

The Week That Was: 2012-08-18 (August 18, 2012)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *Whether increasing CO2 in the atmosphere is bad or good is a question of science. And in science, truth and facts are not the playthings of causes, nor a touchstone of political correctness, nor true religion, nor "what I tell you three times is true."* Roger Cohen, William Happer, and Richard Lindzen (WSJ, Aug 13, 2012) [H/t Martin Mangino]

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Numbers of the Week: 0.90% and 0.89%

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THIS WEEK:

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

Consensus: Last week the *Wall Street Journal* published an op-ed by Environmental Defense Fund President Fred Krupp claiming a new climate change consensus. This week the newspaper published a letter by Roger Cohen, William Happer, and Richard Lindzen asserting that if what Mr. Krupp claims is true, it is true only in Lewis Carroll's definition of truth in the poem "Hunting the Snark", a fictional animal. (Carroll is better known for *Alice In Wonderland*). The quote of the week comes from the new letter, which demolishes the assertions of Mr. Krupp. Please see Article #1.

Summer Statistics: John Christy of the University of Alabama, Huntsville, posted a two part series on the statistical games played by NOAA to assert that July was the hottest July ever measured in the 48 conterminous states of the US, and by James Hansen, et al, of NASA-GISS to assert that carbon dioxide emissions (CO2) are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming, including extreme weather events. In addressing NOAA, Christy points out that measured low temperatures have increased but the measured high temperatures have not. Thus, the mean may be higher, but the days are not necessarily hotter. In addressing Hansen, Christy points out that, among other things, Hansen used the 30 year period from 1951-1980 as the base line for establishing temperature variation for the past 10,000 years, which is nonsense. Please see links under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

Climate and Drought: A new study of deposits of ancient pollen and charcoal in the Egypt covering the period between 7,000 to 3,000 years ago suggests a series of major droughts. This includes a mega drought around 4,200 years ago that may have contributed the end of the Old Kingdom – the period in which the great pyramids were built. Part of the history of the droughts appears to be confirmed by archeology and written history. Although there is no exact dating, these droughts concur with the drying of the Sahara, which eliminated cultures there, as well as civilizations in the Mid-East and the Harappan civilization on the Indus Plains. H.H. Lamb suggested that drying of these latitudes was the result of a cooling of the Northern Hemisphere. What caused this cooling is not understood.

Climate change is real, significant, and natural. Humans have an influence, but the major issue is to what extent. To understand the extent of human influence, the causes of natural changes must be understood. It is doubtful that this understanding can be accomplished as long as the major funding entities dismiss climate history in favor of blaming mankind for climate change. Please see link under Changing Climate.

Zero Wind Power: Journalist Christopher Booker reports that at one point last week, Britain's 3,500 wind turbines contributed 12 megawatts (MW) to the 38,000 MW of electricity that was being consumed. This registered 0% in the statistics produced for the NETA web site (New Electricity Trading Arrangements). Those who monitor the load balancing of the Bonneville Power Administration will often find similar events of zero wind power, for example the morning of August 17. These appear in the California reports as well:

<http://transmission.bpa.gov/business/operations/wind/baltwg.aspx> and
<http://www.caiso.com/Pages/TodaysOutlook.aspx>

These events bring into question prudence of the latest policy of the government in Scotland which is proposing for Scotland to generate 100% of its electricity from renewables by 2020.

Zero wind power events, which are common, justifies an observation raised by John Brignell: If wind power only produces about one-third the time, "how can we describe as "back-up" something that will need to be working for two thirds of the time? A more accurate term would be "front-up"."

Please see links Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind, and Questioning European Green.

Sea Ice: At this time it appears that before the Arctic begins to re-freeze in September, the Arctic will have less sea ice than any time since systematic measurements began in 1979, including at its prior lowest year of 2007. The measured reduction of sea ice does not mean the lowest extent ever. There is evidence that in warmer periods over the past 10,000 years the ice virtually disappeared, such as the periods between 8,000 and 5,000 years ago.

Roger Pielke Sr, requests an array of studies, if they exist, to address the expected chorus that will proclaim that the reduction of sea ice is proof that man is causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming. Please see link under Changing Sea Ice.

Solar Research: A report from the National Academy of Sciences suggests a ten year plan focusing on understanding solar activity, including sun-earth connections and origins of space weather. Such research is needed in order to broaden the understanding of natural climate variability. Please see link under Other Scientific News.

Hackers: The web sites of Jo Nova and, apparently, the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF) have been hacked. As of this writing, Jo Nova's web site is working, but the GWPF's web site is being restored. This is a caution to those who have blogs. Please see link under Other News that May Be of Interest.

Oil Surplus? Several organizations often considered the general press, including the New York Times, are beginning to realize that North America is undergoing an energy revolution. Oil sands from Canada, tight oil from shale in North Dakota and Texas, and discoveries of deep water reserves in the Gulf of Mexico are all contributing to the revolution. The new exuberance needs to be tempered with caution.

All the new types of production are expensive as compared with traditional types of production. A significant fall in the oil prices may make some these types uneconomic. But, in general the public will benefit. Another major concern for all the new types is getting the oil to refineries. Major pressure groups in Washington will bitterly oppose new pipelines, as seen in the Keystone II decision, and will exaggerate the damage done by the smallest pipeline spill.

An additional concern for oil sands is that the product must be heated to make it ready for transportation – thus contributing to the claim of dirty oil. An additional concern with tight oil is the life-time of the wells. It may be short compared with conventional wells. That is yet to be determined, and if changes in the technology can extend the life of the wells. Additional concerns for off-shore deep-water drilling are the relative newness of the technology, the uncertainty of hitting methane hydrates, and the heightened environmental fears brought about by the BP blow-out. However, North America has excellent oil prospects with the greatest limitations being from excessive governmental regulations. Please see links under Energy Issues – Non-US and Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Industrialization of Federal Lands: Washington has repeatedly denied the development of Federal lands for oil and gas. Yet, the administration is granting permits for the use of Federal lands for major solar and wind projects, which require land areas far greater than oil and natural gas development. Some commentators express outrage at the “two economies” approach, which is understandable. However, there is another side to this industrialization of Federal lands. Future administrations can use these actions to justify policies to use Federal lands for other purposes, including oil and gas development. Environmental pressure groups will object to the latter, but it will further expose their hypocrisy. Please see Article #3 and link under Energy Issues – US.

