

The Week That Was: 2011-02-26 (February 26, 2011)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

PLEASE NOTE: The complete TWTW, including the articles, can be downloaded in an easily printable form at the SEPP web site: www.sepp.org.

Quote of the Week:

"Give me a faster computer and I will give you the wrong result sooner." Malcolm Ross upon reading that the MET Office claimed that it failed to predict the cold December and January in Britain because its new computer was too slow.

Number of the Week: 65

THIS WEEK:

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

Early last Saturday morning, the US House of Representatives passed a budget resolution that threatens the environmental industry – the resolution eliminated the \$13 Million proposed by the Obama administration to go to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Immediately, the environmental industry and other alarmists decried this action.

Roy Spencer, who was with the IPCC at the beginning, praised the action and states that the climate change deniers have no one to blame but themselves – that is, the deniers who think that climate change began with their birth and deny natural climate change. Spencer also states the IPCC is not a scientific organization and was formed to regulate carbon dioxide emissions. Claims of human-cause global warming are only a means to that goal. Consequently, the physical evidence that contradicts the central claim that carbon dioxide controls the climate is ignored.

This action, of course, is being opposed by the administration and by many in the US Senate. A brief recap: last year Congress failed to pass a budget. The Federal government has been operating under a series of continuing resolutions, the latest expires on March 4. The US House passed a budget to fund the Federal government to the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2011, but removed funding of the IPCC and certain EPA and Department of Energy programs. Congress has been on vacation this week and the Senate has to pass budget which the President must sign by March 4 or the government may shut down – other options, such as short term extensions, are possible. It should be an interesting week in Washington.

The House bill cut the EPA budget by about 29% and included prohibitions to fund programs implementing carbon dioxide regulations and regulation of cement plants. For their efforts, the Republicans who dominate the House were accused of being anti-science and dirty energy promoters. Please see Article # 1, articles under "Let the Games Begin," and under "Below the Bottom Line."

Last Friday, John Holdren, the President's science advisor, testified before the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. Holdren claimed that climate scientists embrace the orthodox view and likened the skeptics to those who denied the link between smoking and lung cancer. He has termed skeptics as deniers and heretics. In a TV interview in 2006, Holdren claimed that global warming will cause a sea level rise of up to 4 meters (13 feet) by 2100.

Holdren's testimony was apparently not very convincing to the House members who voted to eliminate US funding of the IPCC. Also the Chairman of the Committee, Ralph Hall, introduced an amendment on

the House budget bill to remove funding of NOAA's Climate Services which passed. Please see articles under "Defenders of the Orthodoxy" and "Extreme Weather."

Several articles this week unintentionally exposed the extent to which the alternative energy industry, such as wind power, depends on political favoritism. First, developers receive loan guarantees, or similar inducements, which minimize their risks to bad outcomes including their own poor decisions. (The new House budget will eliminate the loan guarantee program.) Developers also receive construction subsidies. In the US, wind developers can receive a grant from the Treasury that covers 30% of the cost of the project rather than the production from the project. This grant is in lieu of a 10 year production tax credit based upon actual energy production. (A tax credit is equivalent to a tax payment, which is different from deduction from taxable income.)

In many states, and in countries such as the UK and Germany, developers have a guaranteed market for their electricity, protected from low-cost competition. These can be in several forms, including renewable energy standards, which require the consumers (such as electricity distributors) to buy a given percentage of electricity from alternative producers, or feed in tariffs, which set the price at which consumers must buy the electricity. The guaranteed market results in alternative energy producers receiving higher prices than their competitors and protects them market changes, such as a glut of electricity. Unlike their competitors, alternative producers are also protected from dire consequences, such as heavy fees and fines, if they unexpectedly fail to produce electricity.

With this array of political favors, no wonder wind power is a growth industry in many jurisdictions. Under such schemes, buggy manufacturing would be a growth industry in transportation.

Please see articles referenced "Subsidies and Mandates Forever."

In an unfortunate development, the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard has announced a plan to impose taxes on carbon, followed by a shift to an emissions trading scheme. This venture apparently contradicts campaign promises. But what are campaign promises when one can join the world in the rush to expensive, unreliable electricity?

In more positive news, the House of Representatives of New Hampshire voted to pull out of a cap and trade scheme encompassing 10 states of in the northeastern US. Apparently, citizens are angered over increasing electricity bills, especially when the moneys go to special interests. The scheme was designed by current EPA administrator Lisa Jackson.

Please see articles under "Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes."

In Article #2 Fred Singer praises the latest efforts to provide an independent review of surface-air temperatures – a task sorely needed.

An editorial in the Investor's Business Daily praises the response of the citizens of New Zealand in their response to the devastating earthquake in Christchurch. Unfortunately, the editorial does no mention New Zealand's disaster relief program which Bob Carter praised in an article in last week's TWTW. Please see Article # 3.

In a speech to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dale Klein, former chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, stated that the current US program of failing to use spent nuclear fuel is a waste of resources. Please see Article #4.

The Inspector General of the Commerce Department, of which the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is part, released a report of its investigation on possible improper actions by members of NOAA related to Climategate. Two versions of the results and the entire report are referenced under "Climategate Continued."

Also, as stated above, the House budget calls for the elimination of NOAA's Climate Services division. A small section of that division, called CIS, has produced solid reports discussing human influence on extreme weather events. Several such reports are referenced under "Extreme Weather."

An interesting press release from the National Science Foundation reports that a widespread drought struck Africa and Southern Asia 16,000 to 17,000 years ago. The report attributes the drought to a change in the tropical rain belt that changed the pattern of monsoons. This change was attributed to the melting of the great ice sheets covering much of the Northern Hemisphere between 15,000 and 18,000 years ago.

However, the dates do not match well with the data of temperature change from the Greenland GISP2 Ice Cores discussed in the January 29 TWTW and sea level rise. As presented by Don Easterbrook, the GISP2 data reveal a warming of about 10 deg C (from minus 55 deg C) starting about 24,000 years ago, followed by an abrupt cooling, then a period of oscillating warming and cooling. This period was followed by a very abrupt warming about 15,000 years ago of about 12 deg C followed by an abrupt cooling than another abrupt warming about 14,000 years ago of about 4.5 deg C. As shown in Figure 17 of the 2008 NIPCC report, the most dramatic increases in sea levels began about 15,000 years ago and tapered off about 8,000 years ago. The temperature changes are unrelated to atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations, which are also measured in the GISP2 ice cores.

These data reveal that Greenland was up to 2.5 deg C warmer than today between 5000 and 8,000 years ago. A time in which, according to H.H. Lamb and others, the Sahara was quite wet. Lamb suggested that the drying of the Sahara may have been due to a shift in the intertropical convergence zