

The Week That Was: 2012-07-28 (July 28, 2012)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week:

"There is no more common error than to assume that, because prolonged and accurate mathematical calculations have been made, the application of the result to some fact of nature is absolutely certain." Alfred North Whitehead, British mathematician and philosopher [H/t Tim Ball]

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Number of the Week: 4%

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On the Road Again: At the end of the month Fred Singer will be traveling and speaking at various locations. Talks include:

Heartland Institute

July 30, 2012, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm One South Wacker Drive, #2740, Chicago, IL 60606

Registration required, \$10, Contact Tonya Houston at thouston@heartland.org or 312/377-4000

The 15th Annual International Mars Society Convention

August 3 to 5, 2012 Pasadena Convention Center, CA

<http://www.marssociety.org/convention2012>

Morning of Aug 4, Registration may be required

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THIS WEEK:

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

Preemptive Strike? Following the practice embraced by Richard Muller of The Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature Project (BEST), on July 29 Anthony Watts announced a pre-publication draft paper reanalyzing the U.S. surface station temperatures “using the recently WMO-approved Siting Classification System devised by METEO-France’s Michel Leroy. ... The new analysis demonstrates that reported 1979-2008 U.S. temperature trends are spuriously doubled, with 92% of that over-estimation resulting from erroneous NOAA adjustments of well-sited stations upward.” Please see link under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

BEST has announced that it will be issuing a major new report on July 30. Some followers of climate issues are speculating that Richard Muller will announce that his research supports the claims that the warming since 1950 is caused by human emissions of carbon dioxide. The project has focused on land based data, only. However, as stated in last week’s TWTW, other research finds that almost 50% of the increase in temperatures over the past 100 years found in land-based data is due to faulty statistical manipulation of the data. It should be an interesting week.

Media Blitz: The US Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, chaired by environmental advocate Barbara Boxer, is holding a full committee hearing on Wednesday entitled “Update on the Latest Climate Change Science and Local Adaptation Measures.” This will probably be the last such hearing before the election. Environmental advocate Barbara Boxer chairs the committee. As demonstrated by the Alar and Apple campaign in 1986, environmental

advocates are extremely good at media blitzes even if the “scientific” claims are not scientifically substantiated. We may expect such a blitz before the committee hearing.

Perhaps, the hearing is the reason why we have been treated with alarming “scientific” reports such as the one last week that the summertime breaking-off of 0.007% of the area of the Greenland ice sheet was significant, and a precursor of things to come. This week we were treated to alarming reports from NASA that virtually all the Greenland ice sheet is melting. A number of blogs quickly countered that claim, including aerial photos of Greenland showing robust ice, and photos from the webcam at Summit Station, which was certainly not slushy. But the damage was done and some of the public was alarmed. However, the press office of NASA could be called illiterate, further undermining the public’s trust in scientists. No wonder polls taken of Generation X show that generation is not very concerned about global warming.

One interesting point came out of the NASA press release. An expert in ice cores stated that a careful analysis of the ice cores from the Summit Station reveals that there is a cyclical melt occurring about every 150 years. If supported by other evidence, it will be interesting to see possible explanations of this cyclical melt. Please see links under Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate or be Vague?, The Political Games Continue, and Other News that May Be of Interest.

Will They Come? About 50 retired astronauts, engineers, and scientists from the Apollo missions have formed an independent group called the “Right Climate Stuff” team. They have invited experts from all sides of the global warming issue to present their data and conclusions. This is a great opportunity to present needed information to a highly qualified and highly distinguished team of scientists and engineers who have proven accomplishments. Who will come? Please see link under Seeking a Common Ground.

Antarctic Lag: Last week’s TWTW linked to a report that refined the time lag between trends in temperature and trends in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations. The new estimate for the lag is about 400 years. Previously, many estimates were 800 years +/- 200 years. It will be interesting to see if this refinement holds up, but, nonetheless, if temperature trends change before CO2 trends, CO2 cannot be the cause. Some articles are misleading the public by stating that the trends are simultaneous, which they are not. Please see links under Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

EPA Rules: EPA has announced that it is delaying until next year the implementation of certain rules, both under the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. These rules largely, but not exclusively, pertain to coal-fired power plants. One can speculate that real reason for this delay is the upcoming election, which may be very close. In a number of states, voters are expressing outrage at the rules which will raise electricity rates and make coal-fired power plants prohibitively expensive.

Corn to Ethanol: With the draught in the Midwest which is drastically reducing the expected yield of the US corn crop, many commentators are demanding that the Federal government stop its mandates of requiring mixing ethanol with gasoline. Ethanol is an example of a good idea becoming a bad idea. In the 1970s most automobiles and other motor vehicles had carbonators, which were often adjusted too rich. This led to air pollution from un-burnt fuel. Mixing gasoline

with ethanol was one idea to increase the oxygen in the engines to promote more complete combustion. Today, the vast majority of vehicles have computer controlled fuel injection, which will not run unless the mixture is virtually ideal. Thus, ethanol is not needed and it is an inferior fuel compared with gasoline.

In the US, most ethanol comes from corn. Thus, ethanol is a political issue with the corn-belt supporting it. Estimates of the amount of corn that goes to produce ethanol vary significantly. The US Department of Agriculture standard numbers are 32% of the crop in 2010 and 40% of the crop in 2011. But these numbers are first use. The process of making ethanol creates what are called co-products including some that are very useful as animal feed. Animal feed is the largest use of corn in the US, larger than ethanol. Thus, 40% overstates the actual amount of the crop that is used for ethanol, exclusively.

Also, in the US very little corn is produced for direct US human consumption – about 2%. This is called sweet corn. The vast bulk is field corn, which has a multitude of uses, about 4200, including oils, sweeteners, and manufactured cereals. Please see:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/bioenergy/findings.aspx> and links under Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine.

Corrections and Amplifications: Last week TWTW linked to a report by Oxfam on agriculture and biofuel issues in Paraguay. TWTW reader Albercht Glatzle, an agriculture scientist in Paraguay, strongly objected to the report. Dr. Glatzle contradicted the report on a number of points stating that Paraguay produces more food than is domestically consumed therefore exports food, and that he is unaware of any use of irrigation for soybeans. TWTW should have picked up on a misleading statement in the report – Paraguay is the poorest country in South America. Based on IMF, World Bank, and CIA estimates, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Paraguay is slightly below that of Bolivia, but its per capita GDP is significantly above that of Bolivia. The latter is a far superior measure of relative wealth, or poverty. As always, TWTW appreciates corrections to its comments and comments in its links.

Maximum and Minimum Temperatures: Commentary from four-time IPCC expert reviewer Vincent Gray focuses on the bias introduced by homogenization of surface temperature data. He also brings out why surface data that gives maximum and minimum temperatures are inadequate for computing a global average. Please see link under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

Number of the Week: 4%. Unlike satellite data which is compiled from measurements of a volume of air, surface data is measured at points on the surface (actually just above it). For the global circulation models, the surface of the earth is divided into 2,592 grid boxes measuring 5 degrees latitude and 5 degrees longitude. Ideally, at least one measuring point should be in each box. A 1997 study by Peterson and Vose published in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society contains graphs showing the extent to which the grid boxes are covered with at least one weather station reporting maximum and minimum temperatures. There were very few until 1875 and in 1900 there were about 100. Thus, about 4% of the grid boxes were covered. The stations were largely in the US with the remaining stations largely in Western Europe, Japan, and parts of Australia. No doubt a few additional records have been found, but reporting that the surface records go back to, say, 1850 or 1750, without clarifying the poor extent of the coverage is highly misleading.

Further, there were about 260 such grid boxes covered in 1950, 10%; the number of grid boxes covered rose then fell to below 100 in 1994. Please note that the estimates of the number of grid boxes are taken from a graph in the paper and are not precise data (which were not presented). For the article, please see pp 2842 & 2843 at:

http://www.babytrollblog.com/archives/images/ghcn_temp_overview.pdf

for the NIPCC write-up, see pp 8-11 in NIPCC 2008

http://www.sepp.org/publications/NIPCC_final.pdf.

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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. China's Canadian Energy Play

Alberta's oil sands will be developed, no matter what U.S. greens say.

Editorial, WSJ, Jul 26, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444025204577547074156244672.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

2. Wood-Fired Plants Generate Violations

By Justin Scheck and Ianthe Jeanne Dugan, WSJ, Jul 23, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303740704577524822063133842.html?mod=IT_P_pageone_0

3. The Ethanol Mandate Is Worse Than The Drought

The corn market, which already faces the whims of Mother Nature, is also being victimized by the whims of Washington

By C. Larry Pope, WSJ, Jul 26, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443343704577550831467098866.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTTopOpinion

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

The Questions That Were Never Asked

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Jul 21, 2012

<http://climateaudit.org/2012/07/21/the-questions-that-were-never-asked/#more-16543>

[SEPP Comment: More on the independent investigation of the University of East Anglia that pretended to be but never was.]

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Reanalysis of U.S. surface station temperatures

By Anthony Watts, Press Release, WUWT, Jul 29, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/07/29/press-release-2/>

Predictions by climate models are flawed, says MIT meteorology expert

By Staff Writers, Homeland Security News, Jul 26, 2012 [H/t William Readdy]

<http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20120726-predictions-by-climate-models-are-flawed-says-mit-meteorology-expert>

... That climate should be the function of a single parameter (like CO₂) has always seemed implausible. Yet an obsessive focus on such an obvious oversimplification has likely set back progress by decades,” Lindzen said.

Homogenization

By Vincent Gray, NZ Climate Truth Newsletter, No 297

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2012/07/homogenization.html>

Another broken hockey stick: New paper finds ocean temps were warmer during multiple periods over past 2700 years & current warming within natural variability

The Hockey Schtick, Jul 26, 2012, [H/t GWPF]

<http://hockeyschtick.blogspot.ie/2012/07/another-broken-hockey-stick-new-paper.html>

[SEPP Comment: Researchers from Peking University in Beijing natural variability in the southern Okinawa Trough and a “A close correlation of SST in Southern Okinawa Trough with air temperature in East China, intensity of East Asian monsoon and the El-Niño Southern Oscillation index has been attributed to the fluctuations in solar output and oceanic-atmospheric circulation.”]

Be Skeptical of Skeptic’s Skepticism of Skeptics

By Christopher Moncton of Brenchley, SPPI, Jul 24, 2012 [H/t Joe Bast]

http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/reprint/be_skeptical_of_skeptics_skepticism_of_skeptics.html

[SEPP Comment: A summary essay written in Moncton’s refreshing style and flair.]

Cato’s Impact Assessment

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Jul 23, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/07/23/catos-impact-assessment/#more-9166>

[SEPP Comment: Cato Institute has issued a report edited by Patrick Michaels that pointedly rebuts many of the conclusions of the 2009 report from the US Global Change Research Program. Along with the IPCC report and a NRC report, the USGCRP was cited by the EPA in its endangerment finding. This post provides an overview of the issues.]

Without Internet Democracy And Transparency, IPCC Climate Deception Succeeds

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Jul 27, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/without-internet-democracy-and-transparency-ipcc-climate-deception-succeeds/>

Skeptics put the freeze on NASA 'hot air' about Greenland ice

By Jeremy Kaplan, Fox News, Jul 26, 2012

<http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2012/07/26/skeptics-put-freeze-on-nasa-hot-air-about-greenland-ice/>

CO₂ may lag temperature just by 400 years or so

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Jul 25, 2012

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/07/co2-may-lag-temperature-just-by-400.html>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Global warming unequivocal in its advance, says NCAA expert

By Staff Writers, Homeland Security News, Jul 26, 2012 [H/t William Readdy]

<http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20120726-global-warming-unequivocal-in-its-advance-says-ncaa-expert>

Global CO2 emissions continue to increase

By Staff Writers, Amsterdam, Holland (SPX), Jul 25, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Global_CO2_emissions_continue_to_increase_999.html

[SEPP Comment: A race that China is winning – “China (29%), the United States (16%), the European Union (11%), India (6%), the Russian Federation (5%) and Japan (4%).”

A Climate and Energy Stalemate

By John Broder, NYT, Jul 26, 2012

http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/26/a-climate-and-energy-stalemate/?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120727

Searching for Clues to Calamity

By Fred Guterl, NYT, Jul 20, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/21/opinion/the-climate-change-tipping-point.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120721

[SEPP Comment: The analogy does not fit.]

Loading the Climate Dice

By Paul Krugman, NYT, Jul 22, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/23/opinion/krugman-loading-the-climate-dice.html?_r=1

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Scorning the propaganda of fear

By Emma-Kate Symons, Financial Review, Jul 20, 2012 [H/t Morrad Alexanian]

http://afr.com/p/lifestyle/review/scorning_the_propaganda_of_fear_35NPhGM05z5vuBNPRHVoBI

Climate Commission in Melbourne

By Tom Quirk, Quadrant, Jul 27, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/07/climate-commission-in-melbourne>

Praise be! The Climate Commission in Melbourne

By John McLean, Quadrant, Jul 27, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/07/praise-be-the-climate-commission-in-melbourne>

IPCC seeks to influence UK FOI laws

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jul 26, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/7/26/ipcc-seeks-to-influence-uk-foi-laws.html>

[SEPP Comment: Such is the proclaimed transparency and openness of the IPCC.]

Back to the Future: Paradise Lost, or Paradise Regained?

By Paul MacRae, WUWT, Jul 24, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/07/24/back-to-the-future-paradise-lost-or-paradise-regained/>

[SEPP Comment: A collection of views of the past, millions of years ago, when it was warmer and CO2 concentrations were greater.]

Questioning Green Elsewhere

The Ruinous Privileges of Renewable Energy

Ray Evans & Tom Quirk, Quadrant, Jul-Aug, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2012/7-8/the-ruinous-privileges-of-renewable-energy>

[SEPP Comment: A rather long essay on how Australia's politically correct politicians have punished the public through increased electricity rates – which was predicted in March 2009.]

