

The Week That Was: 2013-02-02 (February 2, 2013)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *Occam's Razor and the null hypothesis. William of Occam (1285-1347) was an English Franciscan monk and philosopher to whom is attributed the saying 'Pluralitas non est ponenda sine necessitate', which translates as 'Plurality should not be posited without necessity.'*
Bob Carter

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Number of the Week: 5,322

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THIS WEEK:

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

Articulating the Differences: The publication of the American Institute for Technology and Science Education (AITSE), contains a new article by marine geologist and environmental scientist Bob Carter, a coeditor of *Climate Change Reconsidered (2011)* by the independent Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC).

Carter succinctly addresses the differences among scientists on the issue if human emissions of greenhouse gas (GHG), particularly carbon dioxide (CO₂), are causing Dangerous Anthropogenic Global Warming (DAGW, his term), as alleged by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He uses a prior article in AITSE by Katharine Hayhoe, an atmospheric scientist and Director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University, to address the common ground and then to stated the differences on three major points: 1) amount of human caused warming from emissions; 2) actual evidence of human caused warming over the past 50 years; and 3) can the IPCC models provide accurate climate predictions 100 years into the future.

Carter then applies the principles of Occam's Razor and the importance of testing the hypothesis against the null hypothesis. Carter proposes five separate hypotheses that can be used to test the DAGW hypothesis against the null, using the data currently available. The DAGW fails in each of these tests. Please see link under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

Royal Society: The Philosophical Transactions of Royal Society A, Mathematical, Physical, Engineering Science published a paper calling for a reduction in the production of high volume energy intensive materials. The presumption is that the world is running out of scarce resources and that government intervention and regulation is needed to prevent this from occurring. Other papers in the edition call for controlling consumer demand, the products consumers can buy and, of course, more renewable power.

The Society is beginning to sound a bit like the Club of Rome in the 1970s, which used the most up-to-date computer models to predict that the world would quickly run out of key resources. President Carter was so taken that he declared the world would run out of oil by the end of the 20th century. The world did not obey the computer models.

The call for greater government control of industrial production has often been very popular. Many economists in the early 20th century identified an economic system whereby the ownership of the industry remained private, but the production was controlled by government. They termed

the system National Socialism – a term that has fallen out of favor. Please see links under Defending the Orthodoxy.

Non Peer Reviewed Studies: Last week, TWTW provided a link to the press release of a study done in Norway that indicates the sensitivity of the planet’s climate to a doubling of GHGs, namely CO2, is about 1.9 deg C, which is significantly less than the IPCC models project, and below the artificial threshold established by the IPCC and its political followers.

A short while ago, TWTW reader Donald Rapp suggested that when linking to a report of a paper, TWTW also links to the actual paper as well. We have endeavored to do so and provide links when possible. TWTW was unable find a link to the Norwegian paper, just the press release, but did not so note it. In the future, TWTW will attempt to provide the links to the underlying paper when providing the link of the report of the paper. If it is unable to find a link to the paper, it will be so noted.

Some made much of the fact that the Norwegian study was not published in a peer reviewed journal. This should have been emphasized. The study relies on a complex statistical process that may or may not apply. It should be remembered that one of the criticisms of the BEST land temperature data announced some time ago was that the press releases were not based on peer-reviewed papers. Apparently, the papers are now being published.

Anthony Watts (WUWT) has excellent comments on the difficulties in obtaining links to the actual papers, and what press releases should contain, and frequently do not. Andrew Revkin (Dot Earth) discusses the issue of press releases before publication. Of course, TWTW will provide links to essays and op-eds that are clearly not intended for publication in scientific journals. Please see links under Seeking a Common Ground.

EPA Games: One of the stunts pulled by the EPA is to apply court decisions it considers favorable to expanding its powers and ignore court decisions it considers unfavorable. Since there are 11 Courts of Appeal in the Federal system, and 89 District Courts in the 50 states, which are subordinate to the Court of Appeals in that region, the EPA has developed an imaginative game. For example, if the Second Court of Appeals, covering the mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia, makes a ruling EPA considers unfavorable, and the District Court for Alaska makes a ruling the EPA considers favorable, in its regulations, the EPA may apply the District Court ruling for the nation except for the area covered by the Second Court of Appeals. This has been done, but usually for issues that do not have powerful opponents.

It appears that the EPA will ignore a ruling by the Second Court of Appeals and require petroleum refiners to use cellulosic ethanol in their gasoline blends for 2013, even though the Court “found that the EPA had abused the law with ‘an unreasonable exercise of agency discretion,’ and it vacated the 2012 cellulosic ethanol mandate.” The favored industrial plant is in Mississippi, technically outside of the jurisdiction of the Second Court of Appeals, and the EPA may not make its regulations binding on the few refineries within the jurisdiction of the Second Court of Appeals. Who says the EPA cannot be imaginative in playing legal games? Too bad it is not as accomplished in producing science. Please see Articles # 1 & #2, the above quote comes from Article #1.

Keystone XL Pipeline: Now that Senator John Kerry is becoming the Secretary of State, the decision on permitting or denying the Keystone XL pipeline to cross the boundary from Canada to the US falls upon him. There is great speculation on what he will decide: maintain close relations with Canada, the largest exporter of oil to the US and its greatest trading partner, or “prove” his environmental credentials by denying an opportunity for economic expansion and jobs without government support? [Admitted, this is a loaded question.] Please see links under Washington’s Control of Energy.

