

The Week That Was: 2012-1-07 (January 7, 2012)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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SEPP / VA-SEEE Forum: January 23, 7 pm Mathews County, VA, Cornerstone Fellowship Church, 2243 Buckley Hall Road, Cobbs Creek, Va. Speakers include SEPP President Fred Singer, Dr. Charles Battig, and SEPP Exec. VP Ken Haapala. Topics include: status of global warming science and the divergence between models and observations. Why global models, even if modified for regional conditions, are unsuitable for local and regional planning. Agenda 21 and how to contest UN and Federal control over local land use issues.

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Joyous News: Fred Singer will be traveling to the Southwest and West US to spread the joyous news that the NIPCC Reports are correct and the IPCC models do not conform to observations. Humanity has little to fear from the false claims of unprecedented and dangerous global warming. Although his schedule is not final, his stops include: Houston-Austin from Feb 6 to 8; Southern California from Feb 8 to 12, with a talk at Chapman University on Feb 9, additional meeting in San Diego from on February 13 & 14 and the key Sigma Xi lecture at the University of New Mexico on Feb 16.

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Quote of the Week:

"The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government." --Thomas Jefferson, letter to The Republican Citizens of Washington County, Maryland, 1809 [Concept dating to Aristotle.]

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Number of the Week: \$500 Million in any year

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THIS WEEK:

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

EPA Skinning the Cat: After cap-and-trade failed to pass the Senate controlled by his own party, President Obama famously stated there is more than one way to skin the cat. The cat, of course, is the American public and its use of energy. The preferred skinner is the EPA, which has launched a series of intensified regulations to drive up the cost of energy use to the public, emphasizing the consumption of electricity from coal fired utility plants. As described in prior TWTWs (e.g. July 9, Aug 6), the EPA rule for cross-state emissions was one such example of skinning the cat that depended on double and triple counting of its benefits. The benefits largely came from reductions of emissions from soot, which are controlled by a totally separate set of regulations. The other set of supposed benefits are a reduction of "acidic gases", namely sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxides. The claim is that reducing these gases will reduce new cases of childhood asthma, yet the statistical relationship between these gases and asthma is the opposite of what EPA claims. These cross-state regulations are now tied up in court.

The latest EPA effort to skin the cat are the new Mercury and Air Toxics rules (Utility MACT) announced just before Christmas. These include the double and triple accounting as the prior rules but also include the supposed benefits of reduction in mercury. And herein is the tale of two islands.

As published in the Wall Street Journal, and elsewhere, Willie Soon analyzed the proposed mercury rules. Below is a brief summary of one point in the Soon study. Mercury is a naturally occurring metal, found in the earth, seas, and the atmosphere. For many years mercury was used in thermometers, oral, indoor, and outside. It is used in fluorescent light bulbs. Certain compounds of mercury are toxic to humans, but humans evolved certain defenses against it.

A study of the mercury level in the blood of residents of the Faroe Islands, in the Norwegian Sea between Scotland and Iceland, indicated that the children may suffer from impaired cognitive functions from their mothers eating large amounts of seafood and having a certain level of mercury in their blood as a result.

A study of the mercury level of the residents of the Seychelles Islands off the east coast of Africa, the Seychelles Children Development Study, found no such impaired cognitive functions even though the residents eat large amounts of sea food. Similarly, no impaired cognitive functions have been found in populations of other nations consuming large amounts of sea food – except where toxins have been dumped into the local waters.

A scientific organization would have explored the difference between the eating habits of the residents of the Faroe Islands and the Seychelles Islands, and, perhaps, discovered that the residents of the Faroe Islands eat fish and whale meat and blubber where the residents of the Seychelles Islands eat fish but no whale meat and blubber. It turns out that whale meat and blubber are heavy in other toxins and have little selenium which binds to mercury and renders it largely non-toxic to humans.

The EPA did not perform a rigorous independent study of the science used in making its new rules. The EPA chose the Faroe Islands study to substantiate its pronouncements on acceptable mercury levels and ignored the Seychelles Islands study. Of course, Americans eat virtually no whale meat and blubber. Please see links under “EPA and other Regulators on the March.” The complete Soon report can be found at: http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/reprint/scientific_reply.pdf

Number of the Week: \$500 Million in any year. In the report on the Endangerment Rule (ER) that greenhouse gas emissions endanger human health and welfare, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the EPA stated that a highly influential scientific assessment is one that could have a potential impact of more than \$500 million in any year. The OIG found the EPA failed to meet the necessary scientific review required under the Data Quality Act for its Endangerment Rule. Estimates for the costs of the new Utility MACT rules range from \$10 Billion up to \$100 Billion. Yet, the EPA failed to perform a rigorous review of the science used to justify the rules.

http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore_id=e0584e33-d3da-4fba-b95a-e93

Quote of the Week: Based on the view of Thomas Jefferson, it appears the EPA has lost its legitimate object.

Litigation Issues: The oral arguments for the SEPP / CEI et al, lawsuit against the EPA for its finding that carbon dioxide emissions endanger human health and welfare are scheduled for February 28 and 29 (the leap year date when things are turned around). The earliest decision will probably be mid-summer. No doubt, the losing parties will appeal to the Supreme Court.

