

# The Week That Was: 2011-02-12 (February 12, 2011)

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### The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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PLEASE NOTE: The complete TWTW, including the articles, can be downloaded in an easily printable form at the SEPP web site: [www.sepp.org](http://www.sepp.org).

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#### Quote of the Week:

*“Based on the best peer-reviewed science, EPA found in 2009 that manmade greenhouse gas emissions do threaten the health and welfare of the American people.”* Lisa Jackson, US EPA 2/9/11

*“Climate change is already dramatically affecting the health of people around the world, especially in the developing world. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 166,000 deaths and about 5.5 million disability-adjusted life years ... were attributable to climate change in 2000.”* Lynn Goldman, APHA, 2/9/11

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#### Number of the Week: 8

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#### THIS WEEK:

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

On Wednesday, Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency, and Lynn Goldman, a former EPA Assistant Administrator, representing the American Public Health Association, stridently defended the global warming orthodoxy before a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Power on the issue of removing from EPA the authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions. This may be the first of a number of public fights on this issue. The quotes cited above are but a few of a number of scientifically questionable assertions made during their testimony.

Many newly seated members of the US House of Representatives seem singularly unimpressed by the physical evidence, or lack thereof, substantiating EPA’s claim that it has the authority and the justification to regulate carbon dioxide under the Clean Air Act. If continued, this would be a significant departure from the last time Republicans controlled the House when many embraced the orthodoxy. The US House is the only Federal government body empowered to originate spending and taxing programs.

To briefly recap: in 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that under the Clean Air Act’s vague language, human carbon dioxide emissions are a pollutant and EPA has the authority to regulate them. But, the court also ruled to justify such regulations, EPA had to make a scientific determination that such emissions threaten public health and welfare. On December 7, 2009, Lisa Jackson announced such a determination. The scientific justification, which flowed directly from the IPCC reports, is currently subject to litigation – which Ms. Jackson ignored during her testimony. Had the Clean Air Act carefully stated definitions of a pollutant, it is doubtful if the issue would have ever arisen.

Ms. Goldman’s testimony is on based reports by the World Health Organization, which, in turn, are based on the IPCC reports. In published peer reviewed articles, Indur Goklany, an independent researcher, has demolished these assertions. To a large part, the findings assume global warming will intensify certain common illnesses. In general, public health has improved remarkably during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is little or no physical evidence that the 20<sup>th</sup> century warming adversely affected public health. One must ask: what would the World Health Organization think of global cooling, or the onset of a new ice age – a possibility which the IPCC totally ignores?

Researchers, as diverse as satellite measurement expert Roy Spencer, and palaeontologist Bob Carter, have stated this entire controversy stems from Western governments spending tens of billions of dollars pursuing an answer to the wrong question – what is the risk of human-induced (global warming) climate

change? Given the nature of bureaucracy, the results amplify the question – the risks are considerable. The failure to ask the right question has created agenda driven (ideological) science. The Environmental Minister of India, Jairam Ramesh, calls it “group think.” Challenges to the orthodoxy are shouted down – certainly not an environment conducive to rigorous, innovative research.

The group think concludes that carbon dioxide is the principal driver of climate change and that human emissions of carbon dioxide are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming. These conclusions can easily be rejected by examining ice core borings from Greenland and other empirical data which show that temperature change for the past 10,000 and 25,000 years is largely unrelated to atmospheric carbon dioxide and that 20<sup>th</sup> century warming is insignificant compared with many 100 year warming and cooling periods in the past.

The correct scientific question is: what are the causes of climate change, both natural and human? Once determined, the secondary question can be answered: globally, how significant are human influences compared with natural influences? Then the third question can be answered: how significant are human influences on local and regional climate change compared with natural influences?

Unfortunately, by failing to address the right question, massive government funding has locked scientific organizations into an ideological dispute whereby those who dare question the orthodoxy are frequently called anti-science. Such accusations serve no one except those who are truly anti-science. Examples of such accusations are already too prevalent.

The great danger to future, government-funded scientific research is the extent to which entrenched bureaucrats will appeal to authority or evoke speculative computer models, rather than physical evidence, to deflect serious scientific questions from skeptical members of the House of Representatives. Failure to address scientific questions by the defenders of the orthodoxy will ill serve science. Brought to an extreme, such actions by the orthodoxy will damage future inquiry in natural science, physical science, by making make it difficult for the Federal government to justify funding any scientific endeavors.

Please see the open letter under Article # 1 below and articles referenced under “Let the Games Begin.” For an interesting interview with new head of the House Science Committee’s panel on basic science research and education, 56 year old **freshman** Representative Mo Brooks, please see Article # 3 below.

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Issues regarding the rolling blackouts in Texas during the recent freeze continue. Some commentators claim it was the failure of wind power that caused the blackouts, others claim wind power came through during this critical period. Early indications are that gas supplies failed because electrical power was cut off when it was needed to maintain pressure in gas pipelines. The Public Utility Commission of Texas is conducting an investigation. A rigorously conducted investigation is vital, because, under stress, the power grid is only as strong as its weakest link. Please see Article # 4 below and articles referenced under “What Happened?”

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Number of The Week: 8. Eight states have filed litigation against public utilities (privately owned) generating electricity from coal by claiming these utilities a public nuisance. The states are Connecticut, New York, California, Iowa, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin. The states are joined by the City of New York, three land trusts: Open Space Institute, Inc.; Open Space Conservancy, Inc.; and Audubon Society of New Hampshire. The litigation is reaching the Supreme Court. If successful, is the next step claiming all electricity generation by privately owned utilities, be they solar, wind, hydro, natural gas, and nuclear, are public nuisances? Will government owned utilities do better? See articles referenced under “Is Electrical Generation from Coal a Public Nuisance?”

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TWTW Corrections and Amplifications:

On Feb 8, SEPP sent out a TWTW supplement highlighting an open letter signed by thirty-six eminent scientists, highly knowledgeable in climate change research, and thirty-three others. The letter was submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate contesting the false assertions contained in January 23 letter by 18 scientists, discussed in last week's TWTW.

The supplement gave a few readers the incorrect impression that SEPP was the originator of the Feb 8 letter. Sherwood, Craig, and Keith Idso of CO2 Science.org originated the letter, fully supported by many. SEPP was more a letter carrier than an originator.

The supplement and the full letter can be found at:  
<http://www.sepp.org/twtwfiles/2011/Feb%208%20TWTW.pdf>

Readers pointed out that the Feb 5 TWTW misidentified Sir Joseph Banks as past president of the Royal Academy. Actually he was past president of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge. The Royal Society is focused on science; the Royal Academy of Arts is focused on art.