Race to Extremes: After taking some \$25 million from Chesapeake Energy, a natural gas company, for its successful marketing (propaganda) program called Beyond Coal, the Sierra Club is implementing its new program, Beyond Natural Gas. Its spokesperson, Jenny Craig, has stated that natural gas can never be truly clean and “Clean energy and natural gas are not on the same spectrum.”

No doubt, to be in the vanguard, other environmental groups will join in with the “trail blazing” Sierra Club. If they are successful, what will be the next program to stop economic advancement: Beyond Energy? Beyond the Oxcart?

Wind Promotion: When pleading for subsidies, a favorite tactic of those who promote wind and solar power is to point out the subsidies given to fossil fuels world-wide. A map prepared by the International Energy Agency (IEA) shows that Western nations have less than 0.3% fossil fuel subsidization rates in 2011. Generally, the nations of North Africa and the Mideast have the subsidization rates, between 50.7% and 87.8%.

Apparently, the wind and solar advocates believe that what applies to petroleum fuels in Iran should apply to wind and solar in the US. The logic is less than impeccable. Please see:

<http://www.iea.org/subsidy/index.html> [H/t David Kreutzer]

China Coal: The US Energy Information Agency reports that China is using almost as much coal as the rest of the world combined. In 2011, China consumed 3.8 billion tons (US); the rest of the world excluding China consumed 4.3 billion tons. In 2000, China consumed 1.5 billion tons and the rest of the world excluding China consumed about 3.8 billion tons. How will Western environmentalists react to the news?

No doubt, the global warming advocates will demand that the US and the EU lead by example, which could more correctly be termed as lead by sacrifice. They will imply smog and health issues regarding coal in China are equivalent to those in the US and the EU, which they certainly are not. What will incoming Secretary of State John Kerry do? Suggest a confrontation with China by claiming carbon dioxide emissions are weapons of mass destruction, citing Sandy and the US drought as proof? Threaten to cut off trade with China, excepting, of course, the trade in financial instruments, namely China buying US government debt? The absurdity of the positions of many politicians and their green supporters regarding CO2 emissions is becoming clear. Please

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=9751&src=email#>

Number of the Week – 5,322 separate cited studies on the benefits of increased atmospheric carbon dioxide on various plants and trees are contained in the 2009 NIPCC report Climate Change Reconsidered. [H/t Leighton Steward]

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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. Zero Dark Ethanol

'Do a good job . . . If you fail, we'll fine your customers.'

Editorial, WSJ, Jan 28, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324329204578270043967301294.html#mod=djemEditorialPage_t

2. EPA Continues Ethanol Push

By Ryan Tracy, WSJ, Jan 31, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323701904578276510884365252.html?mod=WSJ_business_whatsNews

3. Cheaper Natural Gas Lets Nucor Factory Rise Again on Bayou

By John Miller, WSJ, Jan 31, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323854904578264080157966810.html?mod=WSJ_hpp_LEFTTopStories

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Global Warming: Anthropogenic or Not?

An Alternative View from Down Under

By Bob Carter, AITSE, No Date

<http://www.aitse.org/global-warming-anthropogenic-or-not/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Departing Energy secretary offers climate warning

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Feb 1, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/280611-departing-energy-secretary-offers-climate-warning>

United States should lead on climate change

Editorial, Kansas City Star, Jan 28, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/01/28/181234/united-states-should-lead-on-climate.html>

Savings needed to meet future demand for resources

By Roger Harrabin, BBC, Jan 27, 2013 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-21203336>

Link to Paper: Material Efficiency: providing material services with less material

Editors: J. M. Allwood, M. F. Ashby, T. G. Gutowski and E. Worrell, Royal Society A, Jan 28, 2013

<http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/site/2013/1986.xhtml>

Nurse joins the EU referendum battle

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill Jan 27, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/1/27/nurse-joins-the-eu-referendum-battle.html>

Obama rekindles climate hopes

President will use regulations to sidestep stalled Congress.

By Jeff Tollefson, Nature, Jan 29, 2013

<http://www.nature.com/news/obama-rekindles-climate-hopes-1.12322>

[SEPP Comment: When does executive side-stepping become authoritarian government?]

Obama's New Chief of Staff on Climate Change

Denis McDonough has spoken out about the need to help developing countries cope.

By Kevin Mullis, MIT Technology Review, Jan 25, 2013

http://www.technologyreview.com/view/510401/mcdonough-on-climate-change/?utm_campaign=newsletters&utm_source=newsletter-daily-all&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20130128

Questioning the Orthodoxy

A Mother's Concern; Promise Of A Green Future Is More Than A White Lie.

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Jan 28, 2013

<http://drtimball.com/2013/a-mothers-concern-promise-of-a-green-future-is-more-than-a-white-lie/>

Obama's path toward energy poverty

Shoddy science backs damaging policies

By Tom Harris, Washington Times, Jan 30, 2013

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/30/obamas-path-toward-energy-poverty/>

A Lukewarmer's Ten Tests

What It Would Take To Persuade Me That Current Climate Policy Makes Sense

By Matt Ridley, GWPF, Jan, 2013

<http://www.thegwgf.org/content/uploads/2013/01/Ridley-Lukewarmer-Ten-Tests.pdf>

A Tsunami of Governmental Global Warming Lies

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Jan 27, 2013

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2013/01/a-tsunami-of-governmental-global.html>

Climate shocker: Carry on as we are until 2050, planet will be FINE

Doubled CO2 means just 1.9°C warming, says Norwegian gov

By Lewis Page, The Register, Jan 25, 2013 [H/t LB Hagen]

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/01/25/norwegian_co2_warming_shocker/

[SEPP Comment: The study has not been published.]

