infectious Diseases

Reference: Rohr, J.R., Dobson, A.P., Johnson, P.T.J., Kilpatrick, A.M., Paull, S.H., Raffel, T.R., Ruiz-Moreno, D. and Thomas, M.B. 2011. Frontiers in climate change-disease research. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 26: 270-277.

Health, Energy, and Climate

Malaria Declines Despite Local Warming

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Oct 3, 2011

<http://www.worldclimaterreport.com/index.php/2011/10/03/malaria-declines-despite-local-warming/>

WHO warns on urban air pollution

By Staff Writers, WNN, 28 September 2011

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/EE-WHO_warns_on_urban_air_pollution-2809116.html

[SEPP Comment: Based on the chart on air born particles, the US, Australian, and New Zealand urban areas are the cleanest of the countries covered.]

Mosquitoes Ignore Global Warming Predictions

By James Taylor, Forbes, Oct 5, 2011

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2011/10/05/mosquitoes-ignore-global-warming-predictions/>

Environmental Industry

Our children are at risk

By Harry Jackson, Jr, Townhall, Oct 5, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/harryjacksonjr/2011/10/05/our_children_are_at_risk

[SEPP Comment: Questioning environmental programs destructive to the economy.]

The Bloody Record of the War Against Carbon—and the Green Movement Generally

By E. Calvin Beisner, Ph.D. Cornwall Alliance, Oct 3, 2011

<http://www.cornwallalliance.org/blog/item/the-bloody-record-of-the-war-against-carbonand-the-green-movement-generally/>

Green groups have plenty of ‘green’

By Paul Chesser, Daily Caller, Oct 6, 2011

<http://dailycaller.com/2011/10/05/green-groups-have-plenty-of-green/#ixzz1a05He3Qd>

Other Scientific News

Chemist Once Accused of 'Quasi-Science' Wins Nobel For Quasicrystal Discovery

By Rebecca Boyle, Pop Sci, Oct 5, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.popsoci.com/science/article/2011-10/chemist-accused-quasi-science-wins-nobel-quasicrystal-discovery>

Studies of universe’s expansion win physics Nobel

Saul Perlmutter and Adam Riess of the United States and US-Australian Brian Schmidt won the 2011 Nobel Physics Prize Tuesday for their research on supernovae, the Nobel jury said.

By Staff Writers, AP, Oct 4, 2011 [H/t Gordon Fulks]

<http://www.physorg.com/news/2011-10-perlmutter-schmidt-riess-nobel-physics.html>

Climate debate diminished standing of science in some quarters: Nobel Prize winner

Sunanda Creagh, The Conversation, Oct 5, 2011 [H/t Lobos Moti, The Reference Frame]

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2011/10/fresh-physics-nobel-schmidt-climate.html#more>

[SEPP Comment: The debate should be based on physical evidence, not political power.]

Space Observatory Provides Clues to Creation of Earth's Oceans

By Staff Writers

Pasadena CA (JPL) Oct 06, 2011

[http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Space Observatory Provides Clues to Creation of Earths Oceans 999.html](http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Space_Observatory_Provides_Clues_to_Creation_of_Earths_Oceans_999.html)

Other News that May Be of Interest

“Energy and Society” Course: Professor Desrochers’s Model for the Academy

By Robert Bradley Jr, Master Resources, Oct 7, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/10/desrochers-energy-class/#more-16949>

[SEPP Comment: Perhaps a mandatory lecture series for all employees of the EPA, and Departments of Interior and Energy.]

China rethinks air pollution reporting

By Staff Writers, UPI, Oct 4, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/China_rethinks_air_pollution_reporting_999.html

Iran, Iraq pay \$1.2 bn to battle sandstorms

By Staff Writers, AFP, Oct 3, 2011

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Iran_Iraq_pay_12_bn_to_battle_sandstorms_999.html

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Friday Funny – The newest member of the Union of Concerned Scientists

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Oct 7, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/10/07/friday-funny-the-newest-member-of-the-union-of-concerned-scientists/#more-48813>

[SEPP Comment: Kenji Watts, Anthony’s dog, is proud to qualify and be accepted to membership to the Union of Concerned Scientists.]

Climate Change Caused Angry Runts

By Tim Wall, Discovery News, Oct 3, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://news.discovery.com/earth/climate-changes-led-to-war-and-stunted-europeans-111003.html>

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ARTICLES:

1. How North Dakota Became Saudi Arabia

Harold Hamm, discoverer of the Bakken fields of the northern Great Plains, on America's oil future and why OPEC's days are numbered.

By Stephen Moore, WSJ, Oct 1, 2011 [H/t George Nicholas]

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204226204576602524023932438.html>

Harold Hamm, the Oklahoma-based founder and CEO of Continental Resources, the 14th-largest oil company in America, is a man who thinks big. He came to Washington last month to spread a needed message of economic optimism: With the right set of national energy policies, the United States could be "completely energy independent by the end of the decade. We can be the Saudi Arabia of oil and natural gas in the 21st century."

"President Obama is riding the wrong horse on energy," he adds. We can't come anywhere near the scale of energy production to achieve energy independence by pouring tax dollars into "green energy" sources like wind and solar, he argues. It has to come from oil and gas.

You'd expect an oilman to make the "drill, baby, drill" pitch. But since 2005 America truly has been in the midst of a revolution in oil and natural gas, which is the nation's fastest-growing manufacturing sector. No one is more responsible for that resurgence than Mr. Hamm. He was the original discoverer of the gigantic and prolific Bakken oil fields of Montana and North Dakota that have already helped move the U.S. into third place among world oil producers.

How much oil does Bakken have? The official estimate of the U.S. Geological Survey a few years ago was between four and five billion barrels. Mr. Hamm disagrees: "No way. We estimate that the entire field, fully developed, in Bakken is 24 billion barrels."

If he's right, that'll double America's proven oil reserves. "Bakken is almost twice as big as the oil reserve in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska," he continues. According to Department of Energy data, North Dakota is on pace to surpass California in oil production in the next few years. Mr. Hamm explains over lunch in Washington, D.C., that the more his company drills, the more oil it finds. Continental Resources has seen its "proved reserves" of oil and natural gas (mostly in North Dakota) skyrocket to 421 million barrels this summer from 118 million barrels in 2006.

"We expect our reserves and production to triple over the next five years." And for those who think this oil find is only making Mr. Hamm rich, he notes that today in America "there are 10 million royalty owners across the country" who receive payments for the oil drilled on their land. "The wealth is being widely shared."

One reason for the renaissance has been OPEC's erosion of market power. "For nearly 50 years in this country nobody looked for oil here and drilling was in steady decline. Every time the domestic industry picked itself up, the Saudis would open the taps and drown us with cheap oil," he recalls. "They had unlimited production capacity, and company after company would go bust."

Today OPEC's market share is falling and no longer dictates the world price. This is huge, Mr. Hamm says. "Finally we have an opportunity to go out and explore for oil and drill without fear of price collapse." When OPEC was at its peak in the 1990s, the U.S. imported about two-thirds

of its oil. Now we import less than half of it, and about 40% of what we do import comes from Mexico and Canada. That's why Mr. Hamm thinks North America can achieve oil independence.

The other reason for America's abundant supply of oil and natural gas has been the development of new drilling techniques. "Horizontal drilling" allows rigs to reach two miles into the ground and then spread horizontally by thousands of feet. Mr. Hamm was one of the pioneers of this method in the 1990s, and it has done for the oil industry what hydraulic fracturing has done for natural gas drilling in places like the Marcellus Shale in the Northeast. Both innovations have unlocked decades worth of new sources of domestic fossil fuels that previously couldn't be extracted at affordable cost.

Mr. Hamm's rags to riches success is the quintessential "only in America" story. He was the last of 13 kids, growing up in rural Oklahoma "the son of sharecroppers who never owned land." He didn't have money to go to college, so as a teenager he went to work in the oil fields and developed a passion. "I always wanted to find oil. It was always an irresistible calling."

He became a wildcat driller and his success rate became legendary in the industry. "People started to say I have ESP," he remarks. "I was fortunate, I guess. Next year it will be 45 years in the business."

Mr. Hamm ranks 33rd on the Forbes wealth list for America, but given the massive amount of oil that he owns, much still in the ground, and the dizzying growth of Continental's output and profits (up 34% last year alone), his wealth could rise above \$20 billion and he could soon be rubbing elbows with the likes of Warren Buffett.

His only beef these days is with Washington. Mr. Hamm was invited to the White House for a "giving summit" with wealthy Americans who have pledged to donate at least half their wealth to charity. (He's given tens of millions of dollars already to schools like Oklahoma State and for diabetes research.) "Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, they were all there," he recalls.

When it was Mr. Hamm's turn to talk briefly with President Obama, "I told him of the revolution in the oil and gas industry and how we have the capacity to produce enough oil to enable America to replace OPEC. I wanted to make sure he knew about this."

