

The Week That Was: 2012-09-01 (September 1, 2012)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *In God we trust; all others bring data!* Motto of the Apollo Space Team

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Numbers of the Week: 0.75%

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THIS WEEK:

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

Apollo Space Team: Neil Armstrong died on August 25, 2012, at the age of 82. His small step on the lunar surface was one of the great triumphs of modern science. The motto of the Apollo space team, which accomplished this mission, is worthy of being remembered by all scientists. Please see links under In Tribute for comments by two of those who knew him.

AMS: The American Meteorological Society (AMS) released an Information Statement adopted by the AMS Council, without the participation of its membership. It cites and follows the reports of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and the U.S. Global Change Research Program, the latter two reports endorsing the first. All the statements assert humans, particularly carbon dioxide emissions, are the cause of the warming since 1950. Since a number of appropriate comments can be found under the links provided below, only a few comments will be made here.

The AMS Statement correctly asserts that the warming trend is greatest in the northern part of the Northern Hemisphere, which is new. The Statement fails to mention that there has been no comparable warming in the Southern Hemisphere and that the continent of Antarctica is cooling. Carbon dioxide-caused warming provides no explanation for this difference.

The Statement asserts that there has been significant loss of ice in Greenland and Antarctica. The latter part is not correct, and the Statement does not address net loss.

The Statement sidesteps the fact that there has been no warming trend for over a decade.

Interestingly, the Statement discusses increased water vapor from warming, but fails to discuss the touted human fingerprint. Prior reports claimed that pronounced warming in the atmosphere over the tropics are the distinct human fingerprint. Has the human fingerprint moved?

In brief, the statement appeals to authority, and is short on data. Please see links under Defending the Orthodoxy and Questioning the Orthodoxy.

Republican Platform: In general, TWTW tries to avoid political controversy. However, *Science Insider*, a publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) contained an article on the science found in the Platform (the official statement of goals for the party if elected). If a similar article appears on the Democratic Platform, which will come later, TWTW will link to it.

Another Republican issue is the assertion of energy independence for North America (Canada, US, and Mexico) by 2020. Such a claim would have been absolutely ridiculed a few years ago. However, the new application of various techniques have so expanded the developable resources of oil and natural gas on the continent, and in the surrounding waters, that the feasibility is no longer unthinkable, though the time frame may be overly optimistic.

The respected oil and natural-gas consulting firm, Bentek Energy states that independence is physically feasible sometime in the near future and that US imports of oil from nations other than Canada will fall by 41%, or more, by 2016. The US is already independent in coal and natural gas. It is the development of oil in Canada and the application of hydraulic fracturing of shale for oil and natural-gas liquids, plus deep-underwater drilling, which will drive this profound change. Please note that such independence does not mean price independence from the world oil market or that independence is desirable. Unfortunately, the details prompting Bentek to reach its conclusions are proprietary. Please see links under The Political Games Continue and Energy Issues – US.

Carbon Taxes: A trick used by some politicians is to propose a tax or a regulation, and then claim the tax or regulation must be implemented because businesses need certainty, as if the threat of the event is more economically damaging than the actual event. EPA’s Lisa Jackson is noted for this trick in proposing regulations and Australia’s Prime Minister Julia Gillard did this in imposing a carbon tax. But for politicians, certainty is very short lived. In two months time, the government of Australia is suggesting changing the carbon tax and linking it to the EU market, whatever that entails.

Christopher Monckton calculated a cost-benefit ratio for Australia’s carbon tax as compared to the expected reduction in global warming. The ratio came to 59/1.6. That is, the tax costs about 36 times more than the benefits. The benefits would not cover the costs of administration of the tax (about 14%) – much less the actual tax.

A study by MIT’s Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change on a proposed US carbon tax estimated that carbon taxes would generate about \$1.5 Trillion over 10 years. The taxes were based on an earlier Congressional Budget Office report that used a \$20-per-ton carbon tax. Amazingly, the study assumed full employment. A carbon tax would cause significant economic dislocation and drive unemployment.

The study is similar to the study by the Congressional Research Service in February 2009 that the stimulus bill will keep the unemployment rate from exceeding 8%. It has been above 8% for three and one-half years, while the labor force shrank significantly. If the size of the labor force for 2009 is used in the calculations, the current unemployment rate is about 11%.

Please see links under Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes.

Race with China: The race with China for dominance in 21st century electricity from solar panels appears to be ending, with all participants losing. The Chinese solar industry is crumbling with many firms facing bankruptcy. The same is happening in the US and Western Europe. Sometimes when politicians declare a race it’s best to run quickly to the sidelines. Please see links under Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

Funding Friends: Dennis Ambler identified some EPA grants to various organizations, some of which may be questionable to some members of Congress. Grants include topics such as environmental justice, climate change, models, and foreign grants. Almost \$5 million went to the UN Environmental Programme, including promoting environmentally sound management worldwide and global environmental agreements. Other grants include \$10,476,856 over 5 years to AAAS “To establish and nurture critical links between decision-makers and scientific professionals to support public policy that benefits society” (lobbying); \$4,437,241 to AAAS over five years to establish fellowships under the EPA. Not to be left out, \$20,405,655 in the last 10 years went to the American Lung Association, which lobbies heavily for more EPA regulations; \$1,277,500 to the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development; and \$1,150,123 to Natural Resources Defense Council (3 years) for sustainable change.

No wonder EPA is popular with environmental and international groups, many of which bitterly criticize those who question EPA actions.

Amplifications and Corrections: A reader challenged TWTW for including two links which suggested that variations in solar activity influence the earth’s climate. The first dealt with the article in the journal of the American Geophysical Union on the association between the freezing of the Rhine River and solar activity. The article **claimed** that it was caused by variations in ultraviolet radiation. The basis of the claim was not supported, and, as such, is speculative. The second link was to a post by Tim Ball that solar wind influences weather. It was clearly stated that the association was speculative.