Numbers of the Week: 0.90% and 0.89%: During the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing held August 1st on “Update on the Latest Climate Change Science ...”, Senator Barbara Boxer made much of a 2011 study by the Brookings Institution proclaiming that it showed there are more green jobs (in the Clean Economy) than jobs in the fossil fuel industry. Indeed, the study states there are 2.7 million jobs in the Clean Economy while only 2.4 million jobs in the fossil fuels industry. Fossil fuels jobs are not considered green. Many will jump to the conclusion that government policies to create green jobs have been successful.

However, according to the study there are 24,294 jobs in Wind power and 24,152 jobs in PV solar power. Thus, according to the study, Wind provides 0.90% of the green jobs and PV solar 0.89%. Of course, the numbers reflect false precision. But, nonetheless each industry provides less than 1% of green jobs. This calculation, based on the findings of Brookings, hardly justifies the massive subsidies given Wind or PV solar. The green jobs policies can hardly be called a success. Please see link under Green Jobs.

Creating Green Jobs: According to the Brookings study discussed above, the two largest categories of green jobs are Waste Management and Treatment (386,116) and Public Mass Transit (350,547). These categories account for 27% of the total. Another large category is Organic Food and Farming (129,956). The study provides an insight on how to create far more green jobs.

Public Mass Transit requires significant amounts of fossil fuels and electricity. Simply replacing motorized transit with horses will provide many more jobs. Immediately, many people will be needed as drivers and workers to care for and feed the horses. Additionally, according a study from Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension, on average, a 1000 pound horse produces about 50 pounds of solid and liquid manure, daily. In addition, it produces about 60 to 70 pounds of stall waste, daily. A great number of waste management workers will be needed to clean the streets at least hourly and muck the stalls at least daily. Since summertime odors, insects, etc. may be an objection, great numbers of students will be needed to address this seasonal issue. By mandating that horses require an organic diet, green jobs in this category will be greatly expanded. Such a mandate has the added benefit of providing a demand for the products of the horse. Indeed the possibilities for green jobs seem boundless.

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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. 'Climate Consensus' Data Need a More Careful Look

By Roger Cohen, William Happer, & Richard Lindzen, WSJ, Aug 13, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443991704577579951766037924.html?mod=WJ_SJ_Opinion_MIDDLEThirdBucket

2. Jaquith might wanna try Somalia

By Charles Battig, Letter, The Hook, Aug 16, 2012

<http://www.readthehook.com/106826/jaquith-might-wanna-try-somalia>

[SEPP Comment: A place to avoid the horrors of modern civilization.]

3. The Regulatory Cliff Is Nearly as Steep as the Fiscal One

The president has postponed damaging rules until after the November election.

By Rob Portman, WSJ, Aug 16, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444772404577587310951310628.html?mod=WJ_SJ_Opinion_LEADTop

4. The Solar-Painted Desert

Interior gives an environmental pass to its business friends.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 13, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443792604577573643555714390.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

5. How Ethanol Causes Joblessness

The corn fuel lobby is flacking a dubious economic study.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 17, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444184704577589812320819988.html?mod=WJ_SJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Challenging the Orthodoxy

In climate change, we are not to blame

By William Gray, ICECAP, Aug 13, 2012

<http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/in-climate-change-we-are-not-to-blame/>

[SEPP Comment: The role of the oceans in changing climate.]

Fun with summer statistics. Part I: USA

By John Christy, Roy Spencer's Blog, Aug 13, 2012

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2012/08/fun-with-summer-statistics-part-i-usa/>

Fun with summer statistics. Part 2: The Northern Hemisphere Land

By John Christy, Roy Spencer's Blog, Aug 15, 2012

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2012/08/fun-with-summer-statistics-part-2-the-northern-hemisphere-land/>

Errors And Omissions In Major Tropical Climate Mechanism Invalidate IPCC Computer Models

By Tim Ball, Principia Scientific, No Date

<http://principia-scientific.org/index.php/latest-news/errors-and-omissions-in-major-tropical-climate-mechanism-invalidate-ipcc-computer-models.html>

Hansen Is Wrong

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Aug 14, 2012

<http://www.worldclimatereport.com/index.php/2012/08/14/hansen-is-wrong/#more-551>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Are Methane Hydrates Dissolving?

By Staff Writers, Kiel, Germany (SPX), Aug 16, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Are_Methane_Hydrates_Dissolving_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Would not temperature measurements of the sea beds suffice?]

Rebuked over Unabomber ad, Heartland Institute resumes fight on carbon rules

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Aug 15, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/243871-heartland-institute-rebuked-for-unabomber-sign-seeks-to-regain-offense->

[SEPP Comment: Posted in the newspaper. For the 50th reunion, the Harvard University Alumni Association directory had an entry by Kaczynski who is a 1962 graduate and listed his occupation as "prisoner" and entered "8 life sentences" under the "Awards" section.

http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/sideshow/harvard-apologizes-including-unabomber-alumni-directory-192547071.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=feed.]

Obama's Clean Energy Revolution

By Michael Grunwald, Time, Aug 11, 2012

http://www.realclearpolitics.com/2012/08/11/obama039s_clean_energy_revolution_287110.html

Questioning the Orthodoxy

The Keys to the Climate Debate

By David M.W. Evans, American Thinker, Aug 13, 2012

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

Why We Need Debate, Not Consensus, on Climate Change

By Joe Bast, Somewhat Reasonable, Aug 10, 2012

<http://blog.heartland.org/2012/08/why-we-need-debate-not-consensus-on-climate-change/>

Apocalypse Not: Here's Why You Shouldn't Worry About End Times

By Matt Ridley, Wired Science, Aug 17, 2012 [H/T WUWT]

http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2012/08/ff_apocalypsenot/

[SEPP Comment: According to some experts on the Mayan calendar, the earth ends when the long count calendar ends on December 2012. This is lengthy, but worthy, article on projected apocalypses.]

How to Think Seriously About the Planet

By Roger Scruton, Book Review, Quadrant, Aug 11, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/08/how-to-think-seriously-about-the-planet>

Questioning European Green

Renewable UK get desperate

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 17, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/17/renewableuk-get-desperate.html>

UK Economy In Deep Trouble As Treasury Splits Over Green Policies

By Jim Pickard, Financial Times, via GWPF, Aug 11, 2012

<http://thegwgf.org/uk-news/6368-uk-economy-in-deep-trouble-as-treasury-splits-over-green-policies.html>

An anomaly of vocabulary

By John Brignell, Number Watch, Aug 7, 2012

<http://www.numberwatch.co.uk/2012%20August.htm>

Conservative MP who chairs climate committee earns £140k from green energy firms

By Gerri Peev, Daily Mail, UK, Aug 13, 2012

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2187948/Conservative-MP-chairs-climate-committee-earns-140k-green-energy-firms.html>

Middle-earning Scots in 'fuel poverty' thanks to bill rises

Middle-earning Scottish household will start struggling to heat and power their homes from this year thanks to large hikes in energy costs, according to an official study.

By Simon Johnson, Telegraph UK, Aug 14, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scotland/9474470/Middle-earning-Scots-in-fuel-poverty-thanks-to-bill-rises.html>

[SEPP Comment: The callous disregard of the politicians and climate establishment for the public.]

Questioning Green Elsewhere

Patrick Moore on the facts and fiction of climate change

By Joseph Cotto, Washington Times, Aug 9, 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/conscience-realist/2012/aug/9/patrick-moore-facts-and-fiction-climate-change/>

[SEPP Comment: The shift in environmentalism from concern over the environment to misanthropy.]

Obama administration wants to double down on failed green energy policy

By Joseph D'Aleo, ICECAP, Aug 15, 2012

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/obama_administration_wants_to_double_down_on_failed_green_energy_policy1/

Green Jobs

Sizing the Clean Economy

By Mark Muro, Jonathan Rothwell, Devashree Saha, Brookings Institution, 2011

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Series/resources/0713_clean_economy.pdf

Rural Utilities Create Zero Jobs Despite \$47 Million in Stimulus Funding

By Lachlan Markay, The Foundry, Aug 14, 2012

<http://blog.heritage.org/2012/08/14/rural-utilities-create-zero-jobs-despite-47-million-in-stimulus-funding/>

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Maryland gets grant to help teach climate change

National Science Foundation funds joint effort with Delaware

By Timothy Wheeler, Baltimore Sun, Aug 15, 2012

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/green/blog/bs-gr-climate-change-teaching-20120815.0,5751051.story>

"At this point in our existence it's really important people understand about climate, why it's changing and what our options are," said Donald Boesch, president of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and one of the leaders of the Maryland-Delaware partnership."

[SEPP Comment: Indoctrinate.]

Rio+20: A Move Towards More Sustainable Transportation

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Aug 17, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Rio_20_A_Move_Towards_More_Sustainable_Transportation_999.html

State Department oversight of climate change spending abroad is a mess, watchdog reports

By George Russell, Fox News, Aug 15, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/08/15/exclusive-state-department-oversight-climate-change-spending-abroad-is-mess/#ixzz23cyX1h2j>

[SEPP Comment: The link to the audit is immediately below.]

Audit of Bureau of Oceans and International, Environmental and Scientific Affairs,

Administration and Oversight of Funds, Dedicated to Address Global Climate Change

By Office of Audits, Department of State, Jul 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/195671.pdf>

Climate change poses risks to food, beyond US drought

- * Bridges, roads could be washed away, hitting harvest transport
- * High degree of confidence" weather extremes linked to climate change
- * Enough food, but problem is distribution - professor

By Alister Doyle, Reuters, Aug 16, 2012

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/08/16/climate-drought-idINL6E8JFAI220120816>

[SEPP Comment: More Malthus from those working on the IPCC report on food. Solution – force everyone to be a vegetarian.]

Seeking a Common Ground

Martin Hoerling on James Hansen's 'game over' thinking

By Martin Hoerling, WUWT, Aug 13, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/08/13/martin-hoerling-on-james-hansens-game-over-thinking/>

[SEPP Comment: An analysis by a NOAA scientist contradicting Hansen's claim that heat waves over the past few years are proof of human cause global warming.]

1.5 million years of climate history revealed after scientists solve mystery of the deep

By Staff Writers, Cambridge UK (SPX), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/1_5_million_years_of_climate_history_revealed_after_scientists_solve_mystery_of_the_deep_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Research pursuing the critical question: what are the causes of natural climate change?]

Confirmation Bias: Why Both Sides Of The Global Warming Debate Are Nearly Always Right

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Aug 14, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/08/14/confirmation-bias-why-both-sides-of-the-global-warming-debate-are-nearly-always-right/>

How "Policy By Panic" Can Backfire for Environmentalists

Saying that droughts are caused by global warming leads to public distrust and disengagement when the rain starts to fall.

By Bjørn Lomborg, Slate, Aug 17, 2012

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/project_syndicate/2012/08/lomborg_paul_krugman_is_wrong_to_say_that_climate_change_causes_extreme_weather_.html

NASA's Remarkable Day Of Triumph And Travesty

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Aug 12, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/08/12/nasas-remarkable-day-of-triumph-and-travesty/>

[SEPP Comment: Praising NASA for the landing of the new Mars rover and condemning Hansen of NASA-GISS for using the occasion for a personal advantage..]

New atmospheric compound tied to climate change and human health

By Staff Writers, Boulder CO (SPX), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/New_atmospheric_compound_tied_to_climate_change_and_human_health_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Can trees help form sulfuric acid and acid rain?]

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

Climate models that predict more droughts win further scientific support

By Hristio Boytchev, Washington Post, Aug 13, 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/climate-models-that-predict-more-droughts-win-further-scientific-support/2012/08/13/cb4e3108-e16f-11e1-ae7f-d2a13e249eb2_story.html

North American freshwater fishes race to extinction

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Aug 14, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/North_American_freshwater_fishes_race_to_extinction_999.html

A new global warming culprit: Dam drawdowns

By Staff Writers, Seattle WA (SPX), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/A_new_global_warming_culprit_Dam_drawdowns_999.html

[SEPP Comment: What is the net effect?]

Climate Lies in Iowa's Supreme Court

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Aug 15, 2012

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2012/08/climate-lies-in-iowas-supreme-court.html>

[SEPP Comment: We may disagree with the author as to the cooling effect of carbon dioxide, but the law suit is still ridiculous.]

Land burning in SE Asia kills nearly 15,000 in El Nino years

By Staff Writers, Paris (AFP), Aug 13, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Land_burning_in_SE_Asia_kills_nearly_15000_in_El_Nino_years_999.html

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

The Parable of Oreskes is epic!

By Roberto Soria, Jo Nova's Blog, Aug 17, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/08/climate-evangelism-the-priestess-oreskes-warns-of-the-evil-fox/#more-23309>

UWA sponsors world wide junkets for poor research, inept smears: Oreskes

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Aug 13, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/08/uwa-sponsors-world-wide-junkets-for-poor-research-inept-smears-oreskes/#more-23284>

Models v. Observations

Modeling reveals significant climatic impacts of megapolitan expansion

By Staff Writers, Tempe AZ (SPX), Aug 17, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Modeling_reveals_significant_climatic_impacts_of_megapolit_an_expansion_999.html

[SEPP Comment: But the BEST team said they found no Urban Heat Island effect.]