The president's reaction? "He turned to me and said, 'Oil and gas will be important for the next few years. But we need to go on to green and alternative energy. [Energy] Secretary [Steven] Chu has assured me that within five years, we can have a battery developed that will make a car with the equivalent of 130 miles per gallon.'" Mr. Hamm holds his head in his hands and says, "Even if you believed that, why would you want to stop oil and gas development? It was pretty disappointing."

Washington keeps "sticking a regulatory boot at our necks and then turns around and asks: 'Why aren't you creating more jobs,'" he says. He roils at the Interior Department delays of months and sometimes years to get permits for drilling. "These delays kill projects," he says. Even the Securities and Exchange Commission is now tightening the screws on the oil industry, requiring companies like Continental to report their production and federal royalties on thousands of

individual leases under the Sarbanes-Oxley accounting rules. "I could go to jail because a local operator misreported the production in the field," he says.

The White House proposal to raise \$40 billion of taxes on oil and gas—by excluding those industries from credits that go to all domestic manufacturers—is also a major hindrance to exploration and drilling. "That just stops the drilling," Mr. Hamm believes. "I've seen these things come about before, like [Jimmy] Carter's windfall profits tax." He says America's rig count on active wells went from 4,500 to less than 55 in a matter of months. "That was a dumb idea. Thank God, Reagan got rid of that."

A few months ago the Obama Justice Department brought charges against Continental and six other oil companies in North Dakota for causing the death of 28 migratory birds, in violation of the Migratory Bird Act. Continental's crime was killing one bird "the size of a sparrow" in its oil pits. The charges carry criminal penalties of up to six months in jail. "It's not even a rare bird. There're jillions of them," he explains. He says that "people in North Dakota are really outraged by these legal actions," which he views as "completely discriminatory" because the feds have rarely if ever prosecuted the Obama administration's beloved wind industry, which kills hundreds of thousands of birds each year.

Continental pleaded not guilty to the charges last week in federal court. For Mr. Hamm the whole incident is tantamount to harassment. "This shouldn't happen in America," he says. To him the case is further proof that Washington "is out to get us."

Mr. Hamm believes that if Mr. Obama truly wants more job creation, he should study North Dakota, the state with the lowest unemployment rate in the nation at 3.5%. He swears that number is overstated: "We can't find any unemployed people up there. The state has 18,000 unfilled jobs," Mr. Hamm insists. "And these are jobs that pay \$60,000 to \$80,000 a year." The economy is expanding so fast that North Dakota has a housing shortage. Thanks to the oil boom—Continental pays more than \$50 million in state taxes a year—the state has a budget surplus and is considering ending income and property taxes.

It's hard to disagree with Mr. Hamm's assessment that Barack Obama has the energy story in America wrong. The government floods green energy—a niche market that supplies 2.5% of our energy needs—with billions of dollars of subsidies a year. "Wind isn't commercially feasible with natural gas prices below \$6" per thousand cubic feet, notes Mr. Hamm. Right now its price is below \$4. This may explain the administration's hostility to the fossil-fuel renaissance.

Mr. Hamm calculates that if Washington would allow more drilling permits for oil and natural gas on federal lands and federal waters, "I truly believe the federal government could over time raise \$18 trillion in royalties." That's more than the U.S. national debt, I say. He smiles.

This estimate sounds implausibly high, but Mr. Hamm has a lifelong habit of proving skeptics wrong. And even if he's wrong by half, it's a stunning number to think about. So this America-first energy story isn't just about jobs and economic revival. It's also about repairing America's battered balance sheet. Someone should get this man in front of the congressional deficit-reduction supercommittee.

2. Local View: A science-based approach to the Ogallala Aquifer

By Jim Goeke, Journal Star, Sep 24, 2011 [H/t Joe Herring]

http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/article_40586032-0597-5375-815a-8f91284a5fbf.html

Jim Goeke is a research hydrogeologist and professor emeritus in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Over the past 40 years, it has been my good fortune to focus my research on Nebraska's Sandhills and the Ogallala Aquifer. Thanks to the University of Nebraska's Conservation and Survey Division and to the U.S. Geological Survey, I have been able to drill more than 1,000 test holes into the Ogallala formation. Many people and organizations have asked my opinion about the Keystone XL pipeline's route and its potential impacts on the Ogallala's water riches. My answer is twofold: First, a thank you for their openness to the science of the aquifer, and second, a reassurance that any leak would have minimal impact on the Ogallala Aquifer. Here's the background:

An aquifer usually is defined as any subsurface material or rock formation that stores and transmits water in usable amounts. Underground water by itself is not an aquifer; the definition must include the host material.

Nebraska has many different aquifers; the Ogallala/High Plains system is the largest. Wherever the pipeline is placed, it will go over or through some kind of aquifer. The Ogallala formation is the largest water-bearing unit in the state.

The Ogallala Formation is layered rock, not a lake or a sandpit. Some people say "the lake beneath my feet" when referring to the aquifer. Others think of it as loose sand identical in all directions. These are misconceptions. Our portion of the Ogallala/High Plains Aquifer is made of widely varied sediments eroded off the Rocky Mountains and then deposited in what is now Nebraska by streams and rivers similar to the Platte over a span of 5 million to 30 million years ago. Eventually, those sediments became layers of different types of rocks.

In the western reaches of the state, the Ogallala formation is exposed at the surface. Going eastward, the Ogallala and related rock units dip; the top of the aquifer can be as deep as 300 feet or so below the land surface.

Detailed test-drilling shows that those many layers of sediment that became rock vary tremendously in all directions. Some are heavily cemented siltstones and sandstones that impede the flow of water; others are highly porous sandstones and conglomerates, with the ability to contain vast amounts of moving water between the grains. No matter which direction you drill -- up, down, or sideways -- you'll go only a few hundred yards or so before hitting a different rock type.

In contrast, UNL environmental engineer John Stansbury's report (on worst-case consequences of a spill, released in July) makes the incorrect assumption that the Ogallala Aquifer is uniform sand in all directions and right below the surface. The calculations of a projected 15-mile plume (of leaked oil) did not take into consideration the geology of the aquifer.

The water movement within the Ogallala/High Plains Aquifer is persistently from west to east. Because of gravity and the gentle eastward slope of the rock formations, the aquifer's waters are in constant movement downgradient to the east. The average gradient of the water table within the Ogallala is 10 feet per mile with consistent flow rates of roughly 150 to 300 feet per year.

The pipeline alignment goes over a far eastern segment of the subsurface Ogallala. Roughly 75 to 80 percent of the aquifer is upgradient to the west. That unrelenting eastward water flow means that it would be a physical impossibility for any oil spill to reach the vast majority of the aquifer to the west.

Furthermore, in its report on a 25-year study of an oil spill near Bemidji, Minn., the USGS noted that "fine-grained layers impeded the infiltration and redistribution of oil." If there were a spill along the Keystone XL pipeline, and some of the spill did get into the Ogallala Aquifer, the variability of the aquifer's rock layers means that any spill would be contained within a very small area of that 25 percent of the aquifer to the east of the pipeline.

Yet another consideration is the depth to the water of the aquifer. Through most of its alignment, the pipeline is some 10 to 50 to 100 feet above the top of the Ogallala formation. It's questionable whether the leaked oil could work its way down through the overlying sediments; they contain interspersed seams of silt and clay.

Even so, no leak, large or small, is something to take lightly. For me, the area of greatest concern is Holt County, where the water table is at or near the surface. Any leaks there could go directly into the waters of the shallow aquifers, although not easily into the deeper Ogallala Aquifer. In this area, it is my understanding that TransCanada will build a protective, sealed cement conduit that will surround the pipeline.

If there is a spill, cleanups could require considerable effort, something that TransCanada has said it is prepared to undertake. It would make sense for the governor and Legislature to ask that the company provide a bond now for the costs of possible cleanups in the future.

These geology and hydrology realities, gleaned from over 75 years of research into Nebraska's subsurface, should put people's minds at ease about the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Ogallala/High Plains Aquifer is not at risk from a pipeline spill.

3. Let's Let Rigorous Science Prevail

By J.E. Murray, Letter, WSJ, Oct 4, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204226204576599213811303294.html?mod=ITP_opinion_1

How refreshing it was to read Michio Kaku's "Has a Speeding Neutrino Really Overturned Einstein?" (op-ed, Sept. 26) on the scientific method, and from a real scientist, too. Mr. Kaku reviewed the stunning finding from CERN in Switzerland which, if true, destroys Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. The physicists at CERN found a neutrino traveling faster than the speed of light, an event not possible under relativity theory.