When TWTW links to speculative suggestions, it will make every effort to state they are speculative. As always, amplifications and corrections are deeply appreciated.

Number of the Week: During the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing held August 1st on “Update on the Latest Climate Change Science ...” much was made of the statement that 98% of scientists agree that global warming is occurring and humans are the cause. Senator Sessions expressed skepticism about the statement and was somewhat belittled for his disbelief. Apparently, the poll being referenced was one published in EOS on January 20, 2009. EOS is published by the American Geophysical Union and bills itself as: “The premier international newspaper of the Earth and space sciences, EOS seeks to forge strong interdisciplinary ties among geophysicists and place the important contributions of geophysics in the context of the social and policy-making arenas.” (From its web site)

The researchers sent an online survey to 10,257 Earth scientists working for universities and government research agencies, and generated responses from 3,146 people to the following questions.

Q 1. “When compared with pre-1800s levels, do you think that mean global temperatures have generally risen, fallen, or remained relatively constant?”

Q 2. “Do you think human activity is a significant contributing factor in changing mean global temperatures?”

Few who have studied climate change would object to the first. Skeptics would object to the second. The researchers then boiled down the numbers to those who self identified themselves as “those who listed climate science as their area of expertise and who also have published more than 50% of their recent peer-reviewed papers on the subject of climate change (79 individuals in total). Of these specialists, 96.2% (76 of 79) answered ‘risen’ to question 1 and 97.4% (75 of 77) answered ‘yes’ to question 2.”

Thus, the touted 98% figure is based on the responses of 0.75% of those polled. This is one more study that qualifies for inclusion in an update of the classic, *How to Lie with Statistics*.

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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. Winning the AGW Science Debate: Here's How

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Aug 30, 2012

http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/08/winning_the_agw_science_debate_heres_how.html

2. The Administration Is No Friend of U.S. Oil Refineries

By Charles T. Drevna, WSJ Letter, Aug 29, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444914904577616211318610528.html>

3. How to Avoid Making the Energy Boom Go Bust

'Resource nationalism' is just one potential flashpoint that could slow a remarkable rise.

By Lawrence Mone, WSJ, Aug 24, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443687504577564783641656356.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_0

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

In Tribute!

Neil Armstrong,

By Harrison Schmitt, Americas Uncommon Sense, Aug 28, 2012

<http://americasuncommonsense.com/blog/postscripts/#Aug28>

Neil Armstrong's Immortal Footprint

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Aug 26, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/08/26/neil-armstrongs-immortal-footprint/>

Climategate Continued

Fighting mad

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 25, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/25/fighting-mad.html>

[SEPP Comment: More emails from the University of Arizona.]

Suppressing Scientific Inquiry

Ye Old Boy’s Club – An Example With Ben Santer and Kevin Trenberth

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Aug 27, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/08/27/ye-old-boys-club-an-example-with-ben-santer-and-kevin-trenberth/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

The IPCC Confession

By Vincent Gray, NZClimate Truth, Sep 1, 2012

<http://theclimatescepticsparty.blogspot.com.au/2012/09/the-ipcc-confession.html>

[SEPP Comment: Getting down to the basics. The atmosphere is a fluid, and we do not have the physical theory to understand fluid dynamics.]

A bumper week for climateers

By Bob Carter, Quadrant, Aug 28, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/08/a-bumper-week-for-climateers>

[SEPP Comment: Two more climate puff pieces claimed to be science.]

Climate Science Falsehoods Repeated With PR Orchestrated Counterattack

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Aug 28, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/climate-science-falsehoods-repeated-with-pr-orchestrated-counterattack/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Climate Change

By AMS Council, Aug 20, 2012

<http://www.ametsoc.org/policy/2012climatechange.html>

Storms, drought overshadow UN climate talks

By Staff Writers, Bangkok (AFP) Aug 30, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Storms_drought_overshadow_UN_climate_talks_999.html

"Climate change and typhoons or droughts like in the United States are interlinked," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres.

[SEPP Comment: It would be interesting to ask her to explain exactly how typhoons in Asia are linked to droughts in the US.]

Carbon efficiency failing to fight warming: study

By Shaun Tandon, India Daily News, Aug 27, 2012

<http://india.nydailynews.com/newsarticle/9771ca0ec381b9e2b84a90bdac5d1ea3/carbon-efficiency-failing-to-fight-warming-study>

[SEPP Comment: The people of other nations desire prosperity.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Contradictory Statements By The American Meteorological Society – Comments On The New Statement Titled “Climate Change”

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Aug 27, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/08/27/contradictory-statements-by-the-american-meteorological-society-comments-on-the-new-statement-titled-climate-change/>

AMS Statement on Climate Change

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Aug 27, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/08/27/ams-statement-on-climate-change/#more-9511>

Activate (?) your science

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Aug 30, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/08/30/activate-your-science/#more-9201>

[SEPP Comment: More on NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco's call for scientists to become politically active in the great cause (no doubt in exchange for government grants). The exaggerated belief that the status of our knowledge of climate science is sufficiently complete to take action is all too typical, as well as the belief in ability of governments to control climate change. Curry's comments are to the point.]

Back to work

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Aug 31, 2012

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/back-work>

[SEPP Comment: The wettest drought ever! A warning to be prepared for a media blitz next year on the dangers of human caused global warming / climate change.]

Should We Fear the Methane Time Bomb (Part Deux)?

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming, Aug 31, 2012

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2012/08/31/should-we-fear-the-methane-time-bomb-part-deux/>

Questioning European Green

Germany's new "renewable" energy policy

By Kelvin Kemm, The Moral Liberal, Aug 28, 2012

<http://www.themoralliberal.com/2012/08/28/germanys-new-renewable-energy-policy/>

[SEPP Comment: Building up to 23 new, large coal fired power plants! Wind produced only 16% of installed capacity over ten years! Comments on the new eco-flick "Fuel" which claims the US petroleum industry is faltering.]