Watching the Greens Kill Australia

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Jul 24, 2012

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2012/07/watching-greens-kill-australia.html>

How Green Was My Bankruptcy? “Roadmap for Solar Energy Development on Public Lands” Edition

By David Middleton, WUWT, Jul 26, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/07/26/how-green-was-my-bankruptcy-roadmap-for-solar-energy-development-on-public-lands-edition/>

[SEPP Comment: Covering western lands with solar PV produces little electricity compared with what much smaller natural gas plants can produce.]

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Six Easy Steps for Saving the Coral Reefs for our Grandchildren

By Bob Fernley-Jones, WUWT, Jul 25, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/07/25/six-easy-steps-for-saving-the-coral-reefs-for-our-grandchildren/>

[SEPP Comment: Draft the consensus conclusion for the conference the month before everyone meets. The only point missing is having NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco as a keynote speaker.]

Climate change where you'd least expect it

By Philippa Martyr, Quadrant, Jul 24, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/qed/2012/07/climate-change-where-you-d-least-expect-it>

[SEPP Comment: A list of climate change research grants in Australia.]

Seven countries join anti-soot and methane campaign

By Staff Writers, Paris (AFP), July 24, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Seven_countries_join_anti-soot_and_methane_campaign_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Soot is a major health problem in many nations but why should it be coupled with methane?]

Seeking a Common Ground

Will They Come?

By H. Leighton Steward, Energy Tribune, Jul 27, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/11296/Will-They-Come?>

Krugman vs. Research, Who You Gonna Believe?

By Roger Pielke Jr, His Blog, Jul 23, 2012

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2012/07/krugman-vs-research-who-you-gonna.html>

The 2012 Norwegian Climate Research Report – Reinforcing The Need To Broaden Climate Science Assessments

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Jul 24, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/07/24/the-2012-norwegian-climate-research-report-reinforcing-the-need-to-broaden-climate-science-assessments/>

[SEPP Comment: The need to move beyond the narrow focus of the UN IPCC in order to understand climate change.]

Observer bias

By Martian Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Jul 27, 2012

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/observer-bias>

When Science Meets Opinion

By John Nielsen-Gammon, Houston Chronicle, Jul 24, 2012

<http://blog.chron.com/climateabyss/2012/07/when-science-meets-opinion/>

[SEPP Comment: An interview with Larry Bell exploring the difference between technical writing and component opinion writing.]

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

Wild Speculation on Climate and Polar Bears

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Jul 26, 2012

<http://www.worldclimaterreport.com/index.php/2012/07/26/wild-speculation-on-climate-and-polar-bears/>

US Official: ‘Activate Your Science’

A senior public servant thinks scientists should be passionate, engaged activists

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Jul 24, 2012

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/07/24/us-official-activate-your-science/>

[SEPP Comment: More on the NOAA Administrator urging political activism from scientists.]

Rise in temperatures and CO2 follow each other closely in climate change

By Staff Writers, Copenhagen, Denmark (SPX), Jul 26, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Rise_in_temperatures_and_CO2_follow_each_other_closely_in_climate_change_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Does not explain what temperatures trends occur first, prior to CO2 trends.]

Satellites see Unprecedented Greenland Ice Sheet Melt

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Jul 25, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Satellites_see_Unprecedented_Greenland_Ice_Sheet_Melt_999.html

"Ice cores from Summit show that melting events of this type occur about once every 150 years on average. With the last one happening in 1889, this event is right on time,"
[SEPP Comment: Unprecedented in 30 years!]

Nasa satellites reveal sudden Greenland ice melt

Nasa has released satellite images showing that a huge sheet of ice across Greenland has melted at an unusually fast rate in the course of this month.

By Staff Writers, Telegraph, UK, Jul, 26, 2012

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/9425486/Nasa-satellites-reveal-sudden-Greenland-ice-melt.html>

Illiteracy at NASA

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Jul 24, 2012

<http://www.worldclimatereport.com/index.php/2012/07/24/illiteracy-at-nasa/>

News Report “NASA: Sudden Massive Melt in Greenland” – My Comments On This Media Hype

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Jul 25, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/07/25/news-report-nasa-sudden-massive-melt-in-greenland-my-comments-on-this-media-hype/>

Summit Station, Weather, July 26, 2012

<http://summitcamp.org/status/weather/index?period=month>

<http://summitcamp.org/status/webcam/> [H/t Gordon Fulks]

[SEPP Comment: Tiny blips above 0 C – ice, no water]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Spinning more bad news to pretend it answers skeptics. When 400 “equals” zero

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Jul 25, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/07/spinning-more-bad-news-to-pretend-it-answers-skeptics-when-400-equals-zero/#more-22884>

Experts: Some fracking critics use bad science

By Kevin Begos, AP, Jul 22, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/experts-some-fracking-critics-use-bad-science>

[SEPP Comment: Natural gas drilling causes breast cancer?]

Drought in the Horn of Africa

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jul 21, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/7/21/drought-in-the-horn-of-africa.html>

[SEPP Comment: Contrary to evidence.]

Changing Weather

Perspective on the 2012 heat and drought

By Joseph D’Aleo, CCM, Weatherbell Co-Chief Meteorologist, ICECAP, Jul 24, 2012

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/perspective_on_the_2012_heat_and_drought/

While most of America sizzles, Alaskans shiver through chilly summer

By George Bryson, in ICECAP, Jul 24, 2012

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/while_most_of_america_sizzles_alaskans_shiver_through_chilly_summer/

Summertime, and the twisters are missin'

July heads for a record-low tornado count

By Bob Henson, NCAR UCAR AtmosNews, July 24, 2012 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://www2.ucar.edu/atmosnews/opinion/7547/summertime-and-twisters-are-missin>

Storm trends in Australia and New Zealand? No evidence that CO2 increases extreme weather

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Jul 25, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/07/storm-trends-in-australia-and-new-zealand-no-evidence-that-co2-increases-extreme-weather/#more-22835>

Changing Climate

Aquifer could supply water for centuries

By Staff Writers, Windhoek, Namibia (UPI), Jul 20, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Aquifer_could_supply_water_for_centuries_999.html

[SEPP Comment: It would be interesting to know what charged the aquifer. Was it monsoon rains from thousands of years ago which also made the Sahara wet?]

Changing Seas

Scientists connect seawater chemistry with climate change and evolution

By Staff Writers, Toronto, Canada (SPX), Jul 23, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Scientists_connect_seawater_chemistry_with_climate_change_and_evolution_999.html

Tropical plankton invade Arctic waters

By Staff Writers, New York NY (SPX), Jul 25, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Tropical_plankton_invasion_Arctic_waters_999.html

Why Are Sea Levels So Low?

By Doug Hoffman, Resilient Earth, via GWPF, Jul 26, 2012

<http://thegwgf.org/the-observatory/6251-why-are-sea-levels-so-low.html>

[SEPP Comment: An amusing question.]