Sea Ice: In his classic, *Climate, History, and the Modern World*, HH Lamb suggested that Arctic sea ice may undergo cyclical changes for reasons not understood. For the past several summers alarmists warn that the disappearing sea ice is proof of global warming, implying the cause is carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. According to the Danish Meteorological Institute, Centre for Ocean and Ice (DMI), since 1978 the trend has been a reduction in September sea ice extent with the lowest year being 2007. For the last half of 2011 the sea ice extent remained generally above of 2007.

According to the measurements taken by DMI since 1958, at or above 80 degrees north latitude, the summer temperatures have remained remarkably similar but recent winter temperatures have been warmer than in the past. The sea ice is not freezing as thick or extensively in the winter, leading to reductions in the extent in the summer. Further, satellite observations show that the extent of the multi-

year sea ice is declining and shifting in location. One may be prompted to state this is the result of classic greenhouse warming – an increase of the low temperatures in arid regions such as winters in the Arctic.

However, as with everything else concerning the earth’s climate, it appears not to be that simple. This week an article was published in *Nature* that discusses changes in the circulation of the fresh water entering the Arctic Ocean from rivers in Russia. These waters appear to be flowing more towards the Pacific (counter-clockwise) than usual. The suggested cause is changes in the intensity of the Arctic Oscillation – defined by the US National Snow and Ice Data Center as “opposing atmospheric pressure patterns in northern middle and high latitudes.

“The oscillation exhibits a "negative phase" with relatively high pressure over the polar region and low pressure at midlatitudes (about 45 degrees North), and a "positive phase" in which the pattern is reversed. In the positive phase, higher pressure at midlatitudes drives ocean storms farther north, and changes in the circulation pattern bring wetter weather to Alaska, Scotland and Scandinavia, as well as drier conditions to the western United States and the Mediterranean. In the positive phase, frigid winter air does not extend as far into the middle of North America as it would during the negative phase of the oscillation. This keeps much of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains warmer than normal, but leaves Greenland and Newfoundland colder than usual. Weather patterns in the negative phase are in general "opposite" to those of the positive phase, as illustrated below.

“Over most of the past century, the Arctic Oscillation alternated between its positive and negative phases. **Starting in the 1970s, however, the oscillation has tended to stay in the positive phase, causing lower than normal arctic air pressure and higher than normal temperatures in much of the United States and northern Eurasia.**” [Boldface added.] http://nsidc.org/arcticmet/patterns/arctic_oscillation.html

If this is not sufficiently complicated, one can add the study of “Solar activity and Svalbard temperatures” linked in the December 17 TWTW. <http://arxiv.org/abs/1112.3256>. The strongest relationship appears to be in the winter – when the sun is below the horizon.

These issues remain to be sorted out, but at this time one can safely say that there is much more to climate change than increasing CO2. Please see links under “Changing Sea Ice.”

The Cart Before the Horse: Much has been written about the failures of companies that received loan guarantees from the Department of Energy (DOE). But little has been written about how ineptly the loan guarantee program was conducted. The Federal Government largely ignored critical, basic research and funded industries that needed a technology that was not yet developed. For example, breakthroughs in battery storage are needed before electric and hybrid automobiles become viable alternatives to the gasoline engine. Autos (electric, hybrid, natural gas) received \$9.1 Billion in loan guarantees – however an effective battery is yet to be developed.

To become viable on the grid, solar and wind generation needs to be competitive and reliable. Mass electricity storage is critically needed. DOE gave \$30 Billion in loan guarantees to companies involved with solar manufacturing (PV panels), wind generation, solar generation (large scale plants). DOE \$20 Million for grid level battery storage and \$40 Million for energy storage (a project that went bankrupt) – 500 times as much to applications than to the basic research on the technology needed to make the applications viable.

A Henry Ford would be appalled by such an impractical waste. Without mandates or subsidies the nation can expect many other bankruptcies in the future. Please see links under “Energy Issues.”

SEPP Amplification and Correction: Last week we failed to attribute quote of the week regarding the electricity needed for electric cars largely comes from coal fired power plants [about 45%] to Thomas Sowell.

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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. Fake! Fake! Fake! Fake!

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Jan 2, 2012

http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/01/fake_fake_fake_fake.html

2. EPA Rules Causing Plant Closures

By Charles Battig, VA-SEEE, Letter, WSJ, Jan 5, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204720204577130940380931240.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_MIDDLEThirdBucket

3. American Heads in the Shale About China

Huge Chinese gas investments are flying under the radar of the U.S. Congress.

By Alisa Newman Hood, WSJ, Jan 5, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203471004577140274055422942.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTTopBucket

4. Renewable Fuel Standards Formula For Global Poverty

Editorial, IBD, Jan 4, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/Article/596771/201201041839/appointments-show-obama-more-king-than-president.htm>

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

Dr Phil, Confidential Agent: Re-visited

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Jan 3, 2012

<http://climateaudit.org/2012/01/03/dr-phil-confidential-agent-re-visited/#more-15356>

[SEPP Comment: Contradicting . the claim in the New York Times that the team did not have time to respond to Freedom of Information requests, the team made various untrue statements to avoid disclosure of data.]

Person or Persons of Interest

Police Inquiry Prompts New Speculation on Who Leaked Climate-Change E-Mails

By Leslie Kaufman, NYT, Jan 1, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/02/science/earth/new-speculation-on-who-leaked-climate-change-e-mails.html?_r=1

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Scafetta: IPCC Warming Claim Is “Erroneous...IPCC Projections For The 21st Century Cannot Be Trusted”

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Jan 5, 2012 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

<http://notrickszone.com/2012/01/05/scafetta-ipcc-warming-claim-is-erroneous-ipcc-projections-for-the-21st-century-cannot-be-trusted/>

[SEPP Comment: See a review of the paper under NIPCC reports below.]