Germany Hits Brakes on Race to Renewable Energy Future

By Charles Hawley, Spiegel, Aug 28, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/germany-addresses-problems-with-renewable-energy-subsidy-system-a-852549.html>

The share of renewable energies in Germany's power mix has shot up so high that the electricity grid and the subsidy framework has been unable to keep up. Now, the government wants to slow down the process. German commentators say that the current chaos endangers the entire project.

[SEPP Comment: The graphs of the erratic output of wind and solar and the forecasts of the share of electricity these sources will deliver highlight the challenges.]

EU: all incandescent light bulbs banned tomorrow

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Aug 31, 2012

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/08/eu-all-incandescent-light-bulbs-banned.html#more>

Europe 'dithering' over joining shale gas revolution

By Benny Peiser, Public Service, Europe, Aug 29, 2012

<http://www.publicserviceeurope.com/article/2376/europe-dithering-over-joining-shale-gas-revolution>

[SEPP Comment: After all, it so readily joined the race with China to dominate solar and wind.]

Trouble in the Orthodoxy

UN ruling: EU must reassess renewables policy

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 27, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/27/un-ruling-eu-must-reassess-renewables-policy.html>

[SEPP Comment: A legal ruling stemming from an UN treaty. Governments have not provided the transparency required when making decisions on renewable energy.]

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Intriguing Habitats, and Careful Discussions of Climate Change

By Leslie Kaufman, NYT, Aug 26, 2012

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/27/science/earth/zoos-and-aquariums-struggle-with-ways-to-discuss-climate-change.html>

[SEPP Comment: Indoctrination.]

Funding Friends

Samples of US Government Grants to the Global Warming Industry

By Dennis Ambler, SPPI, Aug 22, 2012

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

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

Here today, drowned tomorrow

By Tony Thomas, Quadrant, Aug 29, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/08/here-today-drowned-tomorrow>

[SEPP Comment: Creating government bureaucracies to address false claims of future calamities will only amplify the claims.]

Gross out

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 28, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/28/gross-out.html>

[SEPP Comment: Addressing the assertion that if enough wind farms are built, a wind carpet, will even out the erratic nature of wind power.]

Heatwaves to Move Toward Coasts

By Staff Writers, San Diego CA (SPX), Aug 31, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Heatwaves_to_Move_Toward_Coasts_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Heat waves on the cool California coast? Only if you change definitions.]

Fisking Emmott

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 29, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/29/fisking-emcott.html>

[SEPP Comment: Questioning claims in a stage show – it's only art, such as Al Gore's film – no accuracy required.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Climate change deniers 'are either extreme free marketeers or conspiracy theorists'

An Australian study says avid climate change deniers tend to be either extreme free marketeers or conspiracy theorists who believe the moon landing was faked or Princess Diana was murdered.

By Jonathan Pearlman, Telegraph UK, Aug 28, 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/9503044/Climate-change-deniers-are-either-extreme-free-marketeers-or-conspiracy-theorists.html>

[SEPP Comment: The comments on the number of the week apply.]

Moonlanding was staged, 74% of climate alarmists say

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Aug 29, 2012

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/08/where-can-you-find-out-whether-climate.html>

[SEPP Comment: As solid as the poll above.]

Measurement Issues

Recent paper demonstrates relationship between temperature and population density in the UHI of New Delhi

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Aug 31, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/08/31/recent-paper-demonstrates-relationship-between-temperature-and-population-density-in-the-uhi-of-new-delhi/>

Himalayan Glacier Data Shift To The Middle Ground

By Staff Writer, Climate Himalaya, Aug 23, 2012

<http://chimalaya.org/2012/08/23/himalayan-glacier-data-shift-to-the-middle-ground/>

[SEPP Comment: A third study using another set of data puts the glacier loss at 12 gigatonnes rather 50 G from the first study and about 5 G from the second study. Will there be an agreement before 2035, the year that the IPCC stated all the ice will be lost?]

Changing Weather

Hurricane Isaac shifts Mississippi into reverse gear

By Staff Writers, Washington (AFP), Aug 30, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Hurricane_Isaac_shifts_Mississippi_into_reverse_gear_999.html

Is Global Warming Causing A Record Breaking Lack Of Tornado Activity?

By James Taylor, Forbes, Aug 22, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2012/08/22/is-global-warming-causing-a-record-breaking-lack-of-tornado-activity/>

Changing Climate

Antarctic climate

By Nicholas Lewis, Letter, Guardian, UK, Aug 28, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/28/antarctic-climate>

[SEPP Comment: Lewis states that: contrary to the impression given in the article on the Antarctic Peninsula, there has been no statistically significant warming of the continent, which has a climate distinctly different from the peninsula.]

Changing Seas

Sea level rise - not so much

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 27, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/27/sea-level-rise-not-so-much.html>

[SEPP Comment: Expressed in quantities of per degree C of temperature increase rather than in cm per century.]

How ocean currents affect global climate is a question oceanographer may be close to answering

By Elizabeth Bettendorf for FSU News, Tallahassee FL (SPX), Aug 28, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/How_ocean_currents_affect_global_climate_is_a_question_oceanographer_may_be_close_to_answering_999.html

[SEPP Comment: To long-time researchers such as Bill Gray there is no question how oceans affect global climate.]

New paper finds deep Arctic Ocean from 50,000 to 11,000 years ago was 1–2° C warmer than modern temperatures

Posted in Hockey Schtick, Aug 27, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://hockeyschtick.blogspot.com/2012/08/new-paper-finds-deep-arctic-ocean-was.html>

Paper at: <http://www.nature.com/ngeo/journal/v5/n9/full/ngeo1557.html>

[SEPP Comment: No doubt the findings will be challenged, will they survive?]