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### **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2010 SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY PROJECT (SEPP)**

The year 2010 was dominated by the subject of global warming. Although SEPP scientists also dealt with other topics (e.g., nuclear radiation, regulation at EPA, energy policy), climate change occupied the main stage, in terms of university seminars, presentations at scientific conferences, briefings both here and abroad, interviews for TV and radio, as well as, publications in scientific and popular journals. In all instances, we promoted the results of NIPCC (Non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change), which differ sharply from those of the UN-IPCC. [See NIPCC summary report *Nature, not human activity, rules the climate* and full report *Climate Reconsidered*, [www.nipccreport.org](http://www.nipccreport.org) ]

#### **Seminars, Talks, Debates**

In two major trips overseas, Fred Singer presented seminar talks on aspects of climate change and geophysics. The locations included: Erice (Sicily) Conference; Technion (Haifa), India (India Int'l Center – New Delhi; Meteorological Institute – Pune; Mumbai; Santhigiri Ashram – Trivandrum), Singapore (Nat'l University of Singapore and Nat'l Technical University).

Other talks were seminars and/or less formal talks to groups in Rome, Munich, Dusseldorf, Berlin, and Paris.

A highlight was a briefing for members of the German Bundestag. It produced a widely reported flap when a leading politician (the spokesperson on environment for the ruling CDU party) afterwards declared herself somewhat skeptical about Global Warming.

Debates (with large attendances) at Princeton and Purdue University (handled by Ken Haapala and Fred Singer)

Invited Talks at Rockefeller University (NY City), at Heartland's Climate Skeptics Conference in Chicago, at DDP Conference in Orlando, at Statistics Conference in Seattle, and at Santa Marta (Colombia, South America)

#### **Outreach:**

SEPP does not lobby on behalf of political candidates or legislation. We do provide scientific information upon request in testimony to Congress or to other groups.

In response to EPA's request for public comments on its Endangerment Finding (that CO2 emissions constitute a 'pollutant harmful to human health and welfare') SEPP filed scientific objections, based on the evidence assembled in the NIPCC reports. After the revelations of Climategate, SEPP, together with CEI, filed a Petition to the Federal Courts to set aside the Endangerment Finding, since it was based largely on the conclusions of the severely compromised IPCC reports.

We updated and expanded our web site <[www.sepp.org](http://www.sepp.org)>. Readers, including students, journalists, and lawmakers, find it a good source of sound scientific information. Our weekly bulletin "The Week That Was" goes to some 5000 addressees: scientists, policymakers, the media, and reaches many more within the public. TWTW is now edited by SEPP Exec VP Kenneth Haapala, who also pens the column "This Week."

### **Publications**

Fred Singer published a book review, a technical conference paper, and submitted to peer-reviewed journals three scientific papers that deal with disparities between climate models and observations – a hotly contested topic but vital for establishing the cause of climate change.

We spent much time replying to comments and questions from readers and were guests at some dozen radio talk shows, TV interviews on CNN Headline News, Fox News, and BBC. The BBC's Horizon program recorded an interview of Fred Singer, conducted by Sir Paul Nurse, president of Rockefeller University and now president of the Royal Society in London.

For a group of essays see: [http://www.americanthinker.com/s\\_fred\\_singer/](http://www.americanthinker.com/s_fred_singer/)

**Governance:** With the passing of SEPP chairman Prof Frederick Seitz, we reconstituted the Board of Directors:

Chairman: S. Fred Singer (and President)

Vice Chairman: Kenneth A. Haapala (and Exec VP)

Directors: Donna Fitzpatrick Bethell, former Under Secretary, US Dept of Energy

Mark Brandsdorfer, Esq

Thomas Sheahen, PhD (MIT, Physics)

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Respectfully submitted

S. Fred Singer, President, SEPP

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### **ARTICLES:**

For the numbered articles below please see: [www.sepp.org](http://www.sepp.org).

#### **1. An Open Letter to Board of Directors of the American Chemical Society**

By Steven J. Welcenbach, Jan 22, 2011

#### **2. Blame Global Warming? No, Blame Global Warmism.**

By James Taranto, Best of the Web, Feb 9, 2011

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576134273113211948.html?mod=djemBestOfTheWeb\\_h](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576134273113211948.html?mod=djemBestOfTheWeb_h)

#### **3. 'Healthy Skeptic' on Climate Change Promises Hearings by Science subcommittee**

By Jeffrey Mervis, Science Insider, Feb 9, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2011/02/new-science-subcommittee-chair.html>

#### **4. Texas to Probe Rolling Blackouts**

By Rebecca Smith, WSJ, Feb 7, 2011

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703989504576128493806692106.html?mod=ITP\\_pageone\\_1](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703989504576128493806692106.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1)

#### **5. The Weather Isn't Getting Weirder**

The latest research belies the idea that storms are getting more extreme

By Anne Jolis, WSJ, Feb 10, 2011

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704422204576130300992126630.html>

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/02/10/wsj-no-weather-weirding-worries/>

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#### **NEWS YOU CAN USE:**

##### *Climategate Continued*

#### **RealClimategate hits the final nail in the coffin of 'peer review'**

By James Delingpole, Telegraph, UK, Feb 8, 2011 [H/t Joe Bast]

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100075232/realclimategate-hits-the-final-nail-in-the-coffin-of-peer-review/>

##### *Challenging the Orthodoxy*

#### **The Many Benefits of Atmospheric CO2 Enrichment**

By Craig and Sherwood Idso

Press release By SPPI, Feb 8, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://www.transworldnews.com/NewsStory.aspx?id=685510>

[SEPP Comment: A systematic presentation of decades of important research.]

#### **No Arctic "Tipping Point"**

By David Whitehouse, GWPF, Feb 10, 2011 [H/t Cooler Heads Digest]

<http://thegwpf.org/the-observatory/2423-no-arctic-tipping-point.html>

#### **The Urban Heat Island effect: Could Africa be more affected than the US**

By JoNova, Feb 10, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/02/the-urban-heat-island-effect-could-africa-be-more-affected-than-the-us/#more-13225>

##### *Defenders of the Orthodoxy*

#### **European Commissioner: Space Is a Must To Tackle Climate Change**

By Staff Writers, Terra Daily, Feb 7, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

[http://www.terradaily.com/reports/European\\_Commissioner\\_Space\\_Is\\_A\\_Must\\_To\\_Tackle\\_Climate\\_Change\\_999.html](http://www.terradaily.com/reports/European_Commissioner_Space_Is_A_Must_To_Tackle_Climate_Change_999.html)

#### **Bordeaux Wines Face Climate Threat**

Higher temperatures mean that grapes in Bordeaux may ripen earlier and become vulnerable to malnutrition.

By Suzanne Mustcich, AFP, Feb 9, 2011

<http://news.discovery.com/earth/bordeaux-grapes-wine-global-warming-110209.html>

[Will great châteaux move north to the Loire Valley? Will Britain, which is undergoing a Medieval resurgence in white wines, have great success in noble reds? The researcher totally ignores that carbon dioxide enrichment makes vines more resistant to stress such as drought. If you are wondering, 2005,

which NOAA and NASA-GISS declared to be the other hottest year ever, produced an exceptional, landmark vintage – one of the best ever. Is it time to buy 2010 futures?]

### ***Seeking a Common Ground***

#### **Professor Counters Global Warming Myths With Data**

By Claire Perlman, Daily Californian, Feb 11, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

[http://www.dailycal.org/article/111906/professor\\_counters\\_global\\_warming\\_myths\\_with\\_data](http://www.dailycal.org/article/111906/professor_counters_global_warming_myths_with_data)

[SEPP Comment: A welcomed proposal for an independent tabulation of surface data. Will it suffer from some of the biases in the findings of NOAA and NASA-GISS as exposed by Anthony Watts and others such as failure to maintain proper siting of measuring stations? Let us hope not.]

### ***Extreme Weather***

#### **World of two halves! Map shows most of Northern Hemisphere is covered in snow and ice**

By Daily Mail Reporter, Daily Mail, Feb 3, 2011 [H/t Bud Bromley]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1353073/Winter-storm-Map-shows-Northern-Hemisphere-covered-snow-ice.html>

#### **Gradual Trends and Extreme Events**

By Paul Krugman, NYT, Feb 8, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/08/gradual-trends-and-extreme-events/>

[SEPP Comment: See Indur Goklany's comments below.]

#### **Extreme Nonsense by Krugman**

By Indur Goklany, WUWT, Feb 9, 2011

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/02/09/extreme-nonsense-by-krugman/#more-33612>

[SEPP Comment: See Krugman's article above.]

#### **35 zoo animals freeze to death in northern Mexico**

By AP, Feb 5, 2011 [H/t Joe D'Aleo]

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110205/ap\\_on\\_re\\_la\\_am\\_ca/lt\\_mexico\\_frigid\\_weather\\_animals](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110205/ap_on_re_la_am_ca/lt_mexico_frigid_weather_animals)

### ***BP Oil Spill and Aftermath***

#### **White House's Contemptible Drilling Ban**

Editorial, IBD, Feb 4, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/562250/201102041911/White-Houses-Contemptible-Drilling-Ban.aspx>

#### **Natural resources hold the key to economy, creating jobs**

By Rep. Doug Lamborn, Washington Examiner, Feb 7, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/2011/02/natural-resources-hold-key-economy-creating-jobs>

### ***Let the Games Begin***

#### **EPA and APHA testimony to Congress about global warming health treat – a critical review**

By Joseph D'Aleo, ICECAP, Feb 11, 2011

<http://www.icecap.us/>

#### **House Republicans Take E.P.A. Chief to Task**

By John Broder, NYT, Feb 9, 2011 [H/t Bud Bromley]

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/10/science/earth/10emissions.html?\\_r=1&partner=rss&emc=rss](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/10/science/earth/10emissions.html?_r=1&partner=rss&emc=rss)

### ***Cap-and-Trade or Clean Energy Standards, It Doesn't Matter***

#### **Clean Energy Standard: Cap-and-Trade Only Less Efficient**

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming.org, Feb 7, 2011

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2011/02/07/clean-energy-standard-cap-and-trade-only-less-efficient/>

### ***EPA and other Regulators on the March***

#### **Stop EPA's Energy Tax**

Editorial, IBD, Feb 10, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=562838&p=1>

### **AGs Band Together on Climate, Too**

By Paul Chesser, American Spectator, Feb 9, 2011 [H/t Joe Bast]

<http://spectator.org/blog/2011/02/09/ags-band-together-on-climate-t>

### **Will Congress Stop EPA's End Run around Democracy**

By Marlo Lewis, Big Government, Feb 9, 2011

<http://biggovernment.com/mlewis/2011/02/09/will-congress-stop-epas-end-run-around-democracy/>

### **Bipartisan uprising against EPA overreach**

Editorial, Orange County Register, Feb 3, 2011

<http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/epa-286968-democrats-senate.html>

### **Clean Air Under Siege**

Editorial, NYT, Feb 5, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/opinion/06sun1.html?emc=eta1>

*[SEPP Comment: The New York Times considers carbon dioxide a pollutant and fails to state that EPA was required to make a scientific finding that carbon dioxide emissions threaten public health and welfare. The science in EPA's finding was lacking.]*

### **Don't weaken EPA**

Editorial, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Feb 10, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/115777799.html>

### ***Subsidies and Mandates Forever***

#### **Orwell is back: Bulb ban is freedom**

By Henry Payne, Detroit News, The Michigan View, Feb 2, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://detnews.com/article/20110202/MIVIEW/102020372/Orwell-is-back--Bulb-ban-is-freedom>

### ***Energy Issues***

#### **'Sustainability': Some Free Market Reflections**

By Marlo Lewis, Master Resource, Feb 11, 2011

<http://www.masterresource.org/2011/02/sustainability-post/#respond>

*[SEPP Comment: Schemes promoting sustainability are often unsustainable. The estimated costs of various electrical power generation facilities stated in the article have been updated by the US EIA.]*

### **The Unseen Consequences of "Green Jobs"**

Will investing in clean energy harm the economy?

By Ronald Bailey, Reason, Feb 8, 2011 [H/t Dale Petzold]

<http://reason.com/archives/2011/02/08/seen-green-jobs-unseen-layoffs>

### **The Range Fuels Fiasco**

A case study in the folly of politically directed investment  
Editorial, WSJ, Feb 10, 2011

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704364004576132453701004530.html?mod=WSJ\\_Opinion\\_AboveLEFTTop](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704364004576132453701004530.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop)

*[SEPP Comment: In spite of headlines, subsidies, bold government predictions, and venture capital; cellulose to ethanol has failed. Article may be behind a paywall.]*

### **DOE Details Initiative to Reduce PV Costs by 75% by 2020**

By Staff Writers, Power News, Feb 9, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

[http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/DOE-Details-Initiative-to-Reduce-PV-Costs-by-75-percent-by-2020\\_3435.html](http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/DOE-Details-Initiative-to-Reduce-PV-Costs-by-75-percent-by-2020_3435.html)