Changing Sea Ice

Scientists find Grand Canyon-sized rift under Antarctic ice

By Staff Writers, Paris (AFP), July 26, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Scientists_find_Grand_Canyon-sized_rift_under_Antarctic_ice_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The last time scientists visited the area was in 1961. Certainly, they have not monitored it. Comments such as severe sea level rise are unfounded.]

Changing Earth

An earthquake in a maze

By Kimm Fesenmaier, Pasadena CA (SPX), Jul 23, 2012

http://www.terradaaily.com/reports/An_earthquake_in_a_maze_999.html

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Comparing 2012 Drought Costs to 1980 and 1988

By Roger Pielke Jr, His Blog, Jul 26, 2012

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2012/07/comparing-2012-drought-costs-to-1980.html>

[SEPP Comment: The cost as a percentage of GDP is revealing of the shift in the US economy.]

Uses of Corn

By Staff Writers, Nebraska Corn Board, No Date

<http://www.nebraskacorn.org/main-navigation/corn-production-uses/uses-of-corn/>

When Drought Strikes, Should U.S. Policy Endanger Hungry People?

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming, Jul 20, 2012

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2012/07/20/when-drought-strikes-should-u-s-policy-endanger-hungry-people/>

The Political Games Continue

Full Committee hearing entitled, “Update on the Latest Climate Change Science and Local Adaptation Measures.”

U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works

Wednesday, August 1, 2012, 10:00 AM EDT, EPW Hearing Room - 406 Dirksen

http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_id=c0293eca-802a-23ad-4706-02abdbf7f7c3

Litigation Issues

Federal Appeals Court Upholds EPA NAAQS Standards for NOx, SO2

By Sonal Petal, Power News, Jul 25, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4833.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2491636&hq_l=10&hq_v=5e660500d0

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Carbon Taxomania: Bipartisan Stupidity On Steroids

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Jul 24, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/07/24/carbon-taxomania-bipartisan-stupidity-on-steroids/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

POWER’s Peltier: MACT’s Missing Intellectual Justification

By Robert Bradley Jr, Master Resource, Jul 23, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/07/peltier-mact-attack/#more-21000>

EPA to take a second look at coal rules

By Ben Wolfgang, Washington Times, Jul 21, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/21/epa-take-second-look-coal-rules/>

EPA to Stay, Reconsider New Source Emission Standards in MATS Rule

By Sonal Patel, POWERnews, Jul 20, 2012

http://www.powernews.com/POWERnews/4832.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2491636&hq_l=9&hq_v=5e660500d0

EPA Delays Issuance of Final Cooling Water Intake Rule by Nearly a Year

By Sonal Patel, POWERnews, Jul 26, 2012

http://www.powernews.com/POWERnews/4839.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2491636&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e660500d0

EPA defers regulations for coal-fired power plants

Though delayed, mandate still apt to meet resistance

By Ben Wolfgang, Washington Times, Jul 22, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/21/epa-take-second-look-coal-rules/>

[SEPP Comment: These are the carbon emission rules for new power plants.]

EPA declares water in Pa. town safe to drink despite fracking

By Ben Wolfgang, Washington Times, Jul 25, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/25/epa-declares-water-dimock-pa-safe-drink-despite-fr/>

Energy Issues – Non-US

The global (sled) race for the Arctic's oil and gas riches

By Yadullah Hussain, Financial Post, Jul 27, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/07/27/arctic-the-great-sled-race/>

[SEPP Comment: The second of a two part series on the desire by some to develop resources in the Arctic.]

China unveils blockbuster foreign energy deal

By Staff Writers, Beijing (AFP), July 23, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/China_unveils_blockbuster_foreign_energy_deal_999.html

The Power Behind Big Data: A Global Survey

By Mark Mills, Energy Facts Weekly, Jul 23, 2012

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=9ab5389180&e=>

Energy Issues -- US

US approves portion of Keystone pipeline

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Jul 27, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/240753-us-approves-permit-for-keystone-pipelines-southern-portion>

[SEPP Comment: Will help relieve the choke point in Oklahoma, but will not transport oil from Canada or North Dakota.]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Merrill Lynch report: America’s energy sector delivers an economic stimulus of almost \$1 billion every day

By Mark Perry, AEIdeas, Jul 23, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/07/merrill-lynch-report-u-s-energy-sector-delivers-an-economic-stimulus-to-the-u-s-economy-every-day-of-almost-1-billion/>

[SEPP Comment: The actual report is unavailable to the general public. The stimulus is not from policies set in Washington, but in spite of them.]

Why Gas Producers Are Getting Crunched by the Shale Boom

By Keith Schaefer, Oilprice.com, Jul 25, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Natural-Gas/Why-Gas-Producers-Are-Getting-Crunched-by-the-Shale-Boom.html>

[SEPP Comment: The price of natural gas liquids is down considerably due to the sharp increase in production which is currently beyond the capability of traditional users such as the petrochemical industry to absorb.]

Natural Gas, A Burning Issue

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Jul 27, 2012

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2012/07/27/natural-gas-a-burning-issue/>

[SEPP Comment: Debunking the Gasland movie.]

Washington’s Control of Oil and Gas

Obama Sets Drilling Limits, Continues War On Oil

Editorial, IBD, Jul 24, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/article/619416/201207241859/obama-holds-back-offshore-drilling-leases.htm>

Energy right on our shores

White House avoiding a key resource

By Randall Luthi, Washington Times, Jul 23, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/23/energy-right-on-our-shores/>

‘A Bad Signal’: Fracking Opponents Have Policy Indicators in Their Corner

A Democratic congressman talks to PJM about rural landowners' rights, environmental overreach, and production "in spite of the administration's policies."

By Bridget Johnson, PJ Media, Jul 24, 2012

<http://pjmedia.com/blog/a-bad-signal-fracking-opponents-have-policy-indicators-in-their-corner/?singlepage=true>

Return of King Coal?

Locking in the benefits of clean coal: China and India are securing their energy future

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts Weekly, Jul 10, 2012

<http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=df6156bc13&e=>

The Assault on Coal and American Consumers

By Nicolas Loris, Heritage, Jul 23, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/07/the-assault-on-coal-and-american-consumers>
[SEPP Comment: A 20 plus page report on Washington's war on coal-fired utilities.]

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Stanford researchers calculate global health impacts of the Fukushima nuclear disaster

By Staff Writers, Stanford CA (SPX), Jul 23, 2012

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Stanford_researchers_calculate_global_health_impacts_of_the_Fukushima_nuclear_disaster_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Doubtful if the research considers the many areas of the earth with high natural background radiation.]

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

Wind Power in the Windy City: Not There When Needed

By Jonathan Lesser, Energy Tribune, Jul 25, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/11275/Wind-Power-in-the-Windy-City-Not-There-When-Needed>

Toward super-size wind turbines: Bigger wind turbines do make greener electricity

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Jun 25, 2012

http://www.winddaily.com/reports/Toward_super_size_wind_turbines_Bigger_wind_turbines_do_make_greener_electricity_999.html

[SEPP comment: When they make electricity! Blade diameter of 1000 feet, 305 meters.]