Progress: Canadian Senate Listens to Global Warming Skeptics

Global warming orthodoxy gets challenged in a first-of-its-kind hearing.

By Tom Harris, PJ Media, Jan 2, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://pjmedia.com/blog/progress-canadian-senate-listens-to-global-warming-skeptics/>

[SEPP Comment: Summary with links of testimony by four Canadian scientists to the Canadian Senate (which has little actual powers). The testimony of Ross McKittrick was linked in the Dec 17 TWTW.]

The World's Slowest Learners

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Dec 31, 2011

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2011/12/31/the-worlds-slowest-learners/>

[SEPP Comment: Hundreds of billions spent, 20 years wasted, to justify an assumption that was wrong: atmospheric carbon dioxide is the major cause of climate change.]

What Financial Meltdowns Teach Us About the IPCC

When I describe the weird world of climate science to people who are strangers to that world I know it sounds fantastical. But there are strong parallels with the recently destroyed economies of Iceland, Greece, and Ireland.

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Jan 5, 2012

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/01/05/what-financial-meltdowns-teach-us-about-the-ipcc/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Report says global climate deal hinges on Obama reelection

Prospects for striking a binding global climate deal by 2015 are probably toast if President Obama loses in November.

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Jan 5, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/202539-report-global-climate-deal-hinges-on-obama-reelection->

Questioning the Orthodoxy

U.S. Taxpayers Cover Nearly Half the Cost of U.N.'s Global Warming Panel

By Elizabeth Harrington, CNS News, Jan 3, 2012

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/us-taxpayers-cover-nearly-half-cost-un-s-global-warming-panel>

[SEPP Comment: It is good to see some news services are realizing the IPCC depends on US funding. The \$31 million does not include the \$107 Billion the GAO reported went to climate initiatives, including \$31 Billion to climate science alone from 1993 to 2010. See TWTW June 25, 2011, Oct 1, 2011, and Dec 31, 2011.]

Comments On The Scientifically Flawed EOS Article “What Do U.S. Students Know About Climate Change.

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Jan 5, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/01/05/comments-on-the-scientifically-flawed-eos-article-what-do-u-s-students-know-about-climate-change-by-kevin-m-theissen/>

Questioning European Green

Britain's Shift In Green Rhetoric Signals End Of Green Consensus

“There is a clear disintegration of the green consensus,” says Benny Peiser, director of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, a critic of many climate policies.

By Pilita Clark and Sylvia Pfeifer, Financial Times, Jan 4, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/uk-news/4676-britains-shift-in-green-rhetoric-signals-end-of-green-consensus.html>

New year, same issues

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Jan 6, 2012

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/new-year-same-issues>

[SEPP Comment: Possible decline of the influence environmental organizations have on energy issues.]

Solar industry faces months of 'paralysis'

By Staff Writers, SPX, Jan 05, 2012

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/Solar_industry_faces_months_of_paralysis_999.html

[SEPP Comment: "One of the brightest sectors in the UK economy" seeks a "sustainable new subsidy level." Bright for whom?]

Problems within the Orthodoxy

EU grows renewable-supplied energy share

By Staff Writers, UPI, Jan 4, 2012

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/EU_grows_renewable-supplied_energy_share_999.html

Seeking a Common Ground

NSF's New Research Funding Solicitation – “Decadal and Regional Climate Prediction Using Earth System Models” – A Mix Of Scientifically Robust And Flawed Goals

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Jan 2, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/01/02/nsfs-new-research-funding-solicitation-decadal-and-regional-climate-prediction-using-earth-system-models-a-mixed-set-of-goals/>

Beyond smoke and mirrors: the middle ground

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Jan 2, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/01/02/beyond-smoke-and-mirrors-the-middle-ground/#more-6402>

[SEPP Comment: Discussion of a new book with the above title by Stanford Physicist and Nobel Laureate Burton Richter which comes to conclusions similar to those of Robert Bryce in Power Hungry. Much of the discussion of wind and solar is pure promotion. The holy grail for wind and solar is grid scale storage to which SEPP would add transmission to the east coast. Until that is accomplished, using coal, natural gas, then nuclear seem to be the answer.]

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

Still Searching for Republicans With Climate Concerns

By Andrew Revkin, Dot Earth, Jan 5, 2012

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/05/still-searching-for-republicans-with-climate-concerns/?ref=science>

[SEPP Comment: A classic example of Petitio Principii – other than recognizing climate change is normal and natural, and humans influence local and regional climate, what are science-based statements on climate? Certainly statements based on the products of unverified numerical models, that failed to project the current trend of no warming, are not science-based. Appealing to the questionable authority of the IPCC is not science-based.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

A curiosity from Slingo's paper

Here's something else from Julia Slingo's briefing to central government that caught my eye:

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jan 5, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.bishop-hill.net/blog/2012/1/5/a-curiosity-from-slingos-paper.html>

Models v. Observations

Computers Incapable of Modeling Climate: Billions Wasted To Perpetuate Deception

By Tim Ball, His Blog, Jan 3, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/computers-incapable-of-modeling-climate-billions-wasted-to-perpetuate-deception/>

It doesn't matter how big or fast the computer is – the data to build or test it doesn't exist.