Climatologists Retrench as Climate Refuses to Warm

By Doug Hoffman, The Resilient Earth, Jan 29, 2013

<http://www.thegwgf.org/climatologists-retrench-climate-refuses-warm/>

New Book By Hans von Storch: Climate Scientists Took On Role Of Prophets... "Completely In Over Their Heads"

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Jan 28, 2013 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/01/28/new-book-by-hans-von-storch-climate-scientists-took-on-role-of-prophets-completely-in-over-their-heads/>

Coralline Algae and the Case for Natural Climate Change

By Jim Steele, WUWT, Jan 28, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/01/28/coralline-algae-and-the-case-for-natural-climate-change/>

Not a peer reviewed paper.

[SEPP Comment: A lagged correlation between the Pacific Decadal Oscillation and the North Atlantic Oscillation? Study not published.]

Questioning European Green

The perils of precaution

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Feb 1, 2013

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/perils-precaution>

Seeking a Common Ground

More on that Norwegian CS study

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Jan 28, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/1/28/more-on-that-norwegian-cs-study.html>

Link to Magazine Article p. 8: Using modeled historical concentrations of short lived climate components to constrain the climate sensitivity

http://www.notur.no/publications/magazine/pdf/meta_2012_2.pdf

Eurekalert's lack of press release standards – a systemic problem with science and the media

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Jan 29, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/01/29/eurekalerts-lack-of-press-release-standards-a-systemic-problem-with-science-and-the-media/>

When Publicity Precedes Peer Review in Climate Science (Part One)

By Andrew Revkin, Dot Earth, NYT, Jan 28, 2013

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/28/when-publicity-precedes-peer-review-in-climate-science-part-one/?smid=tw-share>

Cities Affect Temperatures For Thousands Of Miles

By Staff Writers, Boulder CO (SPX), Jan 31, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Cities_Affect_Temperatures_For_Thousands_Of_Miles_999.html

Link to Letter: Energy consumption and the unexplained winter warming over northern Asia and North America

By Guang J. Zhang, Ming Cai, & Aixue Hu, Nature Climate Change, Jan 27, 2013

<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1803.html>

Dear Expert, Please Cook the Books

Governments love to refer to experts—until their advice doesn't suit.

By Roger Pielke Jr, WSJ, Jan 29, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323539804578264460952281772.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_0

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

Enjoying Snow, While We Still Have It

By Mark Vanhoenacker, NYT, Jan 26, 2013 [H/t David Manuta]

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/opinion/sunday/enjoying-snow-while-we-still-have-it.html?emc=eta1&r=0>

In Energy Taxes, Tools to Help Tackle Climate Change

By Eduardo Porter, NYT, Jan 29, 2013

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/30/business/energy-tax-is-underused-tool-in-climate-change-fight.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130130&r=0

[SEPP Comment: Typical propaganda photo of a farm harvest during last summer's drought. It would spoil the article to have a photo that was taken during the great Dust Bowl in the 1930s.]

Moral -sediments

Alarmists exaggerate oil sands lake study

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Jan 29, 2013

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2013/01/29/peter-foster-moral-%C2%ADsediments/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Center for American Progress' Christie Hefner: Climate change a factor in Chicago's murder rate

By Jeff Poor, Daily Caller, Jan 30, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://dailycaller.com/2013/01/30/center-for-american-progress-christie-hefner-climate-change-a-factor-in-chicagos-murder-rate/>

Sydney Morning Herald: Jessica Wright gets the facts wrong. An attempt to defame and smear?

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Jan 30, 2013

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/01/sydney-morning-herald-jessica-wright-gets-her-facts-wrong-in-attempt-to-defame-and-smear/#more-26673>

Humans Have Already Set in Motion 69 Feet of Sea Level Rise

Glaciologist Jason Box describes a post-warming world that you won't even be able to recognize.

By Chris Mooney, Mother Jones, Jan 31, 2013 [H/t Tom Nelson]

<http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2013/01/climate-desk-greenland-and-69-feet-sea-level-rise>

[SEPP Comment: No explanation of the Eemian warm period except the CO2 and methane levels were lower than today.]

Changing Weather

Eight reasons the Australian heatwave is not "climate change"

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Jan 28, 2013

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/01/eight-reasons-the-australian-heatwave-is-not-climate-change/#more-26542>

Superstorm Sandy (Part I: Spinning Climate, Weather for Political Points)

By Paul Driessen and Patrick Moffitt, Master Resource, Jan 31, 2013

<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/01/superstorm-sandy-i-climate-weather-spin/#more-23800>

Superstorm Sandy (Part II: Warnings Given–And Ignored)

By Paul Driessen and Patrick Moffitt, Master Resource, Feb 1, 2013

<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/02/superstorm-sandy-part-ii/#more-23833>

Debate Over Rebuilding Beaches Post-Sandy Creates Waves

By Jennifer Ludden, NPR, Jan 30 , 2013 [H/t Ray Lehmann]

<http://www.npr.org/2013/01/30/170301306/debate-over-rebuilding-beaches-post-sandy-creates-waves>

Changing Cryosphere – Land / Sea Ice

Deep ice shows Greenland was warmer; offers clues to future warming impacts

By Staff Writers, Boulder CO (SPX), Jan 29, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Deep_ice_cores_show_past_Greenland_warm_period_may_be_road_map_for_continued_warming_of_planet_999.html

[SEPP Comment: To utilize the clues of the ice cores we need to understand the causes of the Eemian interglacial period.]

Changing Earth

Scientists underestimated potential for Tohoku quake. Now what?

By Staff Writers, Corvallis, OR (SPX) Jan 29, 2013

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Scientists_underestimated_potential_for_Tohoku_quake_Now_what_999.html

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Central Valley irrigation intensifies rainfall, storms across the Southwest

By Staff Writers, UCI, Jan 28, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://news.uci.edu/press-releases/central-valley-irrigation-intensifies-rainfall-storms-across-the-southwest-2/>

Link to Article: Irrigation in California's Central Valley Strengthens the Southwestern U. S. Water Cycle

By Min-Hui Lo & James Famiglietti, GRL, Jan 29, 2013

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/grl.50108/abstract>

[SEPP Comment: Confirming what many have observed for decades.]

New paper finds climate change benefits Chinese agriculture

By Staff Writer, Hockey Schtick, Feb 1, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://hockeyschtick.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/new-paper-finds-climate-change-benefits.html>

Link to Article: The impacts of Climate change on crops in China: A Ricardian analysis

By Yongfu Chen, et al, Global and Planetary Change, Feb 1, 2013

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921818113000180>

New paper predicts CO2 fertilization will greatly improve plant productivity by 40-60%

By Staff, Hockey Schtick, Jan 23, 2013

<http://hockeyschtick.blogspot.com.au/2013/01/new-paper-predicts-co2-fertilization.html>

Link to paper: A model-based constraint on CO₂ fertilisation

By Holden, et al, Biogeosciences, 2013

<http://www.biogeosciences.net/10/339/2013/bg-10-339-2013.html>

[SEPP Comment: The benefits of CO₂ fertilization not are a surprise to those familiar with NIPCC reports. Unfortunately the authors did not consult the hundreds of empirical studies in NIPCC publications.]

Plants Adapt to Drought But Limits Are Looming, Study Finds

By Daniel Stolte/UANews and Ann Perry/USDA ARS, UANews, Jan 22, 2013

<http://uanews.org/story/plants-adapt-drought-limits-are-looming-study-finds>

Unable to link to a published article

[SEPP Comment: Plants have been adapting to changing climate and moisture for millions of years.]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Elevated CO₂ Enhances the Berry Quality of Sub-Arctic Shrubs

Reference: Gwynn-Jones, D., Jones, A.G., Waterhouse, A., Winters, A., Comont, D., Scullion, J., Gardias, R., Graee, B.J., Lee, J.A. and Callaghan, T.V. 2012. Enhanced UV-B and elevated CO₂ impacts sub-Arctic shrub berry abundance, quality and seed germination. *Ambio* 41 (Supplement 3): 256-268.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jan/29jan2013a1.html>

[SEPP Comment: Lingonberries become better!]

Islands Rimming Pacific Atolls: Their Response to Sea Level Rise

Reference: Rankey, E.C. 2011. Nature and stability of atoll island shorelines: Gilbert Island chain, Kiribaati, Equatorial Pacific. *Sedimentology* 58: 1831-1859.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jan/29jan2013a2.html>

Extreme Temperature Events in China's Three Gorges Area

Reference Deng, H., Zhao, F. and Zhao, X. 2012. Changes of extreme temperature events in Three Gorges area, China. *Environmental and Earth Sciences* 66: 1783-1790.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jan/29jan2013a3.html>

Growth, Calcification and Mortality of Juvenile Mussels Exposed to Ocean Acidification

Reference: Range, P., Pilo, D., Ben-Hamadou, R., Chicharo, M.A., Matias, D., Joaquim, S., Oliveira, A.P. and Chicharo, L. 2012. Seawater acidification by CO₂ in a coastal lagoon environment: Effects on life history traits of juvenile mussels *Mytilus galloprovincialis*. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* 424-425: 89-98.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/jan/30jan2013a2.html>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Fifty shades of energy taxes

Gasoline faces higher taxes per unit of carbon emitted than do other forms of energy. Why?

By William Watson, Financial Post, Jan 31, 2013

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2013/01/31/william-watson-fifty-shades-of-energy-taxes/>

[SEPP Comment: Applies to Canada.]

The U.S. has some of the lowest energy taxes in the developed world

By Brad Plumer, Washington Post, Jan 31, 2013

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/01/31/how-the-world-taxes-fossil-fuels-in-three-charts/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Expect More Attempts to Bypass Congress

By Marlo Lewis, National Journal, Jan 31, 2013

<http://energy.nationaljournal.com/2013/01/how-should-washington-address.php#2294222>

Adding Ethanol To Our Fuel Will Cause Cars To Break Down

Editorial, IBD, Jan 31, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/013113-642734-e15-blend-has-less-energy-than-gasoline.htm>

Officials Back Deep Cuts in Atlantic Cod Harvest to Save Industry

By Katharine Seelye & Jess Bidgood, NYT, Jan 30, 2013

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/31/us/officials-back-deep-cuts-in-atlantic-cod-harvest-to-save-industry.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130131&r=0

[SEPP Comment: In the end the bureaucrats blame global warming /climate change.]

Energy Issues – Non-US

European Shale: Green Opposition Increasingly Isolated

By Staff Writers, EurActiv, via GWPF, Feb 1, 2013

<http://www.thegwgf.org/european-shale-green-opposition-increasingly-isolated/>

[SEPP Comment: Graph of shale formations in Europe.]

Energy Issues -- US

U.S. energy policy isn't sustainable

By Tom Harris, Letter, Miami Herald, Jan 30, 2013

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/30/3208950/us-energy-policy-isnt-sustainable.html>

Stupid Grids

Report: 'Smart grid' technology projects funded by stimulus at risk of 'fraud, waste and abuse'

By Lachlan Markay, Washington Free Beacon, Jan 24, 2013

<http://freebeacon.com/stupid-grids/>

CHARTS: Renewables in Bed With Natural Gas?

Top solar rep endorses long-term marriage to natural gas.

By Tim McDonnell, Climate Desk, Jan 31, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://climatedesk.org/2013/01/charts-renewables-in-bed-with-natural-gas/>

But Jenny Chang, a spokesperson for the Sierra Club's Beyond Natural Gas campaign, says the partnership between renewables and natural gas is more unholy than happy: It distracts, she says, from the basic fact that, as a fossil fuel, natural gas can never be truly "clean."

"It's incredibly frustrating and incredibly manipulative" for the gas industry to align itself with renewables, Chang said. "Clean energy and natural gas are not on the same spectrum."

Washington's Control of Energy

The pipeline to change the direction of the economy

No more 'studies' to delay the proven Keystone XL

By Rep. Lee Terry, Washington Times, Jan 30, 2013

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/29/the-pipeline-to-change-the-direction-of-the-econom/>

Change for good

The United States must boost energy spending to make its mark on the climate debate.

Editorial, Nature, Jan 29, 2013

<http://www.nature.com/news/change-for-good-1.12312>

[SEPP Comment: Promote Keystone and natural gas to crush coal! The article fails to recognize there is a huge difference between government spending on basic research and government spending used to force an inferior technology, such as wind power, onto the public.]

Carbon Use and GDP

Why are progressives so eager to suppress the things most necessary for economic growth?

By Robert Zubrin, National Review, Jan 28, 2013

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/338944/carbon-use-and-gdp-robert-zubrin#>

White House targets oil-and-gas tax breaks to replace sequester

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Jan 30, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/280213-white-house-takes-aim-at-oil-and-gas-subsidies-as-part-of-sequester-plan>

Obama should 'face down critics' and approve Keystone XL: science journal

By Yadullah Hussain, Financial Post, Jan 30, 2013

http://business.financialpost.com/2013/01/30/obama-should-face-down-critics-and-approve-keystone-xl-science-journal/?_isa=aa4b-c4ad

Desperately Trying to Derail Canadian Oil Sands

By Paul Driessen, Townhall, Jan 26, 2013

http://townhall.com/columnists/pauldriessen/2013/01/26/desperately-trying-to-derail-canadian-oil-sands-n1496680?utm_source=thdaily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nl

Greens bank on Kerry to quash Keystone pipeline

By Ben Wolfgang, Washington Times, Jan 30, 2013

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/30/greens-bank-on-kerry-to-quash-keystone-pipeline/>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Natural Gas Vehicles in 2013 – Part 1

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Jan 29, 2013

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2013/01/29/natural-gas-vehicles-in-2013-part-1/>

OriginOil's Eckelberry says algae can ease fracking chemical concerns

Interview by Monica Trauzzi, EENEWS, Jan 28, 2013
<http://www.eenews.net/tv/transcript/1635>

Return of King Coal?

China consumes nearly as much coal as the rest of the world combined

By Staff Writers, EIA, Jan 29, 2013

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=9751&src=email#>

Oil Spills, Gas Leaks & Consequences

BP's \$4.5 bn plea deal over US oil spill approved by judge

By Staff Writers, Chicago (AFP), Jan 29, 2013

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/BPs_45_bn_plea_deal_over_US_oil_spill_approved_by_judge_999.html

Nuclear Energy and Fears

UK Process to Site Nuclear Geologic Waste Depository Stalled

By Staff Writers, Power News, Jan 31, 2013

http://www.powermag.com/news/5340.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2607830&hq_l=11&hq_v=5e660500d0

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

The Corruption of Wind Energy

By Peter Glover, Energy Tribune, Feb 1, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/72221/the-corruption-of-wind-energy>

Supersized Wind Turbines Head Out to Sea

The giant turbines could help make offshore wind cheaper.