*[SEPP Comment: A clear illustration of the extent to which photovoltaic is non-competitive with traditional sources of electricity. What is required to create the necessary battery storage?]*

### ***Oil – the Future or the Past?***

#### **Oil; The Energy Of The Future**

By Robert Samuelson, IBD, Feb 8, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/562533/201102081541/Oil-The-Energy-Of-The-Future.htm>

### **Oil has joined the Past ... NG is the future**

By Jack Barnes, Business Insider, Feb 5, 2011

<http://www.businessinsider.com/oil-has-joined-the-past-ng-is-the-future-2011-2>

### **Oil-Drilling Boom Under Way**

Rig Count Doubles in U.S. as Companies, Landowners Tap New Crude Sources

By Ryan Dezember and Matt Day, WSJ, Feb 10, 2011

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576134553990567750.html?mod=WSJ\\_Energy\\_leftHeadlines](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576134553990567750.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines)

*[SEPP Comment: Article may be behind a pay wall.]*

### ***What Failed?***

#### **No Coal, No Power, No Gas**

By Jeffrey Folks, American Thinker, Feb 11, 2011

[http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/02/no\\_coal\\_no\\_power\\_no\\_gas.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/02/no_coal_no_power_no_gas.html)

### **When Wind Is Reliable: Turbines Help Texans Avoid the Dark**

By Eli Kintisch, Science Insider, Feb 8, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2011/02/when-wind-is-reliable-turbines.html?ref=hp>

### ***Whistling in the Wind***

#### **Our Don Quixote Energy Policy**

Editorial, IBD, Feb 8, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=562534&p=1>

### **Lack of wind raises fears for future of green energy**

Credit: Robert Lea, The Times, Feb 2, 2011

<http://www.wind-watch.org/news/2011/02/03/lack-of-wind-raises-fears-for-future-of-green-energy/>

### ***Is Electrical Generation from Coal a Public Nuisance?***

#### **DOJ, Power Companies File Briefs in High-Profile Public Nuisance Case**

By Staff Writers, Power News, Feb 9, 2011

[http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3431.html?hq\\_e=el&hq\\_m=2139139&hq\\_l=6&hq\\_v=5e660500d0](http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3431.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2139139&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e660500d0)

### **Greens With Envy**

Editorial, Feb 8, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/562528/201102081909/Greens-With-Envy.htm>

### ***California Dreaming***

#### **California's environmental regulations cause economic blackout**

By Mark Hemingway, Washington Examiner, Feb 9, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/02/californias-environmental-regulations-cause-economic-blackout>

### **CARB Before Horse**

Editorial, IBD, Feb 7, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/562348/201102071906/CARB-Before-Horse.htm>

[SEPP Comment: Environmental group claims that CARB is too business friendly!]

### ***Oh Mann!***

#### **Is the University of Virginia biased against professors that challenge the idea of global warming?**

By Amanda Carey, The Daily Caller, Feb 2, 2011

<http://dailycaller.com/2011/02/01/is-the-university-of-virginia-biased-against-professors-that-challenge-the-idea-of-global-warming/>

### ***Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC***

***For a full list of articles see [www.NIPCCreport.org](http://www.NIPCCreport.org)***

#### **Ocean Acidification and Marine Diatoms**

Reference: Wu, Y., Gao, K. and Riebesell, U. 2010. CO<sub>2</sub>-induced seawater acidification affects physiological performance of the marine diatom *Phaeodactylum tricornutum*. *Biogeosciences* 7: 2915-2923.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/8feb2011a1.html>

#### **The Struggle to Curtail Global Warming**

Reference: Sherman, D.J., Li, B., Quiring, S.M. and Farrell, E.J. 2010. Benchmarking the war against global warming. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 100: 1013-1024.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/8feb2011a5.html>

#### **Medieval Droughts of Northern Europe and Beyond**

Reference: Helama, S., Merilainen, J. and Tuomenvirta, H. 2009. Multicentennial megadrought in northern Europe coincided with a global El Niño-Southern Oscillation drought pattern during the Medieval Climate Anomaly. *Geology* 37: 175-178.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/8feb2011a6.html>

#### **The Impact of Global Warming on Viral Diseases**

Reference: Zell, R., Krumbholz, A. and Wutzler, P. 2008. Impact of global warming on viral diseases: what is the evidence? *Current Opinion in Biotechnology* 19: 652-660.  
<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/9feb2011a5.html>

### ***The Changing Climate***

#### **Tropical Atlantic sees weaker trade winds and more rainfall: study**

By Staff Writers, Physorg.com, Feb 6, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.physorg.com/news/2011-02-tropical-atlantic-weaker-rainfall.html>

#### **Arctic climate variation under ancient greenhouse conditions**

Press Release, National Oceanography Centre (UK), Feb 11, 2011

<http://noc.ac.uk/news/arctic-climate-variation-under-ancient-greenhouse-conditions>

[“Based on our findings, it seems unlikely that man-made global warming would cause a permanent El Niño state.” El Niños have a warming influence. Some alarmists have suggested the warming from carbon dioxide emissions will be amplified by more frequent El Niños.]

### ***Food for Fuel***

#### **How biofuels contribute to the food crisis**

By Tim Searchinger, Washington Post, Feb 11, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/10/AR2011021006323.html?referrer=emailarticle>

[Biofuels have grown rapidly, from consuming 2 percent of world grain and virtually no vegetable oil in 2004 to more than 6.5 percent of grain and 8 percent of vegetable oil last year. Governments worldwide seek to triple production of biofuels by 2020, and that implies more moderately high prices after good growing years and soaring prices after bad ones.]

### ***Other Scientific Issues***

#### **Science Accounts Hit Hard by Planned House Budget Cuts**

By Jeffrey Mervis, Science Insider, Feb 3, 2011

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2011/02/science-accounts-hit-hard-by.html>

[SEPP Comment: See This Week above.]

#### **Antarctic Drilling Plan Raises Concerns**

By Eric Niiler, Discovery News, Feb 9, 2011

<http://news.discovery.com/earth/lake-vostok-antarctica-environment-110209.html>

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### **BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:**

#### **Speaking of the Weather**

Letter by Béla Lipták, NYT, Feb 4, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/04/opinion/1web04climate.html>

[COMMENTS FROM BEST OF THE WEB: Wow, it's so simple! Meanwhile, London's [Daily Telegraph](#) reports that the Bombay High Court in India has ruled that "astrology . . . is a credible science." That explains why global warmism is central to President Obama's WTF campaign to keep America competitive. We have to make absolutely certain that we embrace the very latest superstitions and call them science.]