Changing Weather

Don't put all your eggs in one basket

By Staff Writers, SPX, Jan 03, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Dont_put_all_your_eggs_in_one_basket_999.html

Recommended Reading “Hurricanes and Global Warming” By Christopher W. Landsea

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Jan 3, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/01/03/recommended-reading-hurricanes-and-global-warming-by-christopher-w-landsea/>

Changing Climate

Antarctic Temperature Trends

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Jan 3, 2012

<http://www.worldclimaterreport.com/index.php/2012/01/03/antarctic-temperature-trends/>

[SEPP Comment: The claimed Antarctic warming is not general to the continent.]

Changing Seas

Shock News : Sea Level Almost As High As Eight Years Ago

By Steve Goddard, Real Science, Dec 30, 2011 [H/t Anthony Watts, WUWT]

<http://www.real-science.com/shock-news-sea-level-high-years>

[SEPP Comment: But can one draw an immediate trend to the saw-tooth pattern?]

Changing Sea Ice

Current Sea Ice extent

By Staff Writers, DMI, Jan 3, 2012

<http://ocean.dmi.dk/arctic/icecover.uk.php>

[SEPP Comment: The link goes to both Arctic sea ice and Arctic temperatures.]

Russian river water unexpected culprit behind Arctic freshening

By Staff Writers, SPX, Jan 05, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Russian_river_water_unexpected_culprit_behind_Arctic_freshening_999.html

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Climate change 'will boost British farmers'

Climate change will be good for British farming, according to Caroline Spelman, the Environment Secretary, with exotic crops such as melons already thriving.

By Staff Writers, Telegraph, UK, Jan 6, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/8996412/Climate-change-will-boost-British-farmers.html>

Litigation Issues

Federal Court Blocks Implementation of CSAPR

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Jan 4, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4290.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2355702&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e660500d0

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Energy fact of the week: Exporting ethanol?

By Steven F. Hayward, The American, Dec 27, 2011

<http://blog.american.com/2011/12/energy-fact-of-the-week-exporting-ethanol/>

A new year in ethanol

By M.S. The Economist, Dec 31, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2011/12/subsidies-end?fsrc=scn/fb/wl/bl/anewyearinethanol>

[SEPP Comment: The subsidy ends but the mandates continue.]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

MILLOY: EPA's statistics not science, but nonsense

Next to China's, agency's air quality numbers don't add up

By Steve Milloy, Washington Times, Jan 5, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jan/5/epas-statistics-not-science-but-nonsense/>

[SEPP Comment: See study below.]

Fine Particulate Matter Constituents and Cardiopulmonary Mortality in a Heavily Polluted Chinese City

By Junji Cao, Hongmei Xu, Qun Xu, Bingheng Chen, Haidong Kan, Environmental Health Perspectives, Jan 3, 2012

<http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/fetchArticle.action?articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1103671>

Beware EPA Bearing Gifts

By James H. Rust, Somewhat Reasonable, Jan 5, 2012

<http://blog.heartland.org/2012/01/beware-epa-bearing-gifts/>

AES New York Subsidiary Declares Bankruptcy on Coal Woes

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Dec 4, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4291.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2355702&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e660500d0

A Coal-Fired Plant That Is Eager for U.S. Rules

By Matthew Wald, NYT, Jan 5, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/06/business/energy-environment/constellation-energy-coal-company-urges-stricter-pollution-rules.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha25

[SEPP Comments: Utilities with state mandates desire all utilities have such mandates.]

Energy Issues

Energy fact of the week: Who got the money?

By Steven F. Hayward, The American, Dec 22, 2011

<http://blog.american.com/2011/12/energy-fact-of-the-week-who-got-the-money/>

[SEPP Comment: Battery and energy storage are largely ignored and transmission gets little.]

PetroChina seals Canadian oil sands deal

By Staff Writers, UPI, Jan 4, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/PetroChina_seals_Canadian_oil_sands_deal_999.html

DOI Approves Renewable Projects in Calif., Ore.

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Jan 4, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4294.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2355702&hq_l=7&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: A great display of preference bureaucracy. Imagine if the transmission lines involved coal fired plants.]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Shale Storm

By Andrew Michta, American Interest, Jan 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=1168>

Administration's Control of Oil and Gas

Obama's War on U.S. Energy

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Jan 1, 2012

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2012/01/obamas-war-on-us-energy.html>

Latin oil supplies for U.S. start to dry up

Canadian pipeline can fill gap

By Patrice Hill, Washington Times, Jan 2, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jan/2/latin-oil-supplies-for-us-start-to-dry-up/>

[SEPP Comment: US energy starvation is the goal of the environmentalists including President Obama.]

The Keystone XL pipeline—a line in the sand for America's future

By Marita Noon, Townhall, Jan 1, 2012

http://finance.townhall.com/columnists/maritanoon/2012/01/01/the_keystone_xl_pipeline_line_in_the_sand_for_americas_future/page/full/

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Fault lines in Japanese nuclear regime

By Staff Writers, WNN, Dec 30, 2011

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/RS_Fault_lines_in_Japanese_nuclear_regime_3012111.html?utm_source=World+Nuclear+News&utm_campaign=ab696a3263-WNN_Weekly_20_December_2011_2_January_2012_3_2012&utm_medium=email

[SEPP Comment: One of the lessons that is being poorly learned about Fukushima is the scope of the infrastructure wipe-out from the tsunami was far beyond what was planned. More than the earthquake, the tsunami created the nuclear disaster.]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy

On-Grid Solar: An Industry in Plight (Government-dependence perils)

By David Bergeron, Master Resource, Jan 6, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/01/on-grid-solar-plight/>

The truth is even if China could sell panels to installers for 1¢/watt, the systems would still be too expensive. Even with free PV, the cost of installation, mounting structure, inverters, wiring, etc. make the systems financially unsustainable.