Changing Sea Ice

Arctic Sea Ice Record Low Is “Broken”

By Art Horn, Energy Tribune, Aug 31, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/11604/Arctic-Sea-Ice-Record-Low-Is-Broken>

[SEPP Comment: A repeat of the 1930s?]

Sea Ice News – Volume 3 Number 11, part 2 – other sources show no record low Arctic ice extent

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Aug 27, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/08/27/sea-ice-news-volume-3-number-11-part-2-other-sources-show-no-record-low/>

Arctic sea ice reached record low extent in 2012 – or maybe not

By Jonathan DuHamel, Tucson Citizen, Aug 28, 2012

<http://tucsoncitizen.com/wryheat/2012/08/28/arctic-sea-ice-reached-record-low-extent-in-2012-or-maybe-not/>

Oh No! Six Thousandths Of One Percent (0.006%) More Of The World’s Ice Melted This Summer!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Aug 27, 2012

<http://notrickszone.com/2012/08/27/oh-no-six-thousandths-of-one-percent-0-006-more-of-the-worlds-ice-melted-this-summer/>

[SEPP Comment: But how much ice accumulated in the other part of the world?]

Changing Earth

Antarctic ice sheet quakes shed light on ice movement and earthquakes

By Staff Writers, Philadelphia PA (SPX), Aug 28, 2012

http://www.terraviva.com/reports/Antarctic_ice_sheet_quakes_shed_light_on_ice_movement_and_earthquakes_999.html

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Floods Across the United States: Trends of the Last Century

Reference: Hirsch, R.M. and Ryberg, K.R. 2012. Has the magnitude of floods across the USA changed with global CO2 levels? *Hydrological Sciences Journal* 57: 10.1080/02626667.2011.621895.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/28aug2012a1.html>

Effects of Ocean Acidification on Coastal Plankton Communities

Reference: Nielsen, L.T., Hallegraeff, G.M., Wright, S.W. and Hansen, P.J. 2012. Effects of experimental seawater acidification on an estuarine plankton community. *Aquatic Microbial Ecology* 65: 271-285.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/28aug2012a3.html>

Do Regional Climate Models Realistically Represent Precipitation?

Reference: Soares, P.M.M., Cardoso, R.M., Miranda, P.M.A., Viterbo, P. and Belo-Pereira, M. 2012. Assessment of the ENSEMBLES regional climate models in the representation of precipitation variability and extremes over Portugal. *Journal of Geophysical Research* 117: 10.1029/2011JD016768.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/28aug2012a4.html>

[SEPP Comment: The authors of the California's Our Changing Climate, 2012 should go back to the drawing board.]

Climate Change and Mushroom Productivity

Reference: Buntgen, U., Kausemer, H. and Egli, S. 2012. Linking climate variability to mushroom productivity and phenology. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 10: 14-19.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/29aug2012a2.html>

[SEPP Comment: Even the lowly mushrooms do better in a warmer, carbon dioxide enriched world.]

Hydroclimatic Extremes in the Basin of the Blue Nile

Reference: Taye, M.T. and Willems, P. 2012. Temporal variability of hydroclimatic extremes in the Blue Nile basin. *Water Resources Research* 48: 10.1029/2011WR011466.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/29aug2012a3.html>

The Political Games Continue

Republican Party Platform Has a Lot to Say About Science

By David Malakoff, Science Insider, Aug 29, 2012

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2012/08/republican-party-platform-has-a-.html>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Study: Carbon tax could raise \$1.5 trillion

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Aug 27, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/245587-study-carbon-tax-could-raise-15-trillion>

So much for certainty? Just two months later, Australia starts changing the carbon tax.

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Aug 31, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/08/so-much-for-certainty-just-two-months-later-australia-starts-changing-the-carbon-tax/#more-23602>

Is CO2 mitigation cost-effective?

By Christopher Monckton of Brenchley, SPPI, Aug 24, 2012

<http://sppiblog.org/news/is-co2-mitigation-cost-effective#more-8433>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Why not let wind tax credit expire?

By The Oregonian Editorial Board. Aug 27, 2012 [H/t John Droz, Jr]

http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2012/08/why_not_let_wind_tax_credit_ex.html

[SEPP Comment: *Dissent in greener than green Oregon?*]

Can Ethanol Cut Foreign Oil Imports?

By Ken Silverstein, Forbes, Aug 26, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kensilverstein/2012/08/26/can-ethanol-cut-foreign-oil-imports-2/>

[SEPP Comment: *Doubtful that it will be needed.*]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Crushing Coal Under the Regulatory Steamroller

By Nicolas Loris, Heritage Foundation, Aug 29, 2012

<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2012/08/crushing-coal-under-the-regulatory-steamroller>

Final Rules Set On Car Mileage

By Staff Writer, NCPA, Aug 31, 2012

http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=22317&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DPD

Energy Issues – Non-US

Russian Arctic Resources

By Staff Writers, Moscow, Russia (Voice of Russia), Aug 30, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Russian_Arctic_resources_999.html

Energy Issues -- US

Crude Awakening: Shale Boom Hits Oil

By Staff Writers, Bentek Energy, Aug. 2012

<http://bentekenergy.com/CrudeAwakening.aspx>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Schlumberger's clever frack takes aim at gas costs

By Andrew Callus, Reuters, Aug 31, 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]
<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSBRE87U0GE20120831?irpc=932>

Return of King Coal?

America's Triple Energy Play: Coal, CO2 and Stranded Oil

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts Weekly, Aug 28, 2012

<http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=d7b5c72136&e=>

Coal Greens Love Buoyed By Shale Gas Hydraulic Fracking

By Christopher Martin, Bloomberg, Aug 29, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-28/coal-greens-love-buoyed-by-shale-gas-hydraulic-fracking.html>

[SEPP Comment: Return of underground coal gasification?]

Oil Spills, Gas Leaks etc. & Consequences

Thai firm pleads guilty over Australian oil spill

By Staff Writers, Sydney (AFP), Aug 30, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Thai_firm_pleads_guilty_over_Australian_oil_spill_999.html

Federal Court Holds TVA Liable for Kingston Coal Ash Spill

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Aug 30, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4934.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2513241&hq_l=8&hq_v=5e660500d0

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

Wind farms — are 96% useless, and cost 150 times more than necessary for what they do

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Sep 1, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/09/wind-farms-are-96-useless-and-cost-150-times-more-than-necessary-for-what-they-do/#more-23690>

Dark clouds gather over China's once-booming solar industry

China's push into solar energy was supposed to be a proud example of how the country was advancing into hi-tech manufacturing. But now the whole sector is on the brink of bankruptcy.

By Malcolm Moore, Telegraph, UK, Aug 29, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/9506945/Dark-clouds-gather-over-Chinas-once-booming-solar-industry.html>

Carbon Schemes

Carbon Dioxide Injection Begins at Fully Integrated Coal-Fired CCS Project

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Aug 30, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4936.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2513241&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e660500d0

Cooled Coal Emissions Would Clean Air and Lower Health and Climate-Change Costs

By Staff Writer, Science Daily, Aug 27, 2012

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/08/120827142121.htm>

[SEPP Comment: It is simple math, until you try to engineer it out. The health benefits come from EPA's imaginary numbers.]

Oh Mann!

The Climate Change Racket: Finally a 'Day in Court'?

By Peter C Glover, Energy Tribune, Aug 29, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/11571/The-Climate-Change-Racket-Finally-a-Day-in-Court?>

Mann versus Steyn: popcorn time!

By James Delingpole, Telegraph, Aug 27, 2012

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100178004/mann-versus-steyn-popcorn-time/>

[SEPP Comment: Taking up donations to fund Mr. Mann's litigation so he does not drop it. The discovery process may reveal information of interest.]

Environmental Industry

Environmentalism's Sword: Protectionism

By Josiah Neeley, Master Resource, Aug 30, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/08/environmentalism-sword-protectionism/#more-21533>

[SEPP Comment: Washington's efforts to control the energy trade through tariffs and other forms of protectionism are producing some contrary results.]

Other Scientific News

Why Nick Kristof's Scientific Illiteracy Threatens Us All

By Trevor Butterworth, Forbes, Aug 26, 2012 [H/t ACSH]

http://www.forbes.com/sites/trevorbutterworth/2012/08/26/why-nick-kristofs-scientific-illiteracy-threatens-us-all-2/?commentId=comment_comment_id

One third less life on planet Earth

By Staff Writers, Munich, Germany (SPX), Aug 28, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/One_third_less_life_on_planet_Earth_999.html

Space race, on a budget, was not how Armstrong saw it

By Staff Writers, Washington (AFP), Aug 26, 2012

http://www.space-travel.com/reports/Space_race_on_a_budget_was_not_how_Armstrong_saw_it_999.html

African anti-malarial research bears first fruit

By Staff Writers, Toulouse, France (SPX), Aug 31, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/African_antimalarial_research_bears_first_fruit_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Perhaps a decades long awaited substitute for the banning of indoor spraying with DDT.]

Former Harvard stem cell researcher falsely represented results, US government finds

By Carolyn Y. Johnson, Boston Globe, Aug 29, 2012

<http://www.boston.com/whitecoatnotes/2012/08/29/former-harvard-stem-cell-researcher-falsely-represented-results-government-finds/V2ZG9jxN5a7H76NcsV86FN/story.html>

How methane becomes fish food

By Staff Writers, Linkoping, Sweden (SPX), Aug 28, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/How_methane_becomes_fish_food_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

'Reach for the Stars' now becomes 'Retreat to the Past'

By Viv Forbes, WUWT, Aug 27, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/08/27/reach-for-the-stars-now-becomes-retreat-to-the-past/>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

One benefit of the midwest drought

Posted by Anthony Watts, WUWT, Aug 27, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/08/27/one-benefit-of-the-midwest-drought/>

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ARTICLES:

1. Winning the AGW Science Debate: Here's How

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Aug 30, 2012

http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/08/winning_the_agw_science_debate_heres_how.html

The upcoming election battles may be unique in offering for the first time a debate about global warming. Neither Bush-Gore nor McCain-Obama chose to discuss the issue -- maybe because they were not really that far apart. By contrast, Barack Obama has already announced that, if re-elected, he will make climate change an important priority -- while Paul Ryan is an assertive *skeptic* on AGW (anthropogenic global warming).

The science of climate change is not just of academic interest, but has been leading to policies for large-scale changes in energy use and supply -- with important economic consequences. The burden of proof for AGW therefore falls on those who call for such policies. They must demonstrate with reasonable certainty that human activities are causing global warming, that a future warming will produce significant economic and ecological damage, and that it would be more cost-effective to mitigate now rather than to adapt later. They must also be ready to respond to any critique of the underlying science.

A recent example of irresponsible AGW claims is a just-released statement by the American Meteorological Society -- the same crew that cannot predict the weather three days in advance. The concluding section begins:

There is unequivocal evidence that Earth's lower atmosphere, ocean, and land surface are warming; sea level is rising; and snow cover, mountain glaciers, and Arctic sea ice are shrinking. The dominant cause of the warming since the 1950s is human activities. This scientific finding is based on a large and persuasive body of research. The observed warming will be irreversible for many years into the future, and even larger temperature increases will occur as greenhouse gases continue to accumulate in the atmosphere. Avoiding this future warming will require a large and rapid reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions. The ongoing warming will increase risks and stresses to human societies, economies, ecosystems, and wildlife through the 21st century and beyond, making it imperative that society respond to a changing climate.