By Kevin Bullis, MIT Technology Review, Feb 1, 2013

<http://www.technologyreview.com/news/510566/supersized-wind-turbines-head-out-to-sea/>

The push to supersize wind turbines is part of an effort to reduce installation and maintenance costs, which can be far higher than the cost of the turbines themselves

Expensive Electricity’s Hidden Costs Include More Than Just Direct Economic Impact

By Marita Noon, Energy Tribune, Jan 30, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/71995/electricitys-hidden-costs-than-economic-impact>

Link to FERC Report <http://www.ferc.gov/legal/staff-reports/dec-2012-energy-infrastructure.pdf>

Link to Contradicting Report <http://www.atinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Hidden-Cost.pdf>

Facing expiring tax credit, wind industry posts record year

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Jan 30, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/280175-facing-expiring-tax-credit-wind-industry-posts-record-year>

[SEPP Comment: What percentage of the 13,124 MW of new power can be relied upon when needed the most – 10%?]

Germany Breaks Clean-Energy Taboo in Attack on Price Surge

By Stefan Nicola, Bloomberg, Jan 28, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-01-28/germany-breaks-clean-energy-taboo-in-attack-on-power-price-surge.html>

[SEPP Comment: But if you shift the costs to the producers of sub-prime electricity, they will produce less. Horrors!]

Another Blow To Germany's Solar Industry: "Center For Solar Excellence" Bankrupt After Less Than 3 Years!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone Jan 26, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/01/26/another-blow-to-germanys-solar-industry-center-for-solar-expertise-bankrupt-after-less-than-3-years/>

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

New research shows E15 fuel causes more damage to cars

By Jayne O'Donnell, USA Today, Jan 29, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/cars/2013/01/29/ethanol-fuel-car-engines/1873733/>

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Vehicles

Each electric car could add costs of \$2000 per year for "our" electricity network

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Jan 26, 2013

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/01/electric-vehicles-could-cost-2000-per-year-for-our-electricity-network/#more-26002>

The best thing about electric vehicles is that in Australia, almost no one buys them. We have 15 million cars on the road, and in 2011 only 49 new cars were electric. That's nearly one new one each week...

Boeing Battery Fires Highlight Folly of Obama's Electric Car Push

Editorial, IBD, Jan 30, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/013013-642577-boeing-dreamliner-fires-show-folly-of-obama-electric-car-push.htm>

Germany's Vision Of Electric Mobility Fades As Renewable Energy Sector Collapses, And Nuclear Power Is Refused

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Jan 27, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/01/27/germanys-vision-of-electric-mobility-fades-as-the-renewable-energy-sector-collapses-nuclear-power-refused/>

Carbon Schemes

Labour's power call sets up clash with Coalition

Party wants carbon-capture and storage technology installed to cut emissions – but plan would double the cost of electricity

By Tom Bawden, Independent, Jan 29, 2013 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/labours-power-call-sets-up-clash-with-coalition-8471945.html>

[SEPP Comment: Typical tactic of the greens, express willingness to reach an agreement provided there is a condition that is impossible to meet.]

California Dreaming

California's Push for Renewable Energy Will Raise Prices

By Benjamin Zycher, Pacific Research Institute Jan 31, 2013

http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=22795&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EnvPD

Link to full report: CA's 33% Renewable Portfolio Standard Will Raise Power Rates by 13 Percent

<http://www.pacificresearch.org/california/california-article-detail/cas-33-renewable-portfolio-standard-will-raise-power-rates-by-13-percent/>

Environmental Industry

The Sierra Club's Broken Moral Compass

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Jan 27, 2013 [H/t Climate Depot]

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2013/01/27/the-sierra-clubs-broken-moral-compass/>

Other Scientific News

Bugs in the Atmosphere: Study Finds Substantial Microorganism Populations in the Troposphere, 8 to 12 Kilometers Above Earth's Surface

By John Toon, Press Release, Jan 28, 2013 [H/t Jo Nova]

<http://gtresearchnews.gatech.edu/study-finds-microorganisms-in-troposphere/>

Florida's aquifer models full of holes, allowing more water permits and pollution

By Craig Pittman, Tampa Bay Times, Jan 28, 2013 [H/t Charles Schafer]

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/water/article1272555.ece>

[SEPP Comment: According to the article, the state Department of Environmental Protection rejected an offer to give a superior model, at no cost to the state, because it was designed by a corporation!]

Other News that May Be of Interest

U.S. Water Supply Not as Threatened as Believed, Study Finds

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Jan. 30, 2013

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/130130184031.htm#.UQo1B5XePA8.twitter>

Link to the Article: Water availability and vulnerability of 225 large cities in the United State

By Julie Padowsky and James Jawitz, WRR, AGU, Dec 22, 2012

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/2012WR012335/abstract>

The researchers also had a modern twist to their study. Padowski created a media-text analysis to search online news archives for reports for each city, looking for stories about water restrictions or drought conditions.

Saving Scotland's fishing industry – and a few whales

By Neil Craig, Think Scotland, Jan 31, 2013

http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkpolitics/articles.html?read_full=11903&article=www.thinkscotland.org

Flaming idiocy

By Roger Underwood, Quadrant, Jan 31, 2013

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2013/01/flaming-idiocy>

In a Spectator review of one of the several books published after 2009's horrific Black Saturday bushfires, I asked two questions: "Why, in Australia of all places, are bushfire science, the

practical experience of firefighters and the lessons of bushfire history forgotten, overlooked or rejected, so that bushfire disasters are constantly replicated? And what is to be done about it?"