Mr. Kaku's response is to do it again and again and again, and have others replicate it in laboratories around the world under the same experimental conditions used by CERN scientists. He does not seek a consensus from other physicists. Scientists are obliged to affirm the null hypothesis. Until proven otherwise by multiple studies over many years, the CERN finding must be considered either a false result caused by a flaw in the methodology or a random event incapable of replication.

What a contrast to the pseudoscience promoted by the consensus-driven global-warming crowd.

4. Five Truths About Climate Change

During the decade that Al Gore dominated the environmental debate, global carbon-dioxide emissions rose by 28.5%.

By Robert Bryce, WSJ, Oct 6, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203388804576612620828387968.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

Over the past two months, environmental activists have held protests at the White House and elsewhere hoping to convince the Obama administration to deny a permit for the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada to the Gulf Coast. Some of those same activists have launched a series of demonstrations called "Moving Planet" to move "the planet away from fossil fuels towards a safer climate future." And next month, leaders from dozens of countries will meet at the 17th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban, South Africa.

But for all of the sturm und drang about climate change, what has actually happened? It's time to acknowledge five obvious truths about the climate-change issue:

1) The carbon taxers/limiters have lost. Carbon-dioxide emissions have been the environmental issue of the past decade. Over that time period, Al Gore became a world-renowned figure for his documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," for which he won an Oscar. In 2007, he, along with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), collected a Nobel Peace Prize for "informing the world of the dangers posed by climate change." That same year, the IPCC released its fourth assessment report, which declared that "most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions." (Emphasis in original.)

Two years later, Copenhagen became the epicenter of a world-wide media frenzy as some 5,000 journalists, along with some 100 world leaders and scores of celebrities, descended on the Danish capital to witness what was billed as the best opportunity to impose a global tax or limit on carbon dioxide.

The result? Nothing, aside from promises by various countries to get serious—really serious—about carbon emissions sometime soon.

Here's a reality check: During the same decade that Mr. Gore and the IPCC dominated the environmental debate, global carbon-dioxide emissions rose by 28.5%.

Those increases reflect soaring demand for electricity, up by 36%, which in turn fostered a 47% increase in coal consumption. (Natural-gas use increased by 29% while oil use grew by 13%.) Carbon-dioxide emissions are growing because people around the world understand the essentiality of electricity to modernity. And for many countries, the cheapest way to produce electrons is by burning coal.

2) Regardless of whether it's getting hotter or colder—or both—we are going to need to produce a lot more energy in order to remain productive and comfortable.

3) The carbon-dioxide issue is not about the United States anymore. Sure, the U.S. is the world's second-largest energy consumer. But over the past decade, carbon-dioxide emissions in the U.S. fell by 1.7%. And according to the International Energy Agency, the U.S. is now cutting carbon emissions faster than Europe, even though the European Union has instituted an elaborate carbon-trading/pricing scheme. Why? The U.S. is producing vast quantities of cheap natural gas from shale, which is displacing higher-carbon coal.

Meanwhile, China's emissions jumped by 123% over the past decade and now exceed those of the U.S. by more than two billion tons per year. Africa's carbon-dioxide emissions jumped by 30%, Asia's by 44%, and the Middle East's by a whopping 57%. Put another way, over the past decade, U.S. carbon dioxide

emissions—about 6.1 billion tons per year—could have gone to zero and yet global emissions still would have gone up.

4) We have to get better—and we are—at turning energy into useful power. In 1882, Thomas Edison's first central power station on Pearl Street in lower Manhattan converted less than 3% of the heat energy of the coal being burned into electricity. Today's best natural-gas-fired turbines have thermal efficiencies of 60%. Nearly all of the things we use on a daily basis—light bulbs, computers, automobiles—are vastly more efficient than they were just a few years ago. And over the coming years those devices will get even better at turning energy into useful lighting, computing and motive power.

5) The science is not settled, not by a long shot. Last month, scientists at CERN, the prestigious high-energy physics lab in Switzerland, reported that neutrinos might—repeat, might—travel faster than the speed of light. If serious scientists can question Einstein's theory of relativity, then there must be room for debate about the workings and complexities of the Earth's atmosphere.

Furthermore, even if we accept that carbon dioxide is bad, it's not clear exactly what we should do about it. In September, Tom Wigley of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder published a report that determined "switching from coal to natural gas would do little for global climate." Mr. Wigley found that the particulates put into the atmosphere by coal-fired power plants, "although detrimental to the environment, cool the planet by blocking incoming sunlight."