U.S moves massive wind farm plan forward

By Staff Writers, Washington, Conn. (UPI), Jul 2 , 2012

http://www.winddaily.com/reports/US_moves_massive_wind_farm_plan_forward_999.html

US wind industry gains major new supporters for Production Tax Credit campaign

By Staff Writers, Atlanta GA (SPX), Jun 15, 2012

http://www.winddaily.com/reports/US_wind_industry_gains_major_new_supporters_for_Production_Tax_Credit_campaign_999.html

Solar Trade Tensions Intensify as China Launches Polysilicon Dumping Probe

By Sonal Patel, Powernews, Jul 25, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4834.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2491636&hq_l=11&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: More on the solar trade wars.]

Administration hits China with wind tower tariff in face of GOP criticism

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Jul 27, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/240809-administration-hits-china-with-wind-tower-tariff>

[SEPP Comment: The wind trade wars.]

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy -- Other

Brazil to build first algae-based biofuel plant

By Staff Writers, Rio De Janeiro (AFP), July 24, 2012

http://www.biofueldaily.com/reports/Brazil_to_build_first_algae-based_biofuel_plant_999.html

[SEPP Comment: According to reports a plant opened in Texas in 2008. We could not determine the current status.]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Vehicles

Electric cars become tougher to sell

By Chris Woodyard, USA Today, Jul 26, 2012

<http://content.usatoday.com/communities/driveon/post/2012/07/electric-cars-become-tougher-to-sell/1#.UBO5A-4grg9>

Carbon Schemes

Pulling CO2 from air vital

By Staff Writers, New York NY (SPX), Jul 26, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Pulling_CO2_from_air_vital_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Green plants do it for free.]

California Dreaming

UCLA study of Japan's bullet train raises questions about California project

A UCLA analysis of Japan's Shinkansen bullet train and its impact on the growth of cities along its route calls into question claims by state officials that California's high-speed rail project will create up to 400,000 jobs.

By Ralph Vartabedian, Los Angeles Times, Jul 13, 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-high-speed-study-20120713,0,2827295.story>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Eight and a Half Centuries of Snowpack Variations in the Andes of Chile and Argentina

Reference: Masiokas, M.H., Villalba, R., Christie, D.A., Betman, E., Luckman, B.H., Le Quesne, C., Prieto, M.R. and Mauget, S. 2012. Snowpack variations since AD 1150 in the Andes of Chile and Argentina (30°-37°S) inferred from rainfall, tree-ring and documentary records. *Journal of Geophysical Research* 117: 10.1029/2011JD016748.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jul/24jul2012a1.html>

Ocean Acidification and the Marine Nitrogen Cycle

Reference: Fulweiler, R.W., Emery, H.E., Heiss, E.M. and Berounsky, V.M. 2011. Assessing the role of pH in determining water column nitrification rates in a coastal system. *Estuaries and Coasts* 34: 1095-1102.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jul/24jul2012a3.html>

[SEPP Comment: Not what some predict.]

Extreme Temperature Events Throughout South America

Reference: Rusticucci, M. 2012. Observed and simulated variability of extreme temperature events over South America. *Atmospheric Research* 106: 1-17.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jul/25jul2012a1.html>

Historic U.S. Midwest Floods of 1993 & 2008

Reference: Bodner, M.J., Junker, N.W., Grumm, R.H. and Schumacher, R.S. 2011. Comparison of atmospheric circulation patterns during the 2008 and 1993 historic Midwest floods. *National Weather Digest* 35: 103-119.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jul/25jul2012a3.html>

Recurrent Bleaching and Storms Need Not Spell "the End" for Earth's Corals

Reference: Adjeroud, M., Michonneau, F., Edmunds, P.J., Chancerelle, Y., Lison de Loma, T., Penin, L., Thibaut, L., Vidal-Dupiol, J., Salvat, B. and Galzin, R. 2009. Recurrent disturbances, recovery trajectories, and resilience of coral assemblages on a South Central Pacific reef. *Coral Reefs* 28: 775-780.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jul/25jul2012a4.html>

Health, Energy, and Climate

How climate change is increasing cholera outbreaks in northern Europe

By Claire Bates, Daily Mail, UK Jul 23, 2012

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2177585/Manmade-climate-change-driving-outbreak-tummy-bugs-Europe-claim-scientists.html>

[SEPP Comment: *Why is it that warm water fisheries do not have frequent cholera outbreaks?*]

Oh Mann!

Mann's legal case

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jul 24, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/7/24/manns-legal-case.html>

Other Scientific News

Lockheed Martin Marks Landsat 40th Anniversary

By Staff Writers, Sunnyvale CA (SPX). Jul 25, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Lockheed_Martin_Marks_Landsat_40th_Anniversary_999.html

Storms Threaten Ozone Layer Over U.S., Study Says

By Henry Fountain, NYT, Jul 26, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/27/science/earth/strong-storms-threaten-ozone-layer-over-us-study-says.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120727

Active forest management to reduce fire could aid northern spotted owl

By Staff Writers, Corvallis OR (SPX), Jul 26, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Active_forest_management_to_reduce_fire_could_aid_northern_spotted_owl_999.html

Researchers publish results of an iron fertilization experiment

By Staff Writers, Munich, Germany (SPX) Jul 20, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Researchers_publish_results_of_an_iron_fertilization_experiment_999.html

Fools' Gold Found to Regulate Oxygen

By Staff Writers, Rehovot, Israel (SPX), Jul 24, 2012

[http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Fools Gold Found to Regulate Oxygen 999.html](http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Fools_Gold_Found_to_Regulate_Oxygen_999.html)

Polar bear evolution tracked climate change

By Staff Writers, Philadelphia PA (SPX), Jul 24, 2012

[http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Polar bear evolution tracked climate change 999.html](http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Polar_bear_evolution_tracked_climate_change_999.html)

Other News that May Be of Interest

Temperature Control for Earth

By Alex Pope, Pope's Climate Theory, No Date [H/t William Readdy]

<http://popescimatetheory.com/page40.html>

[SEPP Comment: How an engineer would design the climate system.]

Western wildfires – horrific, devastating ... and unnecessary

By Paul Driessen, WUWT, Jul 24, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/07/24/western-wildfires-horrific-devastating-and-unnecessary/>

Generation X is surprisingly unconcerned about climate change

By Staff Writers, Ann Arbor, MI (SPX), Jul 23, 2012

[http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Generation X is surprisingly unconcerned about climate change 999.html](http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Generation_X_is_surprisingly_unconcerned_about_climate_change_999.html)

[SEPP Comment: Satiated by alarmist claims?]

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Veterinary Research and Global Warming

By Michael Oxenham, WUWT, Jul 23, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/07/23/veterinary-research-and-global-warming/>

[SEPP Comment: 7.7 Million Euros for what?]