[SEPP Comment: From the president of a company that supplies solar panels for special uses world-wide.]

2012 Global Solar Market Outlook

By Staff Writers, SPX, Jan 05, 2012

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/2012_Global_Solar_Market_Outlook_999.html

[SEPP Comment: As subsidies decline, a big shake out in the industry.]

Storehouses for Solar Energy Can Step In When the Sun Goes Down

By Matthew Wald, NYT, Jan 2, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/03/business/energy-environment/building-storehouses-for-the-suns-energy-for-use-after-dark.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha25

A Honda Civic Lesson

All hybrid makers are now vulnerable to lawsuits for “false advertising.”

<http://spectator.org/archives/2012/01/06/honda-civic-lesson>

[SEPP Comment: EPA promotion and mileage figures will not protect them.]

Taxpayers' Leaf: Four Recharging Stops Needed to Go 180 Miles

By Paul Chesser, NLPC, Jan 3, 2012

<http://nlpc.org/stories/2011/12/29/taxpayers-leaf-four-recharging-stops-needed-go-180-miles>

California Dreaming

Advisory group recommends withholding billions for high-speed rail

By Will Reisman, SF Examiner, Jan 4, 2012

<http://www.sfexaminer.com/local/transportation/2012/01/advisory-group-recommends-withholding-billions-high-speed-rail>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Empirical Harmonic Models Project "Sunnier" Climate Scenarios Ahead

Reference: Scafetta, N. 2012. Testing an astronomically based decadal-scale empirical harmonic climate model versus the IPCC (2007) general circulation models. *Journal of Atmospheric and Solar Terrestrial Physics* doi:10.1016/j.jastp.2011.12.005.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/3jan2012a2.html>

Comparing Earth's Sea-Level and Energy Budgets

Reference: Church, J.A., White, N.J., Konikow, L.F., Domingues, C.M., Cogley, J.G., Rignot, E., Gregory, J.M., van den Broeke, M.R., Monaghan, A.J. and Velicogna, I. 2011. Revisiting the earth's sea-level and energy budgets from 1961 to 2008. *Geophysical Research Letters* 38: 10.1029/2011GL048794.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/3jan2012a1.html>

ENSO Variability Over the Past Millennium

Reference: Khider, D., Stott, L.D., Emile-Geay, J., Thunell, R. and Hammond, D.E. 2011. Assessing El Niño Southern Oscillation variability during the past millennium. *Paleoceanography* 26: 10.1029/2011PA002139.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/3jan2012a4.html>

Nearly Half a Millennium of Antarctic Temperatures

Reference: Thamban, M., Laluraj, C.M., Naik, S.S. and Chaturvedi, A. 2011. Reconstruction of Antarctic climate change using ice core proxy records from coastal Dronning Maud Land, East Antarctica. *Journal of the Geological Society of India* 78: 19-29.
<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/4jan2012a3.html>

Other Scientific News

Rare Moon mineral found in Australia

By Staff Writer, AFP, Jan 5, 2012
http://www.moondaily.com/reports/Rare_Moon_mineral_found_in_Australia_999.html
[SEPP Comment: More fodder for the alien visitors crowd.]

Other News that May Be of Interest

Happy New Leap Year 2012

The most urgent challenge facing mankind is that every 3,200 years, we move Spring by one day.
By Lubos Motl, The Reference Frame, Jan 1, 2012
<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/01/happy-new-leap-year-2012.html>
[SEPP Comment: A humble petition to the UN to address a far more challenging problem than the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All.]

Another Chronic Fatigue Study Retracted

After Science pulls the original article linking a mouse virus to the chronic fatigue syndrome, PNAS follows suit, yanking the only other study supporting the link.
By Bob Grant, The Scientist, Jan 3, 2012 [H/t Catherine French]
<http://the-scientist.com/2012/01/03/another-chronic-fatigue-study-retracted/>

How one man got away with mass fraud by saying ‘trust me, it’s science’

By Joseph Breaun, National Post, Dec 30, 2011
<http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/12/30/how-one-man-got-away-with-mass-fraud-by-saying-trust-me-its-science/>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Ethical Analysis of the Climate Change Disinformation Campaign: Introduction to A Series.

By Donald Brown, Climate Ethics, Penn State, Jan 3, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]
<http://rockblogs.psu.edu/climate/2012/01/ethical-analysis-of-the-climate-change-disinformation-campaign-introduction-to-a-series.html>

The 2011 Climate B.S.* of the Year Awards

[*B.S. means “Bad Science.” What did you think it meant?]
By Peter Gleick, Forbes, Jan 5, 2012 [H/t Joe Best]
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/petergleick/2012/01/05/the-2011-climate-b-s-of-the-year-awards/>
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ARTICLES:

1. Fake! Fake! Fake! Fake!

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Jan 2, 2012
http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/01/fake_fake_fake_fake.html

In discussing the recent release of some 5,000 Climategate e-mails, blogger Anthony Watts uses the clever headline "They are real -- and they're spectacular." He credits Jerry Seinfeld as the source. Following his example, I choose the headline "Fake! Fake! Fake! Fake!" -- also taken from

a *Seinfeld* episode -- in discussing the surface temperatures generally reported for the latter part of the 20th century; they form the science basis for prosperity-killing international climate policy.