Changing Weather

The Long, Dry History of the West

By Bill Marsh, NYT, Aug 12, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/sunday-review/the-long-dry-history-of-the-west.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120812

[SEPP Comment: Two graphics: one, showing hard times today, the second showing far harder times in the past.]

Joe Bastardi Discusses The Record August Weather Turnaround

By Joe Bastardi, Real Science, Aug 14, 2012

<http://stevengoddard.wordpress.com/2012/08/14/joe-bastardi-discusses-the-record-august-weather-turnaround/>

Fresh water breathes fresh life into hurricanes

By Staff Writers, Richland WA (SPX), Aug 16, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Fresh_water_breathes_fresh_life_into_hurricanes_999.html

[SEPP Comment: According to the study, in certain instances, a deep overlay of warmer fresh water over ocean water may contribute to hurricanes to becoming more intense as they near land.]

Drought hits U.S. power supply

By Staff Writers, Morgantown, W.Va. (UPI), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Drought_hits_US_power_supply_999.html

Diversity keeps grasslands resilient to drought, climate change

By Staff Writers, Manhattan, KS (SPX), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Diversity_keeps_grasslands_resilient_to_drought_climate_change_999.html

Forecast: Big snow in Eastern U.S. cities

By Staff Writers, State College, Pa. (UPI), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Forecast_Big_snow_in_Eastern_US_cities_999.html

[SEPP Comment: This winter. Will NOAA blame global warming / climate change?]

Heat Waves

Forecast heatwave puts France on alert

By Staff Writers, Paris (AFP), Aug 16, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Forecast_heatwave_puts_France_on_alert_999.html

[SEPP Comment: It appears that “the new normal” of cold damp summers in England is being broken as well.]

Changing Climate

Climate and Drought Lessons from Ancient Egypt

By Staff Writers, Press Release, USGS, Aug 16, 2012
<http://www.spinics.net/lists/usgs/msg00367.html>

Changing Sea Ice

Summary Of Arctic Ice Decline – Recommendations For Investigation Of The Cause(s)

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Aug 17, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/08/17/summary-of-arctic-ice-decline-recommendations-for-investigation-of-the-causes/>

Changing Earth

Source of Mysterious Pumice 'Raft' in Pacific Found, NASA Says

By Jeanna Bryner, Live Science, Aug 14, 2012 [H/t Tom Sheahen]

<http://www.space.com/17102-pumice-raft-pacific-volcano-source.html>

Nearly 1,000 earthquakes recorded in Arizona over three years

By Staff Writers, Tempe AZ (SPX) Aug 17, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Nearly_1000_earthquakes_recorded_in_Arizona_over_three_years_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Not from hydraulic fracturing, but from more sensitive instruments.]

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Seeds of hope amidst Philippine floods

By Staff Writers, Manila, Philippines (SPX), Aug 16, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Seeds_of_hope_amidst_Philippine_floods_999.html

[SEPP Comment: A new form of rice designed to withstand prolonged flooding (up to two weeks) is put to the test.]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Tropical Influences on North Pacific Sea Surface Temperatures

Reference: Lienert, F., Fyfe, J.C. and Merryfield, W.J. 2011. Do climate models capture the tropical influences on North Pacific sea surface temperature variability? *Journal of Climate* 24: 6203-6209.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/14aug2012a1.html>

Caribbean Corals: What's Really Been Giving Them a Hard Time?

Reference: Cramer, K.L., Jackson, J.B.C., Angioletti, C.V., Leonard-Pingel, J. and Guilderson, T.P. 2012. Anthropogenic mortality on coral reefs in Caribbean Panama predates coral disease and bleaching. *Ecology Letters* 15: 561-567.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/14aug2012a3.html>

Effects of Low pH on Early Life Stages of Atlantic Herring

Reference: Franke, A. and Clemmesen, C. 2011. Effect of ocean acidification on early life stages of Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus* L.). *Biogeosciences* 8: 3697-3707.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/14aug2012a4.html>

[SEPP Comment: The results are not surprising considering that many fish thrive in fresh water swamps that are actually acidic rather than merely having reduced alkalinity.]

The Coral Atoll Islands of the Chagos Archipelago

Reference: Dunne, R.P., Barbosa, S.M. and Woodworth, P.L. 2012. Contemporary sea level in the Chagos Archipelago, central Indian Ocean. *Global and Planetary Change* 82-83: 25-37.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/aug/15aug2012a3.html>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

‘Revenue-Neutral’ Carbon Tax: Merely Implausible or Mathematically Impossible?

By Josiah Neeley, Master Resource, Aug 16, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/08/carbon-tax-implausible-impossible/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

EPA actions at mine could hurt \$220 billion in investments

By Michael Bastasch, Daily Caller, Aug 16, 2012 [H/t SPPI]

<http://dailycaller.com/2012/08/16/epa-actions-at-mine-could-hurt-220-billion-in-investments/>

[SEPP Comment: The calculations include mines other than the one in Alaska being currently challenged.]

Court approves higher ethanol content in fuel

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Aug 17, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/244135-court-approves-higher-ethanol-content-in-fuel>

[SEPP Comment: The wording in the article is all too typically misleading. Rather than stating the decision lets U.S. automobiles use gasoline with higher ethanol, to be more correct it should read the courts upheld a measure giving the EPA the power to require ...]

Federal Court Remands EPA’s Disapproval of Texas Permitting Program

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Aug 16, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4872.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2504614&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: Texas appealed on the basis of EPA failed to follow administrative procedures, not that the EPA science is poor.]

Energy Issues – Non-US

The Coming Oil Boom

By Chrystia Freeland, NYT, Aug 9, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/10/us/10iht-letter10.html?_r=1

[SEPP Comment: Even the editors of the Gray Lady are beginning to comprehend.]

Oil sands producers could feel squeeze in crowded market

By Yadullah Hussain, Financial Post, Aug 16, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/08/16/oil-sands-producers-could-feel-squeeze-in-crowded-market/>

Is the era of oil nearing its end?

By Greg Gordon, McClatchy Newspaper, Aug 12, 2012

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/08/12/160930/is-the-era-of-oil-nearing-its.html>

[SEPP Comment: Try your hand at managing the earth's energy reserves – even though we do not know what they are. Another version of peak oil!]