Could extreme weather be causing climate change? New study aims to find if peat bogs release greenhouse gas when it rains

Release of greenhouse gases from farmed peat bogs could be changed by rain or drought

New East Anglia project to monitor effects of weather

Could provide powerful weapon in fight against climate change

By Rob Waugh, Daily Mail, Jul 26, 2012 [H/t Malcolm Ross]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2179305/Could-extreme-weather-causing-climate-change-New-study-aims-peat-bogs-releasing-greenhouse-gas-rain.html#ixzz21kvEnOg9>

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ARTICLES:

1. China's Canadian Energy Play

Alberta's oil sands will be developed, no matter what U.S. greens say.

Editorial, WSJ, Jul 26, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444025204577547074156244672.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

President Obama may not want to exploit the energy buried in Canada's Alberta oil sands, but China sure does. Think of Monday's \$15.1 billion offer by China's state-owned Cnooc to buy

Canadian energy giant Nexen as a post-Keystone XL Pipeline bid to replace the U.S. as Canada's biggest energy investor and market.

Nexen offers Cnooc a sweeping North American energy footprint, with assets from heavy oil and shale gas in Alberta to offshore leases in the Gulf of Mexico. Part of the bet is also on Canadian politics, which could block the investment on nationalist grounds but which so far hasn't been captured by the anticarbon fevers that dominate Washington.

Canada seems to understand that its resources are a gift that can raise national prosperity. And as extraction technology has improved, Canada's proven oil reserves have climbed to at least 180 billion barrels, putting it behind only Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

Unlike the U.S., Ottawa cedes most energy decisions to the provinces, which have encouraged production. A decade ago Alberta reduced to 1% the royalty that companies must pay until they have earned back their capital costs; then the rate reverts to 25%. The incentive kick-started the oil sands investment boom.

Canada is also looking for oil from shale, drilling in the Arctic, and even producing in the Atlantic—offshore of Nova Scotia, within spitting distance of Maine. All of this has produced a gusher of oil, tax revenue and jobs. The oil sands alone are estimated to have accounted for one-third of Canada's economic growth in 2010 and 2011, according to Canada's national statistical agency.

Contrast that to the U.S., where President Obama has spent tens of billions on failed green energy schemes while making fossil-fuel exploration harder. This week the White House issued a veto threat against a House bill that would restore pre-Obama plans to allow greater offshore exploration. Alaska oil production is so low that there are worries about the viability of its pipeline. Shell Oil, which has plowed \$4.5 billion into an Arctic investment, has been waiting the entire Obama Presidency for permits. The EPA is also waiting for a second term to impose national regulations on shale fracking.

Mr. Obama's rejection of the \$7 billion Keystone XL has no doubt concentrated Chinese and Canadian minds. The pipeline would have moved oil from Canada and North Dakota to refineries on the Gulf Coast, and Mr. Obama's bow to American greens was a direct snub to Canada, which provides nearly 30% of U.S. imports. Prime Minister Stephen Harper promptly said that Canada needs to diversify its energy markets, perhaps by building a pipeline from Alberta to the West Coast to export to Asia.

Energy-hungry China couldn't be happier. Chinese bids for North American companies haven't always been welcomed—see the rejection last year of a Chinese consortium's \$38.6 billion hostile bid for Canada's Potash Corp. But Cnooc executives might figure that Canadian regulators will be more welcoming to this nonhostile bid in the wake of the Keystone fiasco. Canada needs capital to exploit the oil sands and the markets to buy what is produced. Cnooc can help with both.

The lesson for America, and especially Democrats, is that Canada's oil sands will be developed, whether their green financiers like it or not. If the U.S. doesn't want the oil, China and the rest of

Asia will gladly take it. The world wants to grow—must grow to reduce poverty—and it needs abundant, cheap energy to do it. Why is that so hard for some Americans to understand?

2. Wood-Fired Plants Generate Violations

By Justin Scheck and Ianthe Jeanne Dugan, WSJ, Jul 23, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303740704577524822063133842.html?mod=IT_P_pageone_0

BLUE LAKE, Calif.—Malodorous brown smoke from a power plant enveloped this logging town on April 29, 2010, and several hundred residents fled until it passed.

Six months later, the plant got \$5.4 million from a federal program to promote environmentally preferable alternatives to fossil fuel.

The plant, Blue Lake Power LLC, burns biomass, which is organic material that can range from construction debris and wood chips to cornstalks and animal waste. It is among biomass plants nationwide that together have received at least \$700 million in federal and state green-energy subsidies since 2009, a calculation by The Wall Street Journal shows.

Yet of 107 U.S. biomass plants that the Journal could confirm were operating at the start of this year, the Journal analysis shows that 85 have been cited by state or federal regulators for violating air-pollution or water-pollution standards at some time during the past five years, including minor infractions.

Biomass is growing as a source of electricity, its production up about 14% in the past 10 years, according to the Department of Energy. Alternative electricity-production sources as a whole generate about 13% of power in the U.S., and biomass is about 11% of the alternative production.

As federal and state governments promote such sources—largely to cut emissions believed to affect the climate but also for related goals such as providing cleaner air to breathe, preventing acid-rain harm to lakes and reducing reliance on energy imports—biomass plants generally qualify along with wind and solar.

Although the biomass plants inevitably produce emissions, since they burn things, what they burn replenishes itself, qualifying them as renewable power.

They also count as carbon-neutral, on the notion that the carbon released when they burn a material such as scrap wood eventually would get into the atmosphere anyway, when the wood decays.

The Biomass Power Association says any emissions noncompliance lies with a small number of plants. "The idea that members of my association are out of compliance with environmental restrictions on a regular basis is totally wrong," said Bob Cleaves, president of the group, which represents more than 80 power plants that burn wood, not including Blue Lake.

Mr. Cleaves, who declined to comment on specific plants, said biomass is cleaner than the fossil fuels because it is carbon-neutral, and produces "clean energy" efficiently. Mr. Cleaves said the

biomass industry gets a disproportionately small share of public funding in relation to the amount of energy it generates.

Michael Van Brunt, director of sustainability for a division of Covanta Holdings Corp. that owns eight biomass plants, said such power is a vital piece of the nation's renewable-energy supply and gets less in government support than fossil-fuel sources. Fossil-fuel industries also receive government subsidies, but these generally aren't intended to improve the environment.

Some in the industry say a range of issues, from inconsistent fuel supplies to age, can make compliance with emissions standards challenging at biomass plants. "It's goddamn hard to stay in compliance," said Kevin Leary, co-owner of Blue Lake Power.

Mr. Leary—who blamed its smoke release on low-quality fuel—said a problem some biomass plants face is simply that they are old, tracing back to a Carter-era program to spur alternatives to imported oil, and weren't designed to meet today's more stringent emissions rules.

"Without the ability to change the geometry of the furnace, you've got to pull a rabbit out of a hat" to meet limits on nitrogen-oxides emissions, Mr. Leary said, and use strategies such as large smoke scrubbers and precise monitoring of fuel and oxygen levels.

Blue Lake is 27 years old. It was idle for a decade until Mr. Leary helped restart it in 2010. Since then it has had emissions violations, a machinery fire and an explosion that blew a 6-foot hole in a concrete wall. For a while last year it was on an EPA watch list of plants with compliance issues. Now, Mr. Leary says, it is operating within its permit.