#### **Astrology is a science, court rules**

Astrology, the study of interplanetary alignments as the explanation for everything, is a credible science, an Indian court has ruled.

By Dean Nelson, Telegraph, UK, Feb 7, 2011 [H/t Best on the Web]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/8303462/Astrology-is-a-science-court-rules.html>  
[SEPP Comment: Will the IPCC use astrology to justify the projections from its computer models?]

**Prince Charles: Climate skeptics gamble with the future**

By Staff Writers, BBC, Feb 9, 2011

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12403292>

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**ARTICLES:**

**1. An Open Letter to Board of Directors of the American Chemical Society**

By Steven J. Welcenbach, Jan 22, 2011

January 22, 2011

Madeleine Jacobs  
Executive Director and CEO  
American Chemical Society  
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Dear Madeleine,

Congratulations!

You have completed the transition you began long ago when you assumed your present position of power. The American Chemical Society (ACS), formerly the largest scientific society on Earth, has been fully transformed from a respected, credible scientific organization to a fully engaged Progressive Political Action Committee.

The respectability and credibility of ACS has been waning for quite some time, even before you took the reins as Executive Director and CEO. Rudy Baum has done a nice job of continuing the legacy you started as editor of the organizational publication, C&E News. The content of this publication has steadily become based upon hearsay and unproven claims, such as the report last fall about the “pollution fallout” of the “undersea oil plume” from the BP incident in the Gulf last spring. No data was provided. No proof required. Just speculative claims of disaster from the handsomely paid authors of calamity. Such an article typifies the scientific journalistic prowess of C&E News and thus ACS.

In 2009, I attempted to address the blatant malfeasance of Rudy Baum in addressing the issue of Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) in any meaningful scientific manner in C&E News. My efforts were rewarded with a blatant dismissal by Rudy as a “Flat Earther” followed by your full support of his position and methods when I approached you with this matter. While I give Rudy credit for following our interaction up with a boatload of letters from ACS members articulating a similar position to mine, he still articulated a scientifically untenable statement: “Still the science rolls on.....ice is thinning in the Arctic Ice Pack.....” as if the ONLY possible explanation for such an event is AGW and is something unusual in Earth’s history.

Regardless of this complete demonstration of unanimity of outlook and commitment by ACS executives and leadership to AGW doctrine and disregard for the scientific method, many of us felt we could effect change within the organization. One member, Peter Bonk, took it upon himself to articulate the disparity between the ACS official Policy Statement regarding AGW and scientific reality titled:

**Regarding the American Chemical Society Public Policy Statement  
On Climate Change:**

**An Open Letter to Board of Directors of the American Chemical Society**

After Peter got 150 members to sign the petition, a commitment from Rudy Baum that the letter would be published in C&E News, and met with you, Rudy and others in Washington DC to discuss this matter, you all went back on your word and refused to publish the letter. The validity of 25 signatures was questioned as a cover for this reversal. No documentation was ever provided to support this claim despite repeated attempts to obtain such by Mr. Bonk. After being informed of this breach of trust one member commented:

“Peter, my experience with Rudy Baum is very similar. He makes commitments and then does not follow the commitment. Can you send me the final copy of the letter/petition you submitted? I plan to talk to the President of ACS, Joe Francisco either in SF or at Purdue. None of this surprises me, in many ways it is similar to the APS response, specifically the Physics Today response which is similar to C&E News. We are dealing with macro politics. **Obama's science advisor, Holdren has put out the signal to the leadership of all the american scientific societies that they have to stay aligned with the administration or else...there is lots of R&D money at stake.** There is a statement coming out of the AAAS meeting in San Diego just this month, in fact this past weekend re-affirming that the IPCC science is just fine, move along folks.”

So we see that ACS has become nothing more than an organization whose mission is to promulgate a specific political ideology based upon false claims of AGW, government control of R&D funding and “green and sustainable chemistry,” whatever that means. In other words, completely embrace and promulgate the Progressive Political agenda, the agenda where all scientists are wards of the state producing agenda-supporting “scientific research” papers, resulting in government mandates on carbon dioxide emissions, energy production, mineral extraction and private property. In other words, make scientists the thralls utilized to substantiate the radical environmental and energy policies that will kill economic growth and foster the ultimate goal of these folks, population reduction. Just look at the letters Rudy chose to publish in the last edition (January 17, 2011) of C&E News.

ACS has died as a scientific society. Confirmation of this fact arrived January 20th in my inbox in the form of the “ACS Diversity eBrief.” Apparently the mission of ACS no longer entails a comprehensive investigation of a real scientific issue like AGW. Apparently the Abiogenic Theory of Petroleum Formation holds no interest or scientific credibility to ACS members since I forwarded articles on this subject to Rudy Baum years ago for inclusion in C&E News. “Educating” ACS members on “understanding the importance of diversity” and the plight of being female in the workforce now holds priority in the enlightened ACS organization. Last time I checked the scientific method didn’t include questions about race, gender, eye color or sexual orientation.

Who needs this scientific stuff anyway? It’s SO boring!

Madeleine, you and Rudy made it abundantly clear that the opinions and goals of the membership at large mean nothing to the ACS elite running the organization.

I know many don't consider me a real member or scientist for that matter, since I only possess a bachelor's degree. Plus I am a huge, outspoken pain in the rear. So I am sure you'll not miss me in that regard.

What you will miss is my \$151.00 in dues I would have paid plus my dues every year after. You will also miss all of the dues of all of the other members that will follow my example and leave ACS.

This letter of my resignation will be published in many places throughout the world. It will also be forwarded directly to the vast network of ACS members and other scientists in my e-mail archive and then forwarded with my permission to anyone else they see fit to receive it. They all have my permission.

ACS has proven to truly be beyond hope. You and your cabal have systematically subverted the mission of ACS and brought it to this sorry, repulsive juncture.

The displaced scientists from ACS, the American Physical Society and other formerly scientific organizations turned Progressive Political Advocacy groups will form a new society rigorously following the scientific method and staying true to the ethical tenets that have allowed scientific discovery to flourish. I have pulled my personal funding of ACS and plan to do all I can in the coming years to make sure any and all public money ACS receives gets eliminated.

Please tell Rudy I am not abdicating my promise to him to be removed. I just came to the undeniable conclusion that ACS is beyond repair and must be replaced. So in a way I guess I am keeping my promise to him after all.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven J. Welcenbach

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## **2. Blame Global Warming? No, Blame Global Warmism.**

By James Taranto, Best of the Web, Feb 9, 2011

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576134273113211948.html?mod=djemBestOfTheWeb\\_h](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576134273113211948.html?mod=djemBestOfTheWeb_h)

Yesterday we noted that Paul Krugman, star columnist of the New York Times, is blaming global warming for causing a rise in food prices that in turn has led to unrest in the Middle East (as opposed to the pre-global warming days, when the Mideast saw only rest). Reader Fred Singer makes a good point in response:

Krugman is right --but in a perverse sort of way. The rise in the price of wheat is a fact, and so is the rise in the price of (highly subsidized) bread in Egypt--which probably contributed to the popular protests there.