Energy Issues -- US

CO2 emissions in US drop to 20-year low

By Kevin Begos, AP, Aug 20, 2012 [H/t William Readdy]

http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/386c25518f464186bf7a2ac026580ce7/Article_2012-08-16-Gas%20Drilling-CO2%20Drop/id-83889b1f24bc4c679349118b9b6fcee1

[SEPP Comment: The article fails to mention temperatures – no mention of the current no warming trend. But it contains more nonsense from Mr. Mann. The total world-wide emissions are increasing with China now contributing about 29% and the US a distant second at 16%. Is the US losing this energy race?]

Obama's Federal Land Grab

By William Tucker, American Spectator, Aug 17, 2012

<http://spectator.org/archives/2012/08/17/obamas-federal-land-grab>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Whatever Happened to Peak Oil?

By Peter Glover, Energy Tribune, Aug 16, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/11451/Whatever-Happened-to-Peak-Oil?>

Tempering U.S. shale potential

Yadullah Hussain, Financial Post, Aug 10, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/08/10/tempering-u-s-shale-potential/>

Siluria Taps Natural Gas Glut to Make Chemicals

The MIT spin-off lands \$30 million to build a demonstration plant that makes ethylene from natural gas, rather than oil.

By Martin Lamonica, MIT Technology Review, Jul 27, 2012

<http://www.technologyreview.com/view/428636/siluria-taps-natural-gas-glut-to-make-chemicals/?nlid=nldly&nld=2012-07-30>

Canada on cusp of new oil era: Canadian Natural's Laut

By Claudia Cattaneo, Financial Post, Aug 9, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/08/09/canada-on-cusp-of-new-oil-era-as-heavy-crude-discounting-nears-end-canadian-naturals-laut/>

[SEPP Comment: Overly optimistic?]

Washington's Control of Oil and Gas

Salazar lays Arctic drilling delay at Shell's feet

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Aug 13, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/243479-salazar-lays-arctic-drilling-delay-at-shells-feet>

[SEPP Comment: The ad hoc regulations had nothing to do with the delays.]

Obama's backdoor attack on frackin

Editorial, Washington Examiner, Aug 13, 2012

http://washingtonexaminer.com/obamas-backdoor-attack-on-fracking/article/2504809?utm_source=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest%20-%2008/14/2012&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest#.UCo3ZqPqCO4

[SEPP Comment: Using the Department of Transportation to regulate drilling on private lands.]

Oil Spills, Gas Leaks & Consequences

Interior finalizes drilling-safety rule stemming from 2010 BP oil spill

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Aug 15, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/243897-interior-finalizes-drilling-safety-rule>

Northern Gateway panel asks Enbridge for access to damning U.S. spill report

By Jeffrey Jones, Reuters, Aug 15, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/08/15/northern-gateway-panel-asks-enbridge-for-access-to-damning-u-s-spill-report/>

Nuclear Energy and Fears

No signs yet of radiation-induced illness near Fukushima Daiichi plant

By Lana Spivak, ACSH, Aug 13, 2012

http://www.acsh.org/factsfears/newsID.3862/news_detail.asp

Japan's Onagawa nuclear plant 'remarkably undamaged': IAEA

By Staff Writers, Vienna (AFP) Aug 10, 2012

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Japans_Onagawa_nuclear_plant_remarkably_undamaged_IAEA_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The nuclear plant closest to the epicenter of the March 2011 earthquake.]

Belgian nuclear chief 'sceptical' reactor can be restarted

By Staff Writers, Brussels (AFP), Aug 10, 2012

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Belgian_nuclear_chief_sceptical_reactor_can_be_restarted_999.html

Report: Implementing Federal Dry Storage Program by 2020 Is Nation's Best Waste Storage Option

By Staff Writer, POWERnews, Aug 16, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4868.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2504614&hq_l=7&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: Will the courts allow it?]

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

Wind: a zero-sum industry

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 12, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/12/wind-a-zero-sum-industry.html>

[SEPP Comment: See link immediately below.]

The great wind delusion has hijacked our energy policy

The command of Britain's electricity supply has fallen into dangerous hands

By Christopher Booker, Telegraph, UK, Aug 11, 2012
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/9468604/The-great-wind-delusion-has-hijacked-our-energy-policy.html>

Salmond's leap,

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Aug 11, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/8/11/salmonds-leap.html>

[SEPP Comment: Claiming that Scotland can go 100% renewable by 2020 is a leap of faith. The subsidies required may make it a leap to bankruptcy.]

Fraying Support for Windpower: Exelon Does the Math

By Michael Giberson, Master Resource, Aug 15, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/08/fraying-support-for-windpower-exelon-does-the-math/#more-21337>

US Wind Power Market Riding a Wave That Is Likely to Crest in 2012

By Staff Writers, Berkeley CA (SPX), Aug 16, 2012

http://www.winddaily.com/reports/US_Wind_Power_Market_Riding_a_Wave_That_Is_Likely_to_Crest_in_2012_999.html

Solar Energy Update

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Aug 13, 2012

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2012/08/13/solar-energy-update/>

[SEPP Comment: Brief summary on advances in types of solar generation of electricity.]

“Recouping cost of wind turbine may take more than a lifetime” (Consumer Reports confirms micro-wind diseconomies)

By Kent Hawkins, Master Resource, Aug 14, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/08/microwind-consumer-reports/>

[SEPP Comment: Perhaps there was a reason why western farmers and ranchers were so willing to give up their wind power for centralized power from the grid.]

Off-shore wind power project considered

By Staff Writers, Washington (UPI), Aug 9, 2012

http://www.winddaily.com/reports/Off-shore_wind_power_project_considered_999.html

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy -- Other

Biofuel policy on thin ice

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Aug 15, 2012

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/08/15/peter-foster-biofuel-policy-on-thin-ice/>

Delaware opens Pandora's Box with BloomEnergy black box

Taxpayer and ratepayer subsidies, coastal zone permits and crony capitalism spell big trouble

By Lindsay Leveen, The Moral Liberal, Aug 16, 2012

<http://www.themoralliberal.com/2012/08/15/delaware-opens-pandoras-box-with-bloomenergy-black-box/>

Global leaders to press US on biofuels output

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Aug 13, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/243393-global-leaders-to-press-us-on-biofuels>

Senegalese villagers vow to fight biofuels project

By Staff Writers, Dakar (AFP), Aug 9, 2012

http://www.biofueldaily.com/reports/Senegalese_villagers_vow_to_fight_biofuels_project_999.html

Carbon Schemes

Article In Physics Today By David Kramer Titled “Scientists Poke Holes In Carbon Dioxide Sequestration”

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Aug 17, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/08/17/article-in-physics-today-by-david-kramer-titled-scientists-poke-holes-in-carbon-dioxide-sequestration/>

California Dreaming

Vegas Bullet Train Bets Big on Taxpayer \$\$\$

By Tim Cavanaugh, Reason, Aug 16, 2012

<http://reason.com/blog/2012/08/16/vegas-bullet-train-bets-big-on-taxpayer>

Gov. Jerry Brown launches website to rebut climate change skeptics

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee, Aug 14, 2012

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/08/13/2950850/gov-jerry-brown-launches-website.html>

Gov. Jerry Brown said today that "humanity is getting dangerously close to the point of no return" on climate change, and he launched a website criticizing conservatives who dispute its significance.