If Mr. Wigley's right, then using sources that emit no particulates, like nuclear and natural gas, will not make a major difference in averting near-term changes in the climate caused by carbon dioxide. But then—and here's the part that most media outlets failed to discuss when reporting on the Wigley study—widespread use of renewables such as wind and solar won't help much, either.

Will Happer, a professor of physics at Princeton and a skeptic about global climate change, recently wrote that the "contemporary 'climate crusade' has much in common with the medieval crusades." Indeed, politicians and pundits are hectored to adhere to the orthodoxy of the carbon-dioxide-is-the-only-climate-problem alarmists. And that orthodoxy prevails even though the most ardent alarmists have no credible plans to replace the hydrocarbons that now provide 87% of the world's energy.

It's time to move the debate past the dogmatic view that carbon dioxide is evil and toward a world view that accepts the need for energy that is cheap, abundant and reliable.

Mr. Bryce is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. His latest book, "Power Hungry: The Myths of 'Green' Energy and the Real Fuels of the Future" (PublicAffairs, 2010), was recently issued in paperback.

5. Solar-Panel Firms' Outlook Dims

By Cassandra Sweet, WSJ, Oct 4, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204612504576610941400628636.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204831304576596770729824868.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTTopOpinion

Solar-panel company stocks have plunged to multiyear lows as slowing demand and a glut of panels from Asia have squeezed margins, creating a cloud that could hang over the industry for some time.

Shares of U.S. solar-panel giant First Solar Inc. have been trading at four-year lows, while shares of Chinese rival Suntech Power Holdings Co. Ltd. have reached all-time lows since the company went public in 2005. The Standard & Poor's Global Clean Energy Index, which includes First Solar, Iberdrola

SA and other renewable-energy companies, was down 41% year-to-date as of Monday. That compares to the broader S&P 500 index, which was down 11.3% during the same period.

Demand for solar panels in Europe, which accounted for more than 80% of demand in 2010, has slowed as governments in Italy, Germany and other countries have cut solar-power incentives and as financial turmoil has prompted lenders to scale back financing for renewable-energy projects, industry executives say. While solar-power demand in the U.S., China and other countries has been growing, those markets haven't grown fast enough to absorb a massive buildout of solar-panel-manufacturing capacity in China and other Asian countries. The September bankruptcy of California solar-panel maker Solyndra Inc. hasn't helped the solar sector, even though that company was privately held and didn't have a significant position in the market.

"This is a real mess, I don't know how else to put it," said Jack Robinson, managing director at Winslow Management Co.'s Winslow Green Growth Fund. He cited the lack of a broad U.S. clean-energy policy, compared to billions of dollars in Chinese government support for Chinese solar companies, as having led to a sort of arrested development of the U.S. clean-energy sector, with no bottom to falling stocks in sight.

"There are too many companies, too many technologies and I can't believe there isn't going to be more consolidation," Mr. Robinson said.

Manufacturers are likely to ship at least 18 gigawatts of solar panels this year, up from 17.4 gigawatts in 2010, although three gigawatts of this year's panels are likely to remain in inventory, said Paula Mints, an analyst at Navigant Consulting.

"You'll see reselling of products at ridiculously low prices at the beginning of the year," Ms. Mints predicted. She added that while top-tier manufacturers are now selling their panels at between \$1.20 and \$1.50 a watt—down from more than \$2 last year—the same product can be bought from a reseller on the "gray market" for as little as \$1.10 a watt. Lower-tier solar-panel makers are now selling their wares for less than \$1 a watt, she said.

Slumping prices have hit solar companies and their share prices hard. SunPower Corp. said Monday that "challenging market conditions" will prompt the company to revise its 2011 revenue and earnings forecast when it reports third-quarter results in November. SunPower's class A shares closed 12% lower Monday at \$7.14, an all-time low since the company went public in 2005.

"The real problem with solar is a lack of demand due to the macroeconomic concerns, especially in Europe," said Jesse Pichel, an analyst at Jefferies Group Inc. ""We think [solar] stocks are going lower."

To be sure, the lower stock prices of solar and other renewable-energy companies provide buying opportunities for investors who previously stayed away from such names because they thought the prices were too high.

Mr. Robinson cited French oil major Total SA's recent acquisition of a controlling stake in SunPower and Chevron Corp.'s involvement in solar power as evidence that large energy companies are increasingly identifying solar power as a viable, long-term form of energy.

Even so, the turmoil in the global solar-power market is likely to continue testing companies to determine which ones are the strongest and which ones will follow Solyndra into bankruptcy.

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