Nearly all U.S. biomass plants receive government support from subsidies, grants or state-approved power contracts. The federal economic-stimulus act of 2009 provided more than \$11 billion for renewable power, of which about \$270 million went to biomass plants, in grants administered by the Treasury Department. Other federal agencies involved in such subsidies include the departments of energy and agriculture.

More than 30 states require utilities to buy a percentage of their power from sources that are renewable, generally letting the utilities pay more for this power than they would for electricity generated by fossil fuels. Blue Lake sells its electricity to a San Diego utility that pays it about twice as much for coal-fired plants' energy.

In Old Town, Maine, a facility called Old Town Fuel and Fiber has received more than \$5 million in federal funds to develop renewable fuels since 2007, most recently \$377,000 from the state for equipment.

Old Town also has exceeded state-mandated limits on sulfur or another pollutant in every quarter since the end of 2009, federal records reviewed by the Journal show. Violations continued after the plant paid almost \$300,000 in fines between 2008 and 2011.

Company president Dick Arnold said the violations should stop once the plant receives a new state permit, which he said will increase its allowable carbon-monoxide emissions. A spokeswoman for the Maine Department of Environmental Protection said such a permit is in the

approval process. She said the department and Old Town are in the process of negotiating a "six-figure settlement" in which Old Town will pay fines for prior violations.

Old Town hasn't been required to pay back its grant funding or subsidies. In almost all cases, green-power subsidies aren't linked to environmental compliance.

Mary Booth has studied biomass power for the Environmental Working Group, an organization that calls for stricter regulation, and the Partnership for Policy Integrity, a smaller group that is critical of biomass plants. She says government agencies should withhold grants from plants that violate emissions standards. "Why are we subsidizing and incentivizing something that's dirtier than coal power in certain ways?" she said.

Daniel Kammen, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley who also studies renewable energy, says that in the long term, creating electricity by burning organic waste should help reduce greenhouse gases. But he says much recent government funding has gone to projects that were already online, old ones that are more prone to break down and are "not necessarily the best in terms of local air quality."

Some violations are attributed to regulatory standards that are still being ironed out. Simpson Tacoma Kraft Co. of Tacoma, Wash., which mills lumber, got an \$18 million federal grant in February toward the cost of a new wood-burning boiler that produces electricity and heat. Since it started up in 2009, the boiler has emitted higher levels of nitrogen oxides than its original state-issued permit allowed, according to state regulators and Simpson.

Washington state bases permits on the emissions levels achievable by the best boiler technology. Simpson's permit was based on claims the manufacturer made about what its emissions should be, but the nitrogen-oxide emissions turned out to be higher, said a Simpson spokesman, Dave McEntee. The company has done a study to figure out whether the permit should be changed to allow higher emissions.

Robert Carruthers, a Washington Department of Ecology engineer, said the higher emissions rate is a "nuanced ongoing issue" that may be resolved by increasing the plant's allowable emissions.

Mr. McEntee said the plant currently is in "full compliance" with a temporary limit the state set. He added that EPA calculations show that since the plant started operating it has helped avoid 179,000 metric tons of carbon emissions, versus buying conventionally produced power.

California, with 33 biomass plants, has nearly a third of the nation's total. In the Central Valley, four biomass plants received more than \$10 million in state clean-energy subsidies from 2009 through 2011 while accruing more than \$2 million in fines during the same period.

Crown Disposal runs a biomass plant near Fresno called Madera Power, which the owner's website describes as producing "green renewable electricity." Crown took it over in 2004. Since then, state regulators have cited the plant more than two dozen times, fining it several times from 2004 to 2009 for failing to perform emissions tests and emitting excess sulfur and visible smoke.

Madera Power nonetheless qualified under a California program that used a "public goods" surcharge on utility bills to fund a "self-sustaining renewable energy supply for California." From 2009 through 2011, when that program ended, Madera Power received nearly \$6 million in subsidies, state records show.

During that time, it emitted excess sulfur, particulates, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides and at one point was found to be burning plastic and rubber, which weren't allowed.

A second Crown Disposal plant nearby received \$3.1 million in state subsidies from 2009 to 2011 and had multiple violations. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District fined Los Angeles County-based Crown \$1.875 million in 2010 for the violations.

Since then, regulators have fined the Madera plant for continued excess sulfur and carbon-monoxide emissions, regulatory documents show. The air district fined it for excess visible smoke in December, and this year it has had two citations for excess carbon dioxide.

Crown's owner, Thomas Fry, said the Madera plant hasn't been producing power in recent months. "It's pretty darn hard to stay in compliance with anything any more," he said.

Mr. Fry said that officials from the Air Pollution Control District "just come out, decide they need money, and write a citation."

A district spokeswoman said that before levying a fine, officials hold multiple meetings with plant managers to figure out how they can come into compliance. The plants were fined, she said, because they had a pattern of violations and "were burning literally tons of illegal materials" like plastics.

Two nearby Central Valley power plants, in El Nido and Chowchilla, received more than \$2.5 million in state clean-power subsidies from 2009 to 2011 and violated restrictions on nitrogen, sulfur and carbon monoxide at various times during those same years. The EPA last year fined them \$835,000.

A problem was inconsistent fuel supplies, said a person who had a management role with the plants. They had mainly burned building debris, but the construction slowdown reduced that and forced plants to use more agricultural waste, including orchard trimmings that didn't burn cleanly.

A spokeswoman for the plants' current owner, Akeida Capital Management, said they have been running without violations since it acquired them in December. She added that the plants provide employment for 41 people and use waste that might otherwise go to landfills.

Blue Lake Power, the plant that once sent residents fleeing, was resurrected with the help of federal funds.

Built in 1985, it closed in 1999. Hoping to get into the growing renewable-power industry, Mr. Leary, a former fiber-optic-cable engineer, decided to buy the plant with several partners.

Mr. Leary's group received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Forest Service and more than \$16 million in investments to buy and refurbish the plant, knowing a provision of the federal stimulus act would refund 30% of the investment, amounting to subsidies of over \$5 million.

Mr. Leary lived for months in the plant's dusty offices, making deals with logging companies for wood waste and getting permits in line. The plant fired up on April 29, 2010, and immediately began spewing dark smoke.

Curtis Thompson, who works at the Mad River Brewery across the street, picked up his wife and young daughter and fled, as did several hundred other residents. "We were smoked out," Mr. Thompson says. The people returned over the next couple of days as the air cleared.

The plant went idle. The North Coast Air Quality Management District investigated and found several violations. It reached a settlement with Mr. Leary requiring Blue Lake to pay \$1.4 million but allowed it to spend most of the money buying new pollution-control equipment and developing better operating practices rather than paying the agency.