Health, Energy, and Climate

Report Ranks Nation’s Largest Generators In Terms of Air Pollutant Emissions

By Staff Writers, Power News, Aug 14, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/Report-Ranks-Nations-Largest-Generators-In-Terms-of-Air-Pollutant-Emissions_4864.html

[SEPP Comment: Real air pollutants, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, are down 68% from 1990 to 2010.]

Bill Gates Names Winners of the Reinvent the Toilet Challenge

By Staff Writers, Seattle WA (SPX), Aug 16, 2012

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/Bill_Gates_Names_Winners_of_the_Reinvent_the_Toilet_Challenge_999.html

[SEPP Comment: A serious issue in developing nations.]

Environmental Industry

Green groups exploit law for financial gain

Citizens suffer while environmentalists make bank

By William Perry Pendley, Washington Times, Aug 15, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/aug/15/green-groups-exploit-law-for-financial-gain/>

Other Scientific News

10-year plan for space physics put forward

By Staff Writers, Washington (UPI), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/10-year_plan_for_space_physics_put_forward_999.html

Closing in on the Border Between Primordial Plasma and Ordinary Matter

By Staff Writers, Upton, NY (SPX), Aug 15, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Closing_in_on_the_Border_Between_Primordial_Plasma_and_Ordinary_Matter_999.html

NASA STEREO observes 1 of the fastest CMEs on record

by Staff Writers

Huntsville AL (SPX) Aug 16, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/NASA_STEREO_observes_1_of_the_fastest_CMEs_on_record_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

Beefing up security on skeptical blogs

Posted on August 17, 2012 by Anthony Watts

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/08/17/beefing-up-security-on-skeptical-blogs/>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

UV Radiation Frying Marine Life

A study suggests that increased UVB radiation from the sun is causing the decline of many marine species.

By Cristina Luiggi, The Scientist, Aug 13, 2012 [H/t Catherine French]

<http://the-scientist.com/2012/08/13/uv-radiation-frying-marine-life/>

[SEPP Comment: A change in latitude may do wonders.]

Climate Crazyness of the Week – global warming causing helium shortage

By Anthony Watts, WUSWT, Aug 16, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/08/16/climate-crazyness-of-the-week-global-warming-causing-helium-shortage/>

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ARTICLES:

1. 'Climate Consensus' Data Need a More Careful Look

By Roger Cohen, William Happer, & Richard Lindzen, WSJ, Aug 13, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443991704577579951766037924.html?mod=W_SJ_Opinion_MIDDLEThirdBucket

In his Aug. 6 op-ed, "[A New Climate-Change Consensus.](#)" Environmental Defense Fund President Fred Krupp speaks of "the trend—a decades-long march toward hotter and wilder weather." We have seen quite a few such claims this summer season, and Mr. Krupp insists that we accept them as "true." Only with Lewis Carroll's famous definition of truth, "What I tell you three times is true," is this the case.

But repetition of a fib does not make it true. As one of many pieces of evidence that our climate is doing what it always does, consider the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)'s year-by-year data for wet and dry years in the continental U.S.

From 1900 to the present, there are only irregular, chaotic variations from year to year, but no change in the trend or in the frequency of dry years or wet years. Sometimes there are clusters of dry years, the most significant being the dry Dust Bowl years of the 1930s. These tend to be followed by clusters of wet years.

Despite shrill claims of new record highs, when we look at record highs for temperature measurement stations that have existed long enough to have a meaningful history, there is no trend in the number of extreme high temperatures, neither regionally nor continentally. We do see the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s setting the largest number of record highs, at a time when it is acknowledged that humans had negligible effect on climate.

What about strong tornadoes? Again there is no trend. Last year was an unusually active season, and unfortunately some of those storms ravaged population centers. We were told that these disasters were the result of human CO2 emissions. Yet 2011 was only the sixth worst for strong tornadoes since 1950 and far from a record. And have any of us heard about this tornado year? Why not? Because 2012 has been unusually quiet. Most of the tornado season is behind us, and so far the tornado count is mired in the lowest quintile of historical activity. As for hurricanes, again there is no discernible trend. Regarding wildfires, past western fires burned far more acreage than today. Any climate effect on wildfires is complicated by the controversial fire suppression practices of the past hundred years.

Lurid media reporting and advocates' claims aside, even the last comprehensive Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report noted that "archived data sets are not yet sufficient for determining long-term trends in [weather] extremes." Yet this has not stopped global warming advocates from using hot summer weather as a tool to dramatize a supposedly impending climate Armageddon.

In a telling 2007 PBS interview, former Sen. Tim Wirth gloated about how he had rigged the 1988 Senate testimony chamber to dramatize the impact of NASA scientist James Hansen's histrionic testimony on imminent danger from global warming: "We called the Weather Bureau and found out what historically was the hottest day of the summer . . . So we scheduled the hearing that day, and bingo, it was the hottest day on record in Washington or close to it."

Not content to gamble on the vagaries of weather statistics, Mr. Wirth also boasted, "What we did is that we went in the night beforehand and opened all the windows . . . so the air conditioning wasn't working inside the room . . . when the hearing occurred, there was not only bliss, which is television cameras and double figures, but it was really hot." Tricks like those described by Sen. Wirth have been refined to an art to promote the cause of economically costly action to prevent supposedly catastrophic consequences of increasing CO2. Contrast these manipulations with the measured and informative [Senate testimony of climatologist John Christy](#) earlier this month.

In an effort to move the science debate completely into the political arena, Mr. Krupp implies that with the exception of a few enlightened Republican governors and captains of industry, most

"conservatives" are climate skeptics—and vice versa. But some of the most formidable opponents of climate hysteria include the politically liberal physics Nobel laureate, Ivar Giaever; famously independent physicist and author, Freeman Dyson; environmentalist futurist, and father of the Gaia Hypothesis, James Lovelock; left-center chemist, Fritz Vahrenholt, one of the fathers of the German environmental movement, and many others who would bristle at being lumped into the conservative camp.

Whether increasing CO2 in the atmosphere is bad or good is a question of science. And in science, truth and facts are not the playthings of causes, nor a touchstone of political correctness, nor true religion, nor "what I tell you three times is true."