But the reason is not global warming (or its imagined effects), as Krugman claims --it is the *fear* of global warming, which has led to government support for corn-based ethanol as a biofuel that supposedly would reduce the emission of carbon dioxide. This diversion of food to fuel is a major cause of the rise in prices.

There are several ironies here that Krugman seems to overlook: The introduction of ethanol as a motor fuel, accelerated under President Obama, may actually increase CO2 emissions. And the rise

in atmospheric levels of CO2 (a natural fertilizer) almost certainly has been increasing agricultural yields, including those of corn and wheat.

Meanwhile, the [Associated Press](#) reports from Brussels that "Prince Charles lashed out Wednesday at climate change skeptics":

Skeptics are having a "corrosive effect" on public opinion, the British heir to the throne added.

"Their suggestion, that hundreds of scientists around the world . . . are somehow unconsciously biased, creates the implication that many of us are secretly conspiring to undermine and deliberately destroy the entire market-based capitalist system," he said.

It hadn't occurred to us that they might be secretly conspiring to undermine and destroy the entire market-based capitalist system, but now that he mentions it.

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### **3. 'Healthy Skeptic' on Climate Change Promises Hearings by Science subcommittee**

By Jeffrey Mervis, Science Insider, Feb 9, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2011/02/new-science-subcommittee-chair.html>

The House of Representatives science committee's panel on basic research and education plans to hold hearings on climate change to present more views on the topic, says its new chair, freshman Representative Mo Brooks (R-AL).

Brooks, a lawyer and veteran elected state and county official from Huntsville whose district includes NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, leapt over more senior members of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to head the panel that oversees research activities at the National Science Foundation (NSF), NASA, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Commerce. He says that he hasn't seen "anything that convinces me" global warming is real, much less caused by human activity. And he's more than a little skeptical about the motives of those urging the U.S. government and the rest of the world to take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

I'm also old enough to remember when the same left-wing part of our society was creating a global cooling scare in order to generate funds for their pet projects. So 30-some years ago the big scare was global cooling, and once they drained that [topic], they shifted to global warming. So I'm approaching the issue with a healthy degree of skepticism. If the evidence is there to prove it, then so be it.

Brooks, 56, says he's trying to keep an open mind on a number of issues that come before the subcommittee, including federal funding of academic research, support for training future scientists and engineers, and an immigration policy that welcomes foreign-born scientists "who are highly skilled and who will generate more tax dollars than they will consume" while excluding all other immigrants. He relishes the opportunity to explore technological issues for which he once showed an aptitude, he adds, noting that he turned to politics because of his disappointment with the outcome of the Vietnam War after the U.S. government chose not to "get into it to win."

Here is an edited transcript of his conversation yesterday with *ScienceInsider*.

#### **Q: Is human activity causing global warming?**

**M.B.:** That's a difficult question to answer because I've talked to scientists on both sides of the fence, especially at the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Some say yes, and some say no. I'm also old enough to remember when the same left-wing part of our society was creating a global cooling scare in

order to generate funds for their pet projects. So 30-some years ago, the big scare was global cooling, and once they drained the government, they shifted to global warming. So I'm approaching the issue with a healthy degree of skepticism. If the evidence is there to prove it, then so be it.

**Q: What evidence would be convincing, in your mind?**

**M.B.:** I'm going to leave that up to the proponents. For right now, the fact that there may be some global warming doesn't necessarily establish that it's caused by humans. If you look at climatological data going back centuries or millennia, we have periods of cooling, like the Ice Age, and warming. So it's cyclical. So how are the proponents going to convince us that it's not just part of a cyclical pattern? After we hold hearings on this subject, I'll know more. And we're going to have public hearings on the topic.

**Q: Leaving that aside, should the government take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?**

**M.B.:** Well, let me give you some background. I've been a member of the Sierra Club on occasion, and I was attacked in the Republican primary for having been a member of the Sierra Club. I very much believe in controlling pollution so we have better air to breathe and better water to drink and the proper disposal of hazardous waste. And I like going to our national parks. I'm very much the outdoorsman.

But having said that, with respect to carbon dioxide emissions, there's some good associated with that, to the extent that we have higher levels of carbon dioxide. That means that plant life grows better, because it is an essential gas for all forms of plant life.

Does that mean I want more of it? I don't know about the adverse effects of carbon dioxide on human beings. I'm not familiar with any, at present levels. But other pollutants, like sulfur dioxides and nitrous oxides, we know they have harmful effects on people, and we need to reduce them.

But I haven't seen anything that convinces me, keeping in mind I haven't had any public hearings on the topic yet. I haven't heard a bank of scientists going into the details of their methodologies that get beyond the fluff and that are something one needs to pay attention to, to formulate a sound opinion.

**Q: There have been lots of hearings over the years by Congress, including the science committee ... .**

**M.B.:** But I haven't been on those committees.

**Q: Where will you turn to get impartial advice on the subject?**

**M.B.:** Scientists who are both proponents and opponents.

**Q: Do you believe that federal research should be exempt from a rollback in federal spending to 2008 levels?**

**M.B.:** I would love for that to happen. But we just don't have the money. ... We have no choice but to look at everything. If we don't balance our budget over a short period of time, the federal government is going to collapse and there won't be money for any of these things. So if we're going to save money for research and advancement in science, we're going to have to get our house in order now.

**Q: Do you think the government should increase funding on research once things turn around?**

**M.B.:** Do you mean if the budgetary situation turns around? I don't see that happening in the next 4 to 5 years. We've got a \$1.5 trillion budget deficit, and Admiral Mullen, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has

declared it the number one security threat to the country. And if our creditors would cut us off, there would be zero money for national defense or NSF or anything else.

**Q: Should universities focus more on education rather than research?**

**M.B.:** I think both are important.

**Q: Are they putting the federal research money to good use now?**

**M.B.:** If it's like most government programs, I would expect to find some grants that are very productive, some that are less productive, and some that have little or no productivity.

**Q: How do you measure that productivity? Jobs created, publications, new knowledge generated?**

**M.B.:** All of those are factors. And you don't want to focus on one over the other. It comes down to judgment, based on the information we uncover as we conduct public hearings.