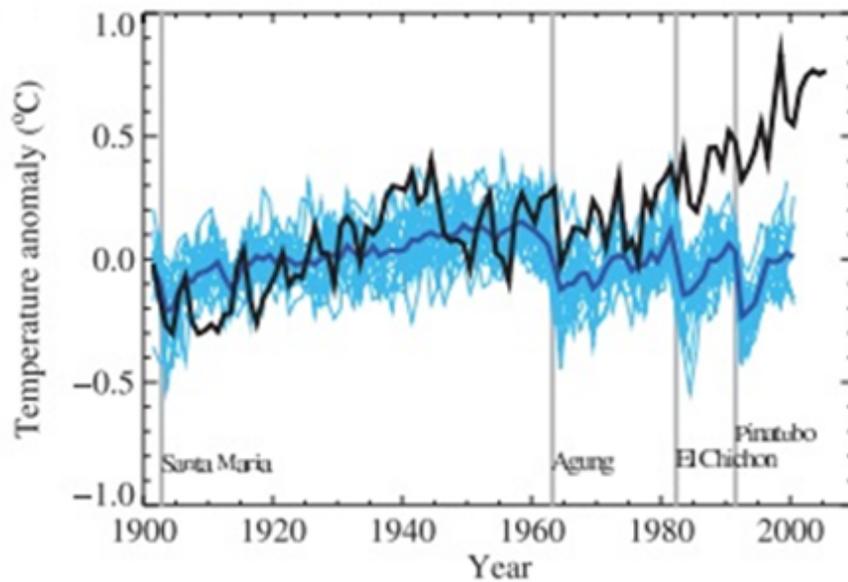
I would start by asking AGW supporters the following question: "What is your single most important piece of evidence for AGW?" I have received many answers to this question; most of them can be disposed of in a trivial way. Some examples are:

- "Man-made CO₂ is increasing in the atmosphere." *True, but is warming increasing as a result?*
- "Climate models predict rising climate temperatures in the future." *True, but models are not evidence.*
- "Glaciers are melting, sea ice is shrinking, storms are increasing, droughts and floods are increasing." *Even if any of these were true, they don't reveal the cause and certainly cannot furnish temperature data like thermometers.*
- "Sea levels are rising." *But they have been rising for 18,000 years, and there is no evidence that the current rate of rise is affected by temperature; 20th-century data show no acceleration.*
- A common misleading reply by AGW supporters: "The past decade is the warmest in X years." *This may be true, provided X is chosen appropriately, but the current trend over the past decade has been approximately zero. (One must not confuse Trend [measured in degrees C/decade] with temperature [measured in degrees C]. According to climate models, it is an increased temperature trend that should relate to any increasing trend in greenhouse gases.)*

But note also that climate seems to follow long-term cycles of about 1,500 years (Singer and Avery, *Unstoppable Global Warming: Every 1500 years*, 2007). If the "Bond-cycle" is active now, we may expect further, irregular warming in the present century and beyond -- entirely due to natural causes, likely related to the Sun.

Finally, a common response simply appeals to the report of the U.N.-IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). *To which one should say: "OK, then let's see if it holds up to scrutiny."* (Note that the "evidence" presented as crucial has been different in every one of the past four IPCC assessment reports.) The latest IPCC claim for AGW is laid out simply in the Summary for Policymakers on page 10 of the 2007 report: *"Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid 20th century is very likely [i.e., 90-99% sure] due to observed anthropogenic increase of greenhouse gases."*

- This claim is advanced in the SPM and eventually backed up by fig. 9.5 on page 684 of the 2007 report. The models are "fitted" to the observed temperature record from 1900 up to about 1970 by choosing suitable sensitivities and model parameters, using "expert judgment." But the figure shows a large gap after 1970 between reported temperatures and *unforced* models (i.e., models that do not incorporate an increase in GH (greenhouse) gases).



Source: IPCC-AR4-Fig. 9.5b

Heavy Black line: Global Ave Surface Temp. Blue: Superposition of models without GH-gas increase.

The IPCC, claiming that they completely understand all natural forcings, now asserts that only AGW (i.e., forcing by anthropogenic GH gases) can explain the gap between the reported global average surface temperature (GAST) and models that do not include GH-gas forcing. (This is an instance of the common logical fallacy of "argument from ignorance." Even if the warming since 1970 were exceptional, and even if science were unaware of any natural explanation for it, that unawareness would not constitute certain evidence that GH gases are responsible.)

Even if we were to accept the IPCC's assertion for the sake of argument, note that the temperature curve refers to *global surface* average temperature and that the models are retrofitted to the temperature data by a suitable choice of climate sensitivities and parameters of the models.

Fair enough, but can the same sensitivities and parameters also explain temperature data that are *non-global*: e.g., the mean for the northern hemisphere (NH) and the mean for the SH? Can they explain ocean temperature data? Can they explain absence of atmospheric temperature trends? And finally, can they explain temperature trends derived from non-thermometer data of various proxies (tree rings, lake sediments, stalagmites, ice cores, etc.)?

Note that the sensitivities and parameters are chosen with great care in order to reach agreement with the reported GAST data; yet the same IPCC report admits to very large uncertainties about most forcings (in fact, 11 out of 16), particularly from aerosols and clouds. But the greatest uncertainty arises from implicit feedbacks that the models assume will amplify direct warming from GH gases. In particular, there is uncertainty about the feedback from water vapor and clouds: the IPCC claims a *positive* feedback -- i.e., an amplification of GH forcing of nearly threefold -- while others adduce evidence for a *negative* feedback -- i.e., opposing GH warming. This is a matter that needs to be resolved urgently; and, until it is, the science underlying the "official" IPCC claim cannot seriously be regarded as "settled."

Further, the models are largely unable to represent or capture important *natural* forcings -- for example, well-documented climate oscillations involving the oceans, such as the North Atlantic Oscillation or Pacific Decadal Oscillation. Also omitted from the models are the effects of solar-activity changes -- in spite of excellent evidence, supported by a growing body of published results, that solar-caused cosmic-ray variations strongly correlate with terrestrial climate changes.