Here I am using the word "fake" as an adjective, and not as a verb. I mean to say that the scientific conclusions derived from such temperatures are *not real*, but I don't imply that the values themselves have been purposefully altered or adjusted. We simply don't have any information to support such an accusation.

But I do claim that the commonly reported and accepted warming between 1978 and 2000 is based only on thermometers from land surface stations and is not supported by any other evidence that I could find. Specifically, ocean data (from 71% of the earth's surface) and global atmospheric data (as recorded by satellites and independent balloon-borne radiosondes) do not show such a warming at all. In addition, most proxy data, from non-thermometer sources such as tree rings, ocean sediments, ice cores, stalagmites, etc., show no warming during this same crucial period. (One has to be careful in this analysis since the year 1998 shows a major warming spike caused by a Super-El Niño. But by 1999 and 2000, temperatures had returned to pre-1998 values.)

Now, I am well aware of the fact that the recent release of the temperature data from the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature (BEST) project does show a warming trend from 1978 to 2000. Many would jump to the conclusion that this represents confirmation of the existence of global warming -- or even of anthropogenic global warming (AGW). However, that would be an error in logic.

What the BEST result shows is that surface thermometers from the land area of the globe (about 29% of the earth's surface) show a warming trend. But this is not *global* warming. And BEST director Professor Rich Muller explicitly disclaims that his trend results indicate a human cause.

He also correctly points out that many of the weather stations used are badly distributed, mostly in the U.S. and western Europe, and possibly subject to local heating effects, such as urban heat islands. He cautions that a third of his monitoring stations show a cooling, not a warming. And that 70% of the U.S. stations are poorly situated and don't satisfy the requirements of the U.S. Weather Service. It is likely that stations elsewhere have similar problems.

While we can applaud the fact that the BEST results agree with other analyses of weather station data, we still need to explain why they don't agree with atmospheric trends that are close to zero, or with ocean data that show no appreciable warming.

As a first step, the BEST data are ideally suited for a number of internal checks. For example, one would like to see if the number of stations changed appreciably between 1970 and 2000, and if their "demographics" changed -- which might lead to the formation of artificial trends.

There are many other such tests that can be performed. They might help us discover why land surface data disagree with all other data; thereby, we may get a better handle on whether the planet is really warming. We note here that the BEST results do not show any warming trend in the 21st century -- even though carbon dioxide levels have been rising more rapidly than before.

Note again: Professor Muller and his colleagues do not claim that their results indicate a human source for warming -- unlike the IPCC, the U.N. Science Panel, which has claimed to be 90%-99% sure that the late-20th century warming is anthropogenic. But if there is no warming between 1978 and 2000, then IPCC's case collapses -- and so do all policies built on the IPCC conclusion.

But this whole matter has really moved beyond any academic discussion. Industrialized nations that signed the Kyoto Protocol (including the U.S., which did not ratify) have already wasted hundreds of

billions of dollars on policies based on the acceptance of the IPCC claim that greenhouse gases (mainly carbon dioxide from the burning of oil, gas, and coal) are responsible for a reported warming -- which may not even exist.

(By now it should be obvious that [1] the enshrined temperature limit of +2 degC [beyond which climate disasters are supposed to set in] is based on fiction and has no scientific basis. As an annual global average temperature, so climate models tell us, it would mean warmer winter nights in Siberia and Canada -- perhaps -35 degrees instead of -40 -- and little warming in the tropics. [2] It should also be obvious that even strenuous and economy-killing efforts at mitigation will have little effect on atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, let alone on climate. If a demonstration is needed, just look at the lack of warming since 1998, in spite of rapidly rising levels of greenhouse gases.)

As is evident from the Climategate e-mails, a small group of scientists, mainly in the U.K. and U.S., have managed to freeze out contrary evidence from being published in the scientific literature or in IPCC reports. The self-described "Team" members brazenly discuss strategies and action plans to further "The Cause." Unfortunately, they have largely succeeded -- and continue to influence publications, thanks to some key journalists and editors. In consequence of this [evident conspiracy](#), it is hardly surprising that politicians, the media, and the general public are receiving entirely wrong information about supposedly catastrophic effects of a future warming.

The just-concluded Durban conference, the 17th in an annual series, demonstrates clearly that the whole discussion is no longer about science, but instead is all about money. 1) How to assure continuing government careers for nearly 200 delegations, with annual vacations paid by taxpayers. (2) How to transfer \$100 billion a year from industrialized nations to LDCs (or more precisely, to their kleptocratic rulers), using "climate justice" or "climate guilt" (depending on who is doing the talking). (3) How to gain a national advantage by setting differential emission limits of CO₂ -- supposedly to keep the planet from reaching a "dangerous" level of warming.

Durban did succeed in extending Kyoto till 2015 -- presumably to allow time to fashion a successor protocol to include all nations. But it is a hollow victory. Russia and Japan have already announced that they are not continuing -- and Canada is formally withdrawing from Kyoto. In the U.S., the White House has never submitted Kyoto to the Democrat-controlled Senate for ratification. Instead, as promised, Obama is using indirect ways to "skin the cat" and make "electricity prices skyrocket" -- relying on EPA regulations to destroy domestic coal as a boiler fuel.