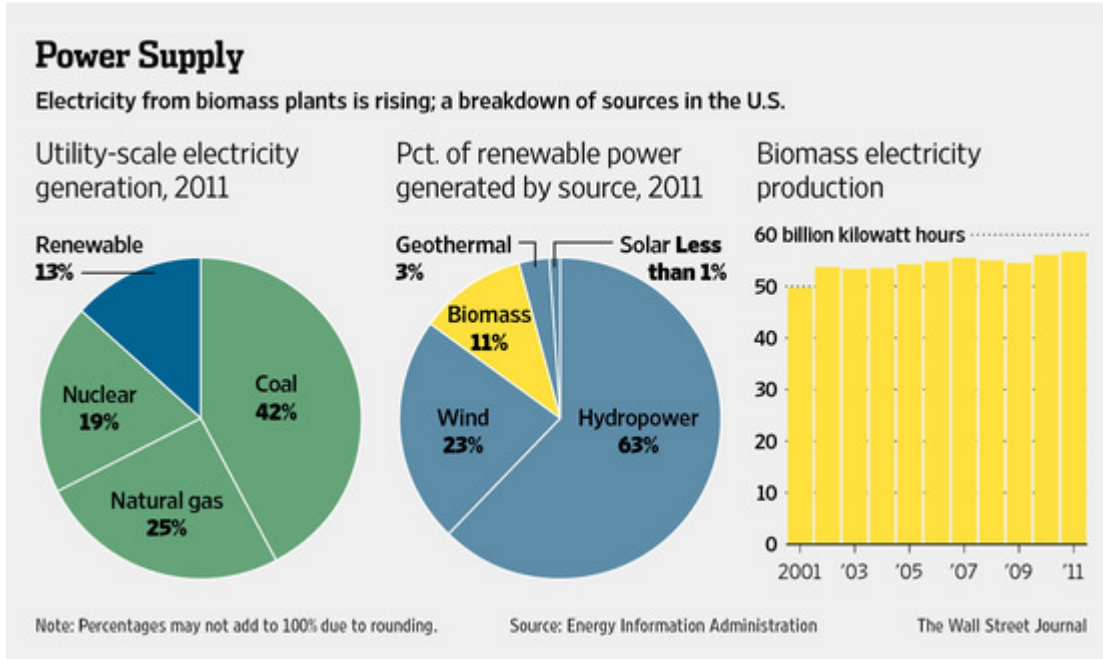
"It has been painful for us to realize that our performance has not been good at all," Mr. Leary wrote in 2010 to the air board's general manager, Rick Martin.

Blue Lake briefly reopened last year, closing again after a wood-loading conveyor belt caught fire. Last summer the EPA put the plant on its watch list of problematic polluters with unresolved compliance issues. It was removed in October.

The plant restarted again in March 2012 and promptly had a pipe explosion that blew a hole in the boiler and a concrete wall. These have been fixed, and the plant is operating again.

Mr. Martin of the air board says he hopes it can stay in compliance. There are four power plants in his district. Three have been fined for environmental violations over the last two years. They all burn biomass and get subsidies or charge customers a premium for their electricity.

A fourth plant, Mr. Martin says, has a clean environmental record and no renewable-energy subsidies. "It burns natural gas," he says.



3. The Ethanol Mandate Is Worse Than The Drought

The corn market, which already faces the whims of Mother Nature, is also being victimized by the whims of Washington

By C. Larry Pope, WSJ, Jul 26, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443343704577550831467098866.html?mod=W SJ_Opinion_LEFTTopOpinion

This has been a cruel season for America's agricultural economy. It was partly unavoidable, as our nation's farmers are being devastated by this summer's brutal and worsening drought. The farm economy has withered along with the crops, and the American consumer, once again, will pay for it with higher food prices.

One of the hardest-hit commodities, corn, plays a critical role in our food chain. This year's crop yield could be the worst in 15 years, and corn prices have already hit record high levels.

But aggravating the problem and adding to the crisis is the U.S. government's Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), which requires that a certain volume of ethanol (15.2 billion gallons in 2012, mainly derived from corn) be blended into gasoline. This is an arbitrary figure, set irrespective of market supplies, demands or price. It applies to corn that's desperately needed for livestock feed and food for consumers.

The RFS has diverted so much corn as a questionable substitute for gasoline that in the face of this drought-depleted harvest, major food-producing companies such as Smithfield are being forced to seek alternative markets for grain to meet the demands of their livestock and at more affordable prices. Ironically, if the ethanol mandate did not exist, even this year's drought-depleted corn crop would have been more than enough to meet the requirements for livestock feed and food production at decent prices.

To give you some idea of the magnitude of the problem, look at Smithfield. We're the world's largest pork producer. We purchase roughly 128 million bushels of corn and corn equivalents a year from U.S. farmers to feed our 16 million pigs on farms across 12 states. This makes us one of the largest consumers of corn in the country. In addition, we contract with about 2,135 U.S. hog producers.

This year, the double whammy of a drought that's ravaging crops and ethanol demand has pushed corn prices to what are now record-high levels of over \$8 per bushel, a quadrupling of prices in less than a decade. This has compelled food producers like Smithfield to find ways to control skyrocketing feed costs. For the first time in memory, corn is cheaper when it's delivered to the U.S. from abroad than if it's purchased from domestic suppliers. Smithfield was forced to take the unfortunate but absolutely necessary step of buying corn from Brazil—spending money that under normal circumstances would have gone to U.S. farmers.

This is what happens when the corn market, which already has to count on the whims of Mother Nature and is governed by the laws of supply and demand, is victimized by the whims of Washington and the unintended consequences of the diversion of food to fuel.

Ethanol now consumes more corn than animal agriculture does. According to a study recently released by the Center for Global Food Issues, ethanol production currently uses more than 40% of the U.S. annual corn supply, representing a 300% increase from 2005 to 2011. The resulting impact on corn prices is stunning: Per-bushel prices jumped to a record high last week of \$8.24 from \$2 in 2005, the year the ethanol mandate was put in place.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture also reported that a record-low 26% of the corn crop is rated to be in "good" or "excellent" condition—down 40% from a year ago. And 45% of the corn crop is in "poor" or "very poor" condition. The USDA has declared nearly 1,400 counties in 31 states disaster areas as a result of the drought.

The current corn-price crisis demands that lawmakers and regulators immediately consider how to amend the RFS to help ease the pressure it is placing on the supply of corn for food, and to help reduce the cost to consumers.

In the short term, the Environmental Protection Agency should grant a nationwide waiver to the RFS. That will have an immediate positive impact on the corn market by removing the demand created by the mandate.

Furthermore, there is a legislative proposal backed by a bipartisan group of members of the House of Representatives that would tie the RFS percentage to free-market supply and demand. Congress should pass that immediately. This "stocks-to-use" ratio—a well-established USDA formula for determining corn availability—would make the market act as the driving force behind the percentage of ethanol blended into gasoline instead of an arbitrary figure set by the federal government.

The nation's corn crop is in a state of crisis. We can't control drought. But we can and must address the impact of politics on corn supplies and prices by taking steps to ease the pressure and

help prevent food inflation: We can waive the ethanol mandate now, and then work on a longer-term plan.

Mr. Pope is the president and CEO of Smithfield Foods, Inc.

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