Turning next to climate observations, there are many questions about the reliability of the reported land-surface temperature data reported by weather stations. Mid-troposphere temperatures do not agree with surface trends -- a disparity that a National Academy of Sciences climate panel tried unsuccessfully to resolve in 2000. It seems that mid-troposphere temperature trends derived from radiosondes in weather balloons and from microwave instruments in satellites both show negligible tropical warming in the last decades of the 20th century. Data are never perfect, and there may be corrections necessary. However, for the time being, these two independent datasets show remarkable agreement with one another, and remarkable disagreement with what the IPCC models would expect as a result of anthropogenic warming.

Ocean data have been notoriously difficult to reconcile, since they employ so many different types of instrumentation. These include buckets, buoys, ship-engine cooling-water inlet temperatures, and both infrared and microwave satellite observations. Unfortunately, there are problems with each of the datasets; their coherence is often different from what one might expect. One example: inlet temperatures seem to be warmer than bucket and drifter buoys that measure temperatures close to the surface -- just opposite of what would be expected.

Additional ocean datasets do not show the warming observed by land weather stations; for example, night-time marine air temperatures (NMAT) confirm the strong warming up to 1940 and cooling to 1975 but show only a small recovery post-1978, with maximum temperatures in the 1990s no greater than in 1940. Similarly, data of ocean heat content (OHC) do not show a warming trend from 1978 to 2000 -- although it should be noted that 20th-century OHC data is of poor quality and has been subject to frequent corrections.

Finally, we have non-thermometer proxy data, which mostly show no warming from 1978 to 1997. Most confirm the 1910-40 warming from weather stations -- but also show no post-1940 warming. It would be interesting to examine the large dataset assembled by the authors of the "hockeystick" to see what temperatures are observed after 1978; unfortunately, their published curve stops at just that point, and their post-1978 data have not been accessible.

It should be clear by now that the strong AGW claims of the IPCC are based on rather flimsy evidence. We look forward to the next IPCC report due in 2013-14 to see if additional data and model results show better support for their claim. I serve as an "expert reviewer" of this report but have not seen any such evidence in the first draft.

In the meantime we can post certain question to the AGW supporters and await their answers:

**Why did climate warm between 1910 and 1940?

**Why did climate cool from 1940-1975? If the cause is assumed to be aerosols, also please explain the separate trends observed in the northern and southern hemispheres and compare with climate models. This asymmetry has been a puzzle for some time.

****Why is there a step increase (temperature "jump") in 1976-77 -- and again in 2001-2002? Such jumps are not in accord with the slow, steady increase calculated by climate models.**

****Why is there no pronounced warming trend since 2002?**

****And finally, why no warming for night-time marine air temperatures, troposphere, and proxies in the last two decades of the 20th century -- in conflict with reported land-surface temperatures? *Could one admit the possibility that there might be something wrong with the land-surface data used by IPCC as "evidence" for AGW?***

For these and many similar reasons, scientific debate about the extent and implications of the anthropogenic contribution to past and future global warming is essential for formulating a rational energy policy as the keystone for economic prosperity. The upcoming election battles may provide such an opportunity.

2. The Administration Is No Friend of U.S. Oil Refineries

By Charles T. Drevna, WSJ Letter, Aug 29, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444914904577616211318610528.html>

Your article "White House Worked with Buyout Firm to Save Plant" (Election 2012, Aug. 22) highlights President Obama's last-minute attempts to prevent a Philadelphia refinery from closing, but I would like to add the real factors that created the refinery's woes.

I applaud the agreement to keep the Philadelphia refinery open and thousands of workers employed, as well as any role the president or any other individual or entity played in such a pact. However, as someone with decades of experience in the refining and manufacturing sectors and one who tracks the industry on a daily basis, I can unequivocally say that the current administration is not working to keep refineries open. To the contrary, the untold irony of the Journal story is that President Obama's policies, coupled with a relentless campaign against fossil fuels, greatly contributed to Northeast refineries becoming threatened in the first place.

If President Obama is truly interested in saving refinery jobs over the long term, he will reverse his current policies that are inundating domestic refiners with costly and often conflicting regulations that threaten their competitiveness, while offering little or no environmental benefits.

The president's automobile mandate, disingenuously proposed under the guise of "Cafe standards," and the federal biofuels mandate will together lead to the unnatural destruction of demand for gasoline equivalent to 18 refinery closures.

If producing such fuels and vehicles were cost-effective and driven by consumer choices in the free market, so be it. However, these policies will only serve to artificially drive up consumer fuel costs and make buying a car a luxury. In relation to biofuels, such realities are why several states have joined a large coalition of auto, engine, food manufacturing, environmental and consumer groups in calling for major reforms to our nation's ethanol mandate.

The administration is also advancing new gasoline regulations that will raise consumer costs and could threaten additional refinery closures. Studies indicate these new regulations could lead to a six- to 25-cent-per-gallon increase in consumer fuel costs and up to seven refinery closures,

depending on how stringent the Environmental Protection Agency decides to make the standards. Furthermore, with voters rejecting the energy rationing greenhouse gas (GHG) cap-and-trade scheme, the EPA is now moving forward with regulating GHGs under the Clean Air Act, despite the fact that EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson herself indicated such rules will do nothing to reduce global GHG emissions. These requirements conflict with many other existing regulations, which would force refiners to increase GHG emissions and threaten to send more refining jobs overseas.

Market factors certainly played a large part in threatening Northeast refinery operations; the facilities were facing high crude costs, the struggling economy and foreign competition. However, the Obama administration's policies and an uncertain regulatory future made the problems worse, not better. The fact, as you note, that the administration agreed to "loosen certain environmental restrictions" to help keep the refinery open is an admission of the adverse impacts the current regulatory environment is having on the domestic refining industry.