Humanity has always dealt with changing climate. In addition to the years of drought and excessive moisture described above, the geological record makes it clear that there have been longer-term periods of drought, lasting for many years as during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s to many decades or centuries. None of these past climate changes, which had a profound effect on humanity, had anything to do with CO2, and there are good reasons for skepticism that doubling CO2 will make much difference compared to natural climate changes.

It is increasingly clear that doubling CO2 is unlikely to increase global temperature more than about one degree Celsius, not the much larger values touted by the global warming establishment. In fact, CO2 levels are below the optimum levels for most plants, and there are persuasive arguments that the mild warming and increased agricultural yields from doubling CO2 will be an overall benefit for humanity. Let us debate and deal with serious, real problems facing our society, not elaborately orchestrated, phony ones, like the trumped-up need to drastically curtail CO2 emissions

2. Jaquith might wanna try Somalia

By Charles Battig, MD, Letter, The Hook, Aug 16, 2012

<http://www.readthehook.com/106826/jaquith-might-wanna-try-somalia>

[SEPP Comment: A place to avoid the horrors of modern civilization.]

To the credit of Janis Jaquith, she acknowledges her addiction [August 9 essay: "[Post derecho: I realize I'm the eco-catastrophe](#)"]. This addiction does seem to have rendered her thought processes somewhat muddled. By the end of her confessional essay, she seamlessly morphs her personal addiction problem into a "we" and "our" epidemic of impugned guilt for enjoying the fruits of human invention and progress.

Perhaps moving to Somalia or post-hurricane Haiti might provide the optimal recovery environment she craves. In either location, she could experience "the (lost) skills possessed by our ancestors...who dealt more or less successfully with the challenges of daily living."

Feel guilt-free while inhaling the smoky fumes of burning animal dung heating your subsistence meal in a one-room hut. Use your back yard as a toilet and free yourself of drinking-water-safety concerns. Watch your forests being clear-cut to provide fuel for heating. Turn your back on the increasing lifespan of modern civilization. You will have no electricity for food refrigeration or modern medicines such as insulin. Watch your children die prematurely because of a lack of efficient transportation to medical facilities and antibiotics.

One risk to the addicted is being supplied counterfeit or harmful versions of the addictive substance. Jaquith relies upon the views of an environmental extremist's pronouncements in an entertainment publication as scientific fact to feed her addiction guilt.

"Big oil" money is bad. Hundreds of millions of dollars of environmentalist lobbying goes unmentioned. Creating justification for her addiction, she claims oceans "30 percent more acidic," as does Wikipedia, which clarifies this as a 200-year reduction in *alkalinity* from 8.25 to 8.14 (7.0 being neutral). Satellite records document no increase in atmospheric temperature for the past 10-15 years, even as CO2 levels rise. Ocean sea-level rise-rates have fallen in recent years. Russian fishing records document the record Arctic melt of the 1920-1930s.

I wish her well in handling her addiction, as I confess to being addicted to the longer life-spans of modern civilization, to human ingenuity, and to resourceful adaptation.

The author the Piedmont Chapter President of the Virginia Scientists and Engineers for Energy and Environment.

3. The Regulatory Cliff Is Nearly as Steep as the Fiscal One

The president has postponed damaging rules until after the November election.

By Rob Portman, WSJ, Aug 16, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444772404577587310951310628.html?mod=W>
[SJ Opinion LEADTop](#)

Americans are learning more about the "fiscal cliff" approaching at the beginning of next year, when tax rates for families and small businesses are set to spike and new taxes in President Obama's health-care spending law take effect. But unless there's real change in Washington, we're also headed for a steep "regulatory cliff" that could compound the damage.

After three years of bureaucratic excess, the Obama administration has been quietly postponing several multibillion-dollar regulations until after the November election. Those delayed rules, together with more than 130 unfinished mandates under the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial law, could significantly increase the regulatory drag on our economy in 2013.

The Labor Department, for example, is working on a regulation that would increase the cost of retirement planning for middle-class workers, to "protect" them from free investment help. This regulation, known as the Fiduciary Rule, would tighten restrictions and increase litigation risks for businesses that offer investment guidance on a commission basis, rather than the more expensive fee-for-service model.

A study last year by the Oliver Wyman Group found that the Fiduciary Rule could result in higher retirement account minimums and cause 7.2 million individual retirement account (IRA) holders to lose access to investment advice. Even the Labor Department was unable to show that the rule's illusory benefits outweigh its substantial costs.

After other lawmakers and I urged the White House to step in, this rule-making was delayed temporarily. But the Labor Department has told interested parties to stay tuned for another iteration of this rule.

Then there is the mega-rule on the shelf at the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) that could block business expansion in many areas of the country. Proposed in 2010, the Ozone Rule would impose a limit on ozone (which creates haze from emissions from cars, power plants and factories) so strict that up to 85% of U.S. counties monitored by the EPA would be in violation.

Susan Dudley, a regulatory economist at George Washington University who served in the previous administration, notes that this rule would force many communities "to forego productive investment and hiring decisions in order to spend hundreds of billions of dollars per year in vain attempts to meet unachievable standards."

The EPA itself says the rule could impose up to \$90 billion in yearly costs on manufacturers and other employers. Last September, after months of public outcry, the White House instructed the EPA to put the rule on ice until 2013, when it will be "revisited."

Also on the Obama EPA's to-do list for 2013 is a new rule that its regulators admit could increase costs for energy consumers and others by as much as \$4.5 billion per year, depending on how it's implemented. The rule targets equipment that power plants and manufacturing facilities use to draw in water to prevent overheating, even though those intake systems are not harmful to human health or water quality.

Last year the EPA estimated that this new rule would cost \$1 for every three cents in benefits. More recently, the EPA has proposed the use of public-opinion surveys with hypothetical scenarios that boost the alleged benefits of its proposed regulation by nearly 14,000%. This is another example of a major regulation put off until next year, ensuring that Americans won't learn about its effect on their electricity bills until after the election.

Consumers can also look forward to a new Department of Transportation rule that will increase the costs of new cars and trucks by mandating expensive new technology. First proposed in 2010, the Rear-View Camera Rule would require that all cars and trucks be equipped with a rear-view camera and video display on the dashboard, at a cost of some \$2.7 billion to auto makers and car buyers.

Americans who want this technology are free to buy it and more than 40% of new cars have it. We don't need a government mandate to drive up costs for families who need to economize. Not surprisingly, the administration delayed moving forward on this costly rule until after Dec. 31.