**Q: Does the country have enough scientists and engineers?**

**M.B.:** I'm doing my part. I have two sons who are engineers. ... My younger son is a senior in aerospace engineering at Auburn University, and my older son is a mechanical engineer. And my father was an electrical engineer. I'm the aberrant one. I went into political science and law school, although all my aptitude tests said I should go into engineering because my scores were highest in those areas.

**Q: So why didn't you become an engineer?**

**M.B.:** Quite frankly, it was the Vietnam War. I saw how the government was sending our youth into harm's way with one hand tied behind their backs and expecting them to fight. My view was that we need to either get into it to win, and use all means at our disposal, or you don't get into it at all. So that experience in the 1960s and 1970s impressed upon me the magnitude and power of the federal government, and the impact it can have on all of us if that power is not used wisely.

**Q: Getting back to whether the supply of scientists is adequate ...**

**M.B.:** No, I don't think we have enough scientists and engineers.

**Q: So what should the federal government do?**

**M.B.:** I'm not sure of the best role. It may be to provide additional scholarships to produce incentives for people to educate themselves in science and math and engineering. Or it may be giving students who graduate with those degrees a tax credit as an incentive to go into those fields. There are plenty of things we can do, and I don't know the best route. What do you suggest?

**Q: There are a lot of programs currently, aimed at different levels of the education pipeline.**

**M.B.:** Well, in K-12 you have STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] programs. In college you have financial incentives, although people who are getting into science and math already have a significant incentive, and that is well-paying jobs. They are highly marketable. So we should be exploring anything we can do within our current financial limitations.

**Q: Do you think legislation to restrict immigration will limit the flow of foreign scientific talent into the country? Is that a concern?**

**M.B.:** No, it's not a concern, and the reason is that I think we should very much restrict immigration in a general sense and expel illegal immigrants while adopting sound immigration policies that permit immigrants who are highly skilled and who will generate more tax dollars than they will consume. So foreigners who are scientists and engineers are exactly the type of people we want to welcome. And illegal immigration is a separate issue. Our policies should allow *only* those people who will be net producers rather than consumers of tax dollars.

**Q: Can we afford a robust space program?**

**M.B.:** Yes, and I think we should have one.

**Q: At the expense of robotic missions?**

**M.B.:** I think it ought to be at the expense of programs across the government that are of lesser priority, in particular the wealth-transfer programs that generate little or no wealth for America.

**Q: You mean outside of NASA?**

**M.B.:** We've got entitlement programs and interest on the debt that exceed our overall revenue.

**Q: Are you opposed to earmarks for academic research?**

**M.B.:** I haven't thought about it in the context of research, but in the House Republican caucus, I voted to allow earmarks.

**Q: And your reason?**

**M.B.:** That there are plenty of legitimate federal programs, like national defense and highway construction, that are appropriate for the earmarking process. I think it is also uniquely within the purview of the Congress to prioritize what roads we're going to build and what weapons systems we will R&D and then implement.

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#### **4. Texas to Probe Rolling Blackouts**

By Rebecca Smith, WSJ, Feb 7, 2011

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703989504576128493806692106.html?mod=ITP\\_pageone\\_1](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703989504576128493806692106.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1)

Texas officials have ordered an investigation into rolling blackouts that struck the state's electric grid last week, including whether market manipulation played a role along with harsh weather in disrupting natural-gas and electricity supplies to millions of people.

The Public Utility Commission of Texas asked the state's independent energy-market monitor, Daniel Jones, to conduct a probe to see if power generators, pipeline companies or others broke market rules. Among the questions are whether some firms faked power-plant problems to push prices higher, or were slow to restart plants that were off line.

Mr. Jones, vice president of Potomac Economics in Austin, said he could not comment until his team has completed its investigation, which could take weeks or months.

To be sure, Texas set an all-time winter power demand record one day during the storm, placing historic pressure on power providers.

Electricity-grid officials said Mr. Jones' team will look at price patterns and power-plant outages remembering that, in California's energy crisis of 2000-2001, unscrupulous power generators feigned equipment problems to drive up the price of electricity. A significant number of plants in Texas failed last week, and wholesale electricity prices briefly spiked.

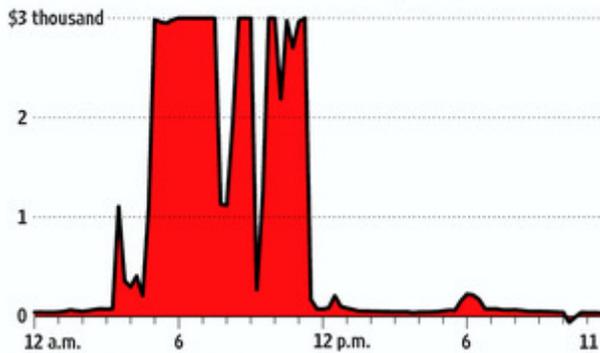
The state Senate committee that oversees the state utility commission will conduct hearings on the blackouts, said its chairman, Sen. Troy Fraser, a Republican whose district includes central Texas.

The organization that runs the Texas grid, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas or Ercot, is considering whether it should require better weatherization at power plants. Trip Doggett, chief executive of the group, said it "will be working with generation owners to understand why and what can be done" to prevent the sort of breakdowns that destabilized the state's electrical network. Among other problems, the breakdowns were caused by equipment freezing and cracking.

### Supply and Demand

Wholesale electricity prices surged in markets like Houston when Texas experienced rolling blackouts last week.

PRICE PER MEGAWATT-HOUR IN HOUSTON, FEB. 2



Source: Electric Reliability Council of Texas

Generation companies said they are ready to answer any questions and are confident they followed the rules. Representatives of Luminant and NRG Energy Inc., which own many power plants in Texas, said extreme cold forced outages they couldn't prevent and they got plants back up quickly.

David Knox, spokesman for NRG, said "our guys worked throughout the night" on Feb 2-3 to get the Limestone power plant back in service after a freeze-related problem broke equipment enabling the plant to send power to a substation.

Texas prides itself on a state-regulated electric grid with only limited connections to the rest of the country. The state's grid emergency began on Feb. 2, after a huge winter storm sent demand for electricity and gas soaring. Dozens of power plants that were expected to furnish power suddenly reported operating difficulties.

The state's system is supposed to reward power generators for providing electricity when it is most needed. While most power in Texas sells for negotiated prices between generation companies and retail power sellers under long-term contracts, the grid operator also buys power when more juice is needed and pays an auction price that resets every 15 minutes. When supplies are thin, prices can rise rapidly.