Furthermore, this administration has repeatedly discouraged energy exploration and energy production, contributing to higher refinery crude-oil costs. The most glaring example of such a policy is the president's decision to disapprove the Keystone XL pipeline, a project that would have created tens of thousands of jobs and provided our nation with a more secure oil source, greatly benefiting American refineries and consumers.

We hope the president's newfound willingness to recognize the benefits of one Northeast refinery and the jobs it provides translates into a reversal of current policies to ensure the viability of our entire domestic refining industry. Otherwise, more refining jobs are sure to be sent overseas.

*Charles T. Drevna, President
American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers

3. How to Avoid Making the Energy Boom Go Bust

'Resource nationalism' is just one potential flashpoint that could slow a remarkable rise.

By Lawrence Mone, WSJ, Aug 24, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443687504577564783641656356.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_0

Mitt Romney's energy plan, unveiled Thursday in New Mexico, is the first to deal with the new reality on the ground. It recognizes that the United States has accessible energy stores that could not only help resuscitate the American economy, but also transform global politics by taking energy leadership away from the perennially troubled Middle East. Mr. Romney and President Obama would serve voters well by making it the starting point for a serious energy-policy debate.

Already, the direction of U.S. energy policy is shifting dramatically. New extraction technologies—especially for natural gas and shale oil—have replaced the idea of energy scarcity with that of abundance. Just a few years ago, alternative energy—and the "green jobs" that were supposed to come with the development of biofuels and solar and wind power—dominated policy discussion in Washington.

But that agenda has been largely pushed aside by the understanding that low-cost natural gas can fuel domestic manufacturing, cut electricity-generation costs, and help revive the nation's industrial Midwest (where much of our shale gas resources are concentrated). And not just the Midwest: A recent study by Citigroup estimates that oil and gas extraction could, by 2020, add as many as 3.6 million net new jobs in the U.S. and Canada—and, through increased tax receipts, cut the U.S. budget deficit by 60%.

With such bright prospects, and such high stakes for a fragile economic recovery, it's crucial to avoid public policies that could slow or even stop this boom. In particular, four principles should guide us:

- First, there is no point in pitting renewables against hydrocarbons and nuclear energy. There is simply no way solar and wind energy can meet the economy's vast energy needs at an affordable price. Today, solar and wind energy combined provide 1% of our energy.

The latest projections from the U.S. Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook show that non-hydro renewables like solar and wind are not likely, absent technological breakthroughs, to rise beyond 3% of total U.S. energy needs by 2035. Mr. Romney's plan embraces that reality.

Low-cost coal and natural gas, not renewables, are reducing costs. From 2003 to 2008, natural gas "spot" prices averaged about \$7 per million British thermal units (BTUs). Today, the spot price of natural gas is about \$3 per million BTUs, saving the U.S. economy some \$264 million a day.

Those savings—combined with the royalties and taxes generated from the extraction and consumption of natural gas, oil and coal—could provide the funding the government needs to invest in the basic science and materials research that might help solar and wind eventually become cost-competitive. Unfortunately, the Obama administration seems not to understand this link between gas and oil today and solar tomorrow—as its decision to delay the Keystone XL pipeline linking Canadian oil with U.S. refineries indicated.

- Second, we need to avoid what Edward Morse, an energy economist and the global head of commodities research at Citigroup, has termed "resource nationalism"—a potential fight between energy exporters and domestic users. North American energy resources may enable this country to achieve self-sufficiency in a crisis, but it would be a mistake if this were to lead to protectionism.

It may seem counterintuitive to encourage energy exports—even when liquefied natural gas can be profitably shipped to energy-hungry global markets—but that is what we need to do if we are to become leaders in the world market.

Some energy-intensive U.S. manufacturers, especially chemical companies, benefit from low-cost oil and gas, and they worry about the impulse to ship hydrocarbon resources offshore. It is not surprising, then, to see Sen. Ron Wyden (D., Ore.) and Rep. Edward Markey (D., Mass.) urge President Obama to use his executive authority to restrict exports of oil, natural gas and coal. Such restrictions cannot be justified economically or philosophically.

If domestic energy producers can profit from exports, they should be allowed to do so. As Mark Mills, founder and CEO of the Digital Power Group and Manhattan Institute fellow, has pointed out, accelerating rather than restricting hydrocarbon exports is a path to both greater jobs and economic benefits for America as well as a key to keeping the lid on energy prices that are set globally.

- Third, regulators should facilitate the energy boom by expediting the permitting process. Too much of our federal land and offshore waters are off-limits to oil and gas drilling. Even for onshore and offshore areas open to exploration, the permitting process is complex and protracted, taking months or even years and involving multiple federal and state agencies.

The U.S. should emulate Canada, where Stephen Harper's administration is pushing for a "one project, one review" process, whereby the federal government brings the request to the various relevant agencies—rather than asking an army of lawyers to do the work for firms and entrepreneurs.

Such a process—coupled with a time limit—would in no way eviscerate environmental regulation. Instead, it would allow appropriate projects to proceed without long delays and enable smaller players to get into the game along with big multinationals like Chevron and Shell.

- Finally, regulators should not dictate the U.S. energy mix. For proof of how excessive intervention can harm consumers, we need only look at how the corn-ethanol mandates have put pressure on grain prices and ignited the food versus fuel debate.

Despite this sorry history, the Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a rule that would prohibit construction of new coal-fired plants. This makes no sense.

The U.S. has more coal reserves than any other country. And the newest coal-fired power plants use technologies that are dramatically cleaner. Reducing emissions is important—but so is cheap, abundant and reliable electricity, especially in an economy that needs all the help it can get.

The reality of America's new-found energy abundance is upon us. Yet the public policies necessary to unleash its enormous potential have been slow in coming. Mr. Romney's energy plan is the ideal pivot around which to have this crucial debate.

Mr. Mone is president of the Manhattan Institute.

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