Next year will bring not only new rules but new regulators. The Independent Payment Advisory Board—a bureaucracy created by the president's health-care law—has vast authority over patient care and health markets, yet it is immune from the usual public input and review requirements that apply to other regulators.

As the American Medical Association and others have pointed out, the board is charged with the contradictory mandate of cutting Medicare reimbursement rates to health-care providers, without reducing benefits or finding new ways to increase value. The result will be a technocratic body with almost unchecked power to limit access to care for Medicare patients.

According to a 2011 Gallup survey, overregulation tops the list of "most important problems" facing America's small-business owners. With our economy stuck in the worst jobs slump since the Great Depression, the pressing need is to build a regulatory climate that encourages investment, growth and job creation. Avoiding the coming regulatory cliff, like the fiscal cliff, will require new leadership at the top.

Mr. Portman, a Republican, is a U.S. senator from Ohio.

4. The Solar-Painted Desert

Interior gives an environmental pass to its business friends.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 13, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443792604577573643555714390.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

Who says President Obama isn't pro-business? The trick is being a business he likes.

Several weeks ago in a remarkable but little-noticed policy directive, the Interior Department announced that it will allow construction permitting on 285,000 acres of public land in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah for solar energy projects. Even more remarkable, Interior said that energy firms can petition Interior to build solar installations "on approximately 19 million acres"—a larger land mass than Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont combined.

Interior boasts that "this represents a major step forward in the permitting of utility-scale solar energy on public lands throughout the west." This means opening up huge chunks of U.S. desert and wilderness to the installation and long-term placement of hundreds of thousands of solar panels. The dirty secret of solar and wind power is that they are extremely land intensive, especially compared to coal mining, oil and gas drilling or building a nuclear power plant.

That's only part of the special treatment for solar companies. Interior says it plans to expedite solar-project approval and cut up-front costs for developers. The agency is also streamlining National Environmental Policy Act approval and facilitating the linking of solar electricity generation to transmission lines that will carry the electricity to substations. All of this is on top of the \$9 billion in taxpayer handouts for solar and wind projects that were approved between 2009 and 2011.

In short, green energy is getting an EZ Pass through the Administration's costly regulatory tolls. Since taking office in 2009, the Obama Administration has approved 17 major solar projects on public lands. All of this is facilitated through a program called the "roadmap for solar energy development."

What's surprising is that few if any nature groups are protesting this regulatory rush to approve renewable energy projects. Environmental groups have never hesitated to block a dam to save a snail darter, or oppose a forest-clearing to save an owl, but desert tortoises and bighorn sheep are apparently expendable as sacrifices to the gods of green energy. So much for protecting wildlife from big, bad profit-making industry.

Meanwhile, the Institute for Energy Research notices that the new solar policy is "in sharp contrast to the Obama Administration's canceling lease sales for oil shale deposits in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah early in the President's term and significantly downsizing development plans for those resources since then."

This is roughly the same list of western states that got the green light for solar, but with different results. Oil shale—not to be confused with shale oil, which is extracted through hydraulic fracturing—is recovered by heating rock at high temperatures, which releases petroleum. The U.S. has the largest oil shale deposits in the world, totaling a little under one trillion recoverable barrels, or about 150 years worth of supply. But most of it is located on public lands and is still off limits.

Consider the 2005 Energy Policy Act that authorized oil shale leasing on public lands. In 2008 the Bush Administration issued rules on oil shale exploration, but in February 2009 Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said those rules would be delayed. Only this year, says Mary Hutzler, former acting administrator of the Energy Information Agency, "did the Interior Department announce its plan for shale drilling, but the administration closed off 75% of the federal land containing oil shale resources that were to be offered for lease under the Bush rules."

The solar industry's environmental pass fits the Obama pattern of interpreting the law one way for friends and another for those in businesses it doesn't like. Maybe if Mr. Obama treated every American industry the way it does solar and wind power (subsidies aside), the U.S. economy would be growing faster and the unemployment rate would fall below 8.3%. Just a thought.

5. How Ethanol Causes Joblessness

The corn fuel lobby is flacking a dubious economic study.

Editorial, WSJ, Aug 17, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444184704577589812320819988.html?mod=W_SJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop

Our indefatigable friend Bob Dinneen—the ethanol lobby's old reliable—is back with a nearby letter, and as always we're more than happy to give him his say. But just as the Renewable Fuels Association president never lets any claim about his industry slip by unchallenged, a word or two is in order about his line that ethanol lowers gas prices.

Not least because Mr. Dinneen's trade group is running an ad campaign across the Midwest asserting that the ethanol mandate reduced the price of a gallon of fuel by 89 cents in 2010 and \$1.09 in 2011. That is, the average U.S. price at the pump of \$3.52 last year would have been \$4.61 without the mandate. What a deal!

The source for these remarkable claims, which Obama Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has also mentioned in a few speeches, is a series of papers by economists Xiaodong Du and Dermot Hayes. But they've turned out to be the corn stover of academic research, if that's not an insult to corn stover.

Mr. Hayes of Iowa State University and Mr. Du of the University of Wisconsin use monthly data about ethanol production and the profit margin of oil refiners—known as the crack spread—to

estimate the relationship between the two variables. The major problem is that ethanol production over the period the duo studied increased more or less steadily thanks to the mandate. Crack spreads also showed a steady trend because of the world oil markets.

If economists compare one steady trend to another steady trend without the right statistical controls, they can easily conclude that one trend was caused by the other even if they have no causal relationship in the real world. We're borrowing here from the details in a new paper by MIT economist Christopher Knittel and the University of California Davis's Aaron Smith, who demolish this "classic example of spurious correlation."

The claim that ethanol cuts gas prices is so silly that Messrs. Knittel and Smith have a little fun. To show how silly, they take "the same empirical models" Messrs. Du and Hayes used and replace the crack spread with the unemployment rate. The model then "proves" that if the U.S. had eliminated ethanol production in 2010, joblessness would have plunged by 60%, a finding that is statistically significant.

Of course, their practical joke only shows that unemployment was rising when ethanol was also rising, even though ethanol has little to do with jobs. Whatever trend you plug into this model, ethanol becomes the cause. They use the model to show that every million barrels of ethanol cause Mr. Knittel's daughter Caiden to become 26 days older, while eliminating ethanol in 2010 would have caused Mr. Smith's daughter Hayley to have a negative age.

The MIT paper also documents the many ways in which the Iowa State authors mangle the basic economics of the oil industry, and it concludes that using better models suggests that the causal effects of ethanol on gas prices are "near zero and statistically insignificant." Something to remember when you see that next TV ad pushing ethanol as a free lunch.

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