On Feb. 1, one day before the blackouts, Texas had raised the maximum price that the grid operator would pay for electricity to \$3,000 a megawatt hour from \$2,250. That's triple the price permitted in wholesale eastern markets and about 60 to 100 times a normal Texas price.

Texas had raised the maximum allowable price not because of the impending storm, but as part of the long-term arrangement with its power suppliers.

Spot market prices, which typically are under \$50 this time of year, hit the \$3,000-a-megawatt hour price cap repeatedly on Feb. 2 and were elevated on surrounding days, too, meaning that some generators reaped enormous profits.

The generators' costs for that power is borne by companies that sell power, other generators and consumers.

Despite the high prices, generators did not supply as much electricity as needed during the bitter cold snap. So the grid operator ordered utilities to initiate rolling blackouts with blocks of customers turned off for periods of 15 to 45 minutes. Rolling blackouts, though inconvenient, are designed to prevent an uncontrolled, catastrophic failure such as happened in the eastern U.S. in 2003.

By Sunday, as Texas prepared to host the Super Bowl, spot market power prices were back below \$30 a megawatt hour.

Officials still are trying to figure out what caused so many power plants to report problems last week. ERCOT's Mr. Doggett said generators complained about equipment failures caused by temperatures that were in the single digits as well as natural-gas shortages, meaning some couldn't get the fuel they needed to run power plants.

State officials reacted with disbelief that a region with enormous natural-gas production capability and storage fields should have been caught short.

Gas transmission companies complained that supplies were low, due to cold-related problems at gas wells, storage fields and pipelines. [El Paso Corp.](#) and Transwestern issued emergency notices that warned utilities and industrial customers not to use more gas than they'd purchased.

Texas produces about a third of the nation's gas, so its problems led to disruptions last week—to California, Arizona and New Mexico, where the governor declared a state of emergency and ordered National Guard troops to help gas crews restore service.

Ben Feilner, an engineer for the White Sands missile range in New Mexico, said his home in Alamogordo lost electric service on Wednesday and gas service from Wednesday until Friday. "We have winter weather with snow and ice all the time, but this isn't a normal occurrence," he said.

Low gas pressure forced two California utilities to curtail gas deliveries to about 100 big industrial customers, including some power plants. The California grid operator was able to line up power plants to replace the 1,400 megawatts of capacity in the San Diego area that was lost, a spokeswoman said.

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## **5. The Weather Isn't Getting Weirder**

The latest research belies the idea that storms are getting more extreme

By Anne Jolis, WSJ, Feb 10, 2011

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704422204576130300992126630.html>

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/02/10/wsj-no-weather-weirding-worries/>

Last week a severe storm froze Dallas under a sheet of ice, just in time to disrupt the plans of the tens of thousands of (American) football fans descending on the city for the Super Bowl. On the other side of the globe, Cyclone Yasi slammed northeastern Australia, destroying homes and crops and displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

Some climate alarmists would have us believe that these storms are yet another baleful consequence of man-made CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In addition to the latest weather events, they also point to recent cyclones in Burma, last winter's fatal chills in Nepal and Bangladesh, December's blizzards in Britain, and every other drought, typhoon and unseasonable heat wave around the world.

But is it true? To answer that question, you need to understand whether recent weather trends are extreme by historical standards. The Twentieth Century Reanalysis Project is the latest attempt to find out, using super-computers to generate a dataset of global atmospheric circulation from 1871 to the present.

As it happens, the project's initial findings, published last month, show no evidence of an intensifying weather trend. "In the climate models, the extremes get more extreme as we move into a doubled CO<sub>2</sub> world in 100 years," atmospheric scientist Gilbert Compo, one of the researchers on the project, tells me from his office at the University of Colorado, Boulder. "So we were surprised that none of the three major indices of climate variability that we used show a trend of increased circulation going back to 1871."

In other words, researchers have yet to find evidence of more-extreme weather patterns over the period, contrary to what the models predict. "There's no data-driven answer yet to the question of how human activity has affected extreme weather," adds Roger Pielke Jr., another University of Colorado climate researcher.

We do know that carbon dioxide and other gases trap and re-radiate heat. We also know that humans have emitted ever-more of these gases since the Industrial Revolution. What we don't know is exactly how sensitive the climate is to increases in these gases versus other possible factors—solar variability, oceanic currents, Pacific heating and cooling cycles, planets' gravitational and magnetic oscillations, and so on.

Given the unknowns, it's possible that even if we spend trillions of dollars, and forgo trillions more in future economic growth, to cut carbon emissions to pre-industrial levels, the climate will continue to change—as it always has.

That's not to say we're helpless. There is at least one climate lesson that we can draw from the recent weather: Whatever happens, prosperity and preparedness help. North Texas's ice storm wreaked havoc and left hundreds of football fans stranded, cold, and angry. But thanks to modern infrastructure, 21st century health care, and stockpiles of magnesium chloride and snow plows, the storm caused no reported deaths and Dallas managed to host the big game on Sunday.

Compare that outcome to the 55 people who reportedly died of pneumonia, respiratory problems and other cold-related illnesses in Bangladesh and Nepal when temperatures dropped to just above freezing last winter. Even rich countries can be caught off guard: Witness the thousands stranded when Heathrow skimmed on de-icing supplies and let five inches of snow ground flights for two days before Christmas. Britain's GDP shrank by 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2010, for which the Office of National Statistics mostly blames "the bad weather."

Arguably, global warming *was* a factor in that case. Or at least the idea of global warming was. The London-based Global Warming Policy Foundation charges that British authorities are so committed to the notion that Britain's future will be warmer that they have failed to plan for winter storms that have hit the country three years running.

A sliver of the billions that British taxpayers spend on trying to control their climes could have bought them more of the supplies that helped Dallas recover more quickly. And, with a fraction of *that* sliver of prosperity, more Bangladeshis and Nepalis could have acquired the antibiotics and respirators to survive their cold spell.

A comparison of cyclones Yasi and Nargis tells a similar story: As devastating as Yasi has been, Australia's infrastructure, medicine, and emergency protocols meant the Category 5 storm has killed only one person so far. Australians are now mulling all the ways they could have better protected their property and economy.

But if they feel like counting their blessings, they need only look to the similar cyclone that hit the Irrawaddy Delta in 2008. Burma's military regime hadn't allowed for much of an economy before the cyclone, but Nargis destroyed nearly all the Delta had. Afterwards, the junta blocked foreign aid workers from delivering needed water purification and medical supplies. In the end, the government let Nargis kill more than 130,000 people.

Global-warming alarmists insist that economic activity is the problem, when the available evidence show it to be part of the solution. We may not be able to do anything about the weather, extreme or otherwise. But we can make sure we have the resources to deal with it when it comes.

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