Besieged by bears

By Jake McDonald, Up Here, No Date [H/t GWPF]

<http://uphere.ca/node/850>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

France bans light at night

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Feb 1, 2013

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2013/02/france-bans-light-at-night.html>

[SEPP Comment: Environmentalist bureaucrats are increasingly dim.]

Climate Change Could Cause Massive Losses in Pyrenees Ski Resorts

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Jan 23, 2013 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/01/130123094259.htm>

Link to Article: Modeling climate change effects on winter ski tourism in Andorra

By Pons-Pons, et al, Climate Research, Oct 11, 2012

<http://www.int-res.com/abstracts/cr/v54/n3/p197-207/>

[SEPP Comment: A speculated warming could mean a loss of skiers. A speculated ice age could do the same.]

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ARTICLES:

1. Zero Dark Ethanol

'Do a good job . . . If you fail, we'll fine your customers.'

Editorial, WSJ, Jan 28, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324329204578270043967301294.html#mod=djemEditorialPage_t

Ethanol is one of the only products in history that Congress subsidizes and mandates at the same time. That sounds pretty generous. Yet now a federal court has ruled the Environmental Protection Agency is illegally giving the lobby extra benefits that Congress never intended. That takes some work.

On Friday the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals found that the EPA had abused the law with "an unreasonable exercise of agency discretion," and it vacated the 2012 cellulosic ethanol mandate. The 2007 Bush-Pelosi energy bill required blending fuels that can allegedly be made from switchgrass or farm waste into the gasoline supply, though no companies produced the product at a commercial scale. Guarantee a market, the thinking went, and somebody somewhere will fill it.

Except six years later, little has changed. The cellulosic ethanol industry produced zero gallons in 2011 and zero in 2012. But the EPA still required oil companies and refiners to buy 6.6 million gallons in 2011 and 8.7 million in 2012—and then to purchase millions of dollars of "waiver credits" for failing to comply with a mandate to buy a product that did not exist. This is the sort of thing that led to the Protestant Reformation.

In writing the law, Congress included a safety valve and told the EPA to set the mandate to meet "the projected volume available" in the event of a shortfall. But the EPA nonetheless argued that accurate projections would undermine "the objective of promoting growth in the industry" and creating "the appropriate economic conditions for the cellulosic biofuel industry to grow." In other words, only a fantasy mandate will motivate the industry to make enough of a fantasy fuel.

The three-judge panel found "no basis" in the law for such a dispensation and scored the EPA for "the adoption of an entirely new goal" that it simply invented. Judge Stephen Williams also noted the absurdity of the EPA's enforcement: "Apart from their role as captive consumers, the refiners are in no position to ensure, or even contribute to, growth in the cellulosic biofuel industry. 'Do a good job, cellulosic biofuel producers. If you fail, we'll fine your customers.'"

Since the EPA is making things up, the rational way to set the mandate would be to fine the cellulosic folks for a lack of mermaids and rebate the money to consumers who are paying higher prices because the oil companies can't do the impossible and buy an imaginary fuel.

2. EPA Continues Ethanol Push

By Ryan Tracy, WSJ, Jan 31, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323701904578276510884365252.html?mod=W_SJ_business_whatsNews

WASHINGTON—The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday held its ground on the federal mandate for using renewable motor fuels, proposing to boost a requirement for next-generation fuel even after it lost a recent court case throwing out last year's requirement.

The agency said it intended to require U.S. refiners and fuel importers to use a total of 16.55 billion gallons of renewable fuel during 2013, compared with 15.2 billion gallons last year.

As in previous years, the lion's share of that mandate is expected to be met with ethanol made from Midwestern corn. But the agency is also proposing to boost the requirement for advanced renewable fuels, including diesel-motor fuel made from soybeans, sugar cane ethanol imported from Brazil, and "cellulosic" fuels made from inedible parts of plants, such as corn stalks and wood chips.

The EPA requirement for advanced fuel would be about 2.75 billion gallons in 2013, compared with two billion gallons last year. Of that requirement, 1.28 billion would have to come from plant-based diesel-motor fuels, and 14 million gallons must be cellulosic fuel.

The agency's proposal was a win for cellulosic fuel producers, including KiOR Inc, which has a plant in Mississippi that the EPA expects will produce about eight million gallons of cellulosic fuel from wood chips.

Brooke Coleman, executive director of the Advanced Ethanol Council, a group of cellulosic fuel producers, said the EPA got "the right number" and provided "advanced biofuel investors and innovators with a predictable and durable path forward."

The American Petroleum Institute, an oil industry trade group, won a lawsuit earlier this month throwing out last year's cellulosic fuel requirement. The EPA in 2012 required refiners to buy 8 million gallons of cellulosic fuel, but the industry only produced about 20,000 gallons that could count toward the mandate.

The institute on Thursday criticized EPA's proposal to require even more cellulosic fuel this year. "The promised production [of cellulosic fuel] hasn't happened," said Bob Greco, the institute's downstream group director. "With today's announcement, EPA has proved yet again that its renewable fuels program is unworkable and must be scrapped."

Part of Thursday's decision was a negative for U.S. corn ethanol producers.

They had asked the EPA to require fewer gallons of "advanced" fuel in order to limit imports of Brazilian sugar cane ethanol, which qualifies for the "advanced" category and takes market share from ethanol made domestically.