Yet hope springs eternal in the hearts of true warmistas that China, by far the largest emitter of carbon dioxide, will join a future protocol in 2015. In Durban, China's chief climate negotiator Xie ZhenHua dropped all kinds of hints that China might be willing to join a second commitment period of emission targets -- provided certain conditions are met. Not surprisingly, a number of environmental activists have taken the bait and really believe that China is willing to sacrifice economic growth to satisfy the elusive goal of controlling global warming.

Within the United States, and also elsewhere, global warming scares have become a means of transferring taxpayer money to politically influential cronies. There is now so much "crony capitalism" that it would be difficult to reverse or even stop the ongoing subsidies, outright grants, tax breaks, and other transfers to privileged groups.

Time is becoming short. We're reaching a tipping point -- not of the earth's climate, but of the financial schemes that permanently divert funds from productive activities into wasteful ones, all in the name of "saving the climate." The results are evident: higher levels of spending, deficits, or taxes; higher prices for energy and electricity and therefore for all manufactured goods; less productive activity; less employment; and more misery.

It seems odd that all of this is essentially based on a fake -- the data that seem to show a (nonexistent) warming. It will be difficult to overturn this notion, but we must keep trying.

2. EPA Rules Causing Plant Closures

By Charles Battig, VA-SEEE, Letter, WSJ, Jan 5, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204720204577130940380931240.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_MIDDLEThirdBucket

Economist Julian Simon had a term for it: "false bad news." Nicole Lederer's Dec. 29 letter "New Pollution Rules Will Benefit Business" blends false good news with false bad news to produce imagined business and health benefits.

The new EPA rules for air-quality standards are already having their (intended) effect on coal-fired power plants. These companies are announcing numerous plant closures and eliminating jobs. These losses are neglected by Ms. Lederer's rosy predictions of thousands of new construction jobs.

The statement that "coal-fired power plants produce about half of all mercury" is scientifically vacuous and misleading. Tell us please, half of what total mercury sources? Where is the missing comparison? "The Myth of Killer Mercury" by Willie Soon and Paul Driessen (op-ed, May 25, 2011) presents the relative mercury contributions from various sources—U.S. coal-fired plants, about 41-48 tons per year; forest fires, about 44 tons per year; Chinese power plants, 400 tons per year, while recurring geological events such as volcanoes and geysers emit 9,000-10,000 tons per year. With these missing pieces of information, the U.S. power plant contribution of mercury is closer to a 0.5% value than the "half of all mercury" claim by Ms. Lederer.

Would that Ms. Lederer and the Environmental Entrepreneurs expend an equal amount of environmental anguish over placing compact fluorescent lamp bulbs indoors in homes, schools and factories. These mercury-containing, stealth-pollution bulbs bring the mercury threat right into your living room and nursery. Computer-generated illusory health benefits while neglecting real-world mercury bombs at home is "real" bad news.

Charles Battig
Scientists and Engineers for Energy and Environment-Virginia
Charlottesville, Va.

3. American Heads in the Shale About China

Huge Chinese gas investments are flying under the radar of the U.S. Congress.

By Alisa Newman Hood, WSJ, Jan 5, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203471004577140274055422942.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTTopBucket

China's state-owned oil companies are snapping up large minority stakes in some of the biggest shale gas plays and supporting industries in the United States. On Tuesday, Sinopec announced a \$2.5 billion deal with Devon Energy to extend fracking to five new areas. Yet the U.S. Congress has been silent on the implications of these investments for the country's energy security.

As the Journal reported last month, Cnooc and Sinopec have entered the race to buy a 30% stake in FTS International, a U.S. shale gas services company. This bid follows Cnooc's January 2011 purchase of a one-third stake in Chesapeake Energy's shale developments in Wyoming and Colorado and, more notably, its October 2010 purchase of a similar stake in the massive Eagle Ford shale development in Texas, again from Chesapeake.

The development of shale gas resources is poised to transform the U.S. natural gas market. It has already helped drive prices and imports to decade-long lows and led to a surge in employment in the states where it is most plentiful: Texas, North Dakota and Pennsylvania.

So it's incredible that Congress has evinced virtually no interest in Chinese investment in U.S. shale. To anyone who followed the noisily unsuccessful 2005 takeover of Unocal by Cnooc, this is incomprehensible.

More importantly, every minute of silence from Congress represents a lost opportunity to exert pressure on Beijing for the benefit of American companies. A vigorous exploration by Congress of Chinese investment in U.S. shale could help pry open similar opportunities for U.S. investment in China.

Back in the summer of 2005, when Cnooc announced its bid for Unocal, such was the outcry that one might have suspected the Chinese were bidding for Los Alamos rather than a midsize U.S. oil company. The House Armed Services Committee hastily convened a hearing, at which the proposed Chinese investment was the source of intense, at times shrill, debate.

James Woolsey, CIA director in the Clinton administration, testified, "China is pursuing a national strategy of domination of the energy markets and strategic dominance of the western Pacific." The controversy generated no fewer than four separate bills in Congress, including an overwhelming 333-92 vote by the House to block any Bush administration approval of the takeover.

As a result of the uproar, Cnooc withdrew its bid, paving the way for U.S. oil giant Chevron to acquire Unocal. In 2007, Congress passed the Foreign Investment and National Security Act, which added "energy assets" to the purview of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, the executive branch body under the Treasury Department responsible for reviewing and approving foreign investment in strategic U.S. assets.

Six years and one massive economic downturn later, Congress is nowhere to be found. There have been no debates, no resolutions and no angry rhetoric. Cnooc's 2010 acquisition of the Texas shale stake even sailed through its CFIUS review.

The silence is even stranger when one considers the assets at stake. Unocal was not much more than a bit player on the U.S. energy scene. At the time of the takeover bid, it contributed less than 1% of U.S. oil and gas production. Its major producing assets were located primarily outside the United States, mostly in Southeast Asia. The company was hardly a large employer, and Cnooc had even pledged to retain all U.S. employees to overcome any potential concerns.

By contrast, the implications of shale gas for U.S. energy security, employment and the environment are hard to overstate. Add China to the mix and the issue sits at the intersection of some of the most important economic and foreign policy issues of the day.

There are several plausible explanations for the difference. One is that the Chinese companies, presumably on the advice of clever lawyers, have structured the recent deals to fly under the radar by purchasing minority interests and standing behind U.S. companies such as Devon and Chesapeake, which continue to serve as operators and marketers of the shale projects. Although perhaps no one deal is large enough to raise a red flag, these smaller deals are starting to accumulate and Congress should be looking at these investments in the aggregate.

Another theory is that politicians are concerned that too much noise may disrupt efforts by U.S. oil companies to access China's own shale gas reserves, which surpass even those of the United States. The U.S.-China Shale Gas Initiative announced by President Obama in 2009 was intended to support those very efforts. Earlier this year, Sinopec announced a partnership with Royal Dutch Shell Plc and Exxon Mobil Corp. to perform joint surveys of certain Chinese shale gas reserves.

That is a good start, but China has yet to take the important step of publishing production-sharing terms between its national oil companies and foreign investors. Surely U.S. companies would be better served by a Congress willing to apply some heat to China to ensure true reciprocal access rather than keeping its head down in order not to offend.

The Unocal episode, with its protectionist and even racist undertones, was not one of Congress's finer moments. At the same time, however, it showed at least that Congress was paying attention to matters of critical energy and national security import. Now is not the time for U.S. politicians to bury their heads in the shale.

Ms. Newman Hood is an adjunct professor of oil and gas law at the Georgetown University Law Center. A related editorial appears today.

4. Renewable Fuel Standards Formula For Global Poverty

Editorial, IBD, Jan 4, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/Article/596771/201201041839/appointments-show-obama-more-king-than-president.htm>

Energy Policy: There was a reason Congress let ethanol subsidies expire. Legislation mandating using corn as fuel will keep prices high. They will also increase poverty worldwide. Anyone remember the "tortilla riots?"

The Renewable Fuel Standards Program (RFS) was originally passed as part of the Energy Security Act of 2005. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 expanded the renewable fuel standard for gasoline and the RFS mandates that at least 37% of the 2011-12 corn crop be converted to ethanol and blended with the gasoline that powers our cars.

"Producing ethanol for use in motor fuels increases the demand for corn, which ultimately raises the prices that consumers pay for a wide variety of foods at the grocery store, ranging from corn-syrup sweeteners in soft drinks to meat, dairy and poultry products," says the Congressional Budget Office. The RFS program ensures this mandate and ethanol production continues with costs being passed on to consumers at the checkout line and gas pump.

The mandate to burn food in our cars places our corn supply at risk to supply disruptions caused by drought and bad weather. Coming off the third-largest corn harvest in U.S. history in 2010, the carryover (unsold corn still in elevators), constituted only a two-week supply, the lowest level since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

According to the most recent USDA estimates, carryover stocks into the 2012 crop year will be only 6.7% of annual use, a level seen only once since 1950.

The RFS mandate requires a massive quantity of corn to be converted to ethanol each year regardless of price or available supply. In other words, our cars are now at the top of the food chain and if there's not enough to go around, its fuel first and food second.

According to a report prepared by 10 international organizations, including the World Bank and five different arms of the U.N., including the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, hardly right-wingers, increased bio-fuel mandates by governments mean the price of coarse grains could increase as much as 13%, oilseeds by 7% and vegetable oil 35% on average each year between 2013 and 2017.

As the American Enterprise Institute points out in a recent report, World Bank researchers Maros Ivanic, Will Martin and Hassan Zaman estimate that the ethanol-induced price spike between June and December 2010 forced 44 million people below the extreme poverty line of \$1.25 per day and that price increases from 2005-08 forced 105 million people below the extreme poverty line.

When demand for bio-fuels caused the price of corn tortillas, a staple of the Mexican diet, to rise precipitously in late 2006 and early 2007, many in Mexico took to the streets in what became known as the "tortilla riots." The Mexican tortilla crisis came after a rise in the cost of corn, itself induced by growing ethanol consumption and booming demand in emerging countries.

They were the first in a series of disturbances that year to hit emerging countries from Haiti to Bangladesh as the cost of agricultural commodities, including wheat and rice, reached record highs as cropland was diverted to biofuel production.

We have created a market where even the slightest production disturbances could have devastating consequences for the world's poor and severe consequences for American consumers. The breadbasket of the world is even at risk of one day having to import corn.

The ethanol mandates should depart along with the ethanol subsidies that expired at the beginning of the year. It's time to stop putting food in our gas tanks.

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