The EPA proposal issued Thursday didn't heed those requests and could "open the door even wider to imports," said the Renewable Fuels Association, a U.S. ethanol trade group.

The EPA will take public comments for 45 days before moving to complete the 2013 renewable fuel requirement.

3. Cheaper Natural Gas Lets Nucor Factory Rise Again on Bayou

By John Miller, WSJ, Jan 31, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323854904578264080157966810.html?mod=WSJ_hpp_LEFTTopStories

CONVENT, LA—In 2004, steelmaker Nucor Corp bought a plant next to alligator-infested Louisiana wetlands, took it apart and shipped it to Trinidad on ocean barges. This summer, after almost two years of construction, it will open the same type of plant at the same site at a cost of \$750 million.

Why? Natural gas, which is critical to these Nucor plants, was cheap in Trinidad. Now, it is suddenly plentiful and relatively cheap in the U.S. due to hydraulic fracturing technology, or fracking, a process that has unlocked natural gas from massive shale formations, driving prices down. Fracking remains controversial due to concerns it could pollute underground water. The Environmental Protection Agency hasn't yet ruled on the issue.

Lower-priced natural gas has energized many parts of the country and the economy. Chemical and fertilizer companies, which use gas as both a feedstock and energy source, say lower prices have reduced costs and made the U.S. a more competitive manufacturing location. Dow Chemical Co. and Chevron Phillips Chemical Company LLC have announced plans to build multibillion-dollar chemical plants in Texas, Louisiana and other states. Energy-intensive industries, such as glass and aluminum makers, can cut costs, while companies that make pipes and drills are benefiting from new domestic demand.

Abundant natural gas has also made certain processes, considered uneconomical a few years ago, now doable and profitable.

Nucor's Louisiana project, next to a bayou town of 700 set among protected wetlands and chemical plants, is one example. The plant uses natural gas to strip oxygen from iron ore to make high-purity pellets. Those pellets, called direct-reduced iron or DRI, can be combined with scrap and melted to make steel—at lower cost than using scrap alone. At current gas prices, DRI can generate iron pellets at a cost of \$260 to \$280 a ton. Scrap steel is currently trading at around \$390 a ton.

When completed, the plant will mark the return of this type of manufacturing—the last DRI plant left the U.S. in 2009—and be the second largest such facility in the world, behind a plant in Iran. Nucor's Louisiana DRI plant will process 2.5 million tons of DRI pellets a year, compared with well below 2 million tons at most of the roughly 100 DRI plants around the world (The plant in Iran has 3.2 million ton capacity).

"This is bigger than anything we've ever seen in the U.S.," said Chuck Bradford, an analyst with Bradford Research Inc. "It's a huge bet on gas."

Others are making similar bets. Midrex Technologies Inc., which makes DRI furnaces, said two to three more plants are being planned in the U.S. U.S. Steel Corp. John Surma said Tuesday the company was studying its options for building a DRI plant. "It's possible we might have something to talk about this year," he said.

Current DRI global production is around 73 million tons, up from 45 million tons a decade ago. The technology is widely used in countries where natural gas was cheap, such as the Middle East.

Originally part of a conglomerate that included the maker of the first Oldsmobile, Nucor makes steel in electric arc furnaces, which are giant melting pots, and uses scrap steel from cars and rail tracks as the main ingredient. This can make it more vulnerable to fluctuations in scrap prices than rivals like U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal, which make steel by melting raw materials, such as iron ore, coal and limestone.

Nucor has managed to operate a leaner company than the traditional makers, thanks in part to high productivity and a smaller, nonunionized workforce. Earlier this week, Nucor said it turned a quarterly profit of \$136.9 million, or 43 cents a share. U.S. Steel and AK Steel Holding Corp. both lost money.

When scrap prices surged in the early 2000s as the global economy boomed, Nucor bought the Louisiana DRI plant to reduce the overall amount of scrap needed. It moved the plant to Trinidad, where it would be cheaper to operate.

"We dismantled everything and put it on 13 oceangoing barges," said Lester Hart, general manager of the new Louisiana plant, who used to manage the Trinidad location. The Trinidad plant started production in 2006, and now processes two million tons of pellets a year to supply Nucor plants. The company says it plans to keep operating both plants simultaneously.

Shortly before the 2008 financial crisis, U.S. natural gas prices topped \$12 per million British Thermal Units. After the crisis, they fell below \$5 per MBTU. "We knew we'd be foolish not to get in on this," said Dan DiMicco, Nucor's then-CEO, who retired at the end of 2012.

The new plant will employ about 150 highly-skilled workers. The average salary will be \$75,000, which the company said is twice the median income in that part of Louisiana.

Nucor officials tout the plant's location on the Mississippi, where barges can easily hook up to 4,600-foot long conveyor belt erected 25 feet above ground that whisks raw iron ore into the plant. "We get the best of both worlds here, with the Gulf and the shale gas from the fracking," said Johnny Jacobs, a plant logistics manager. After processing, the barges will ship the DRI to mills in the South.

And what if gas prices rise?

Last year, Nucor announced a 20-year gas supply agreement with Calgary-based Encana Oil & Gas Inc. It won't use that gas directly for its plants. Instead, it will sell that gas itself to cover its cost of buying gas in Louisiana, as a kind of hedge in case the price suddenly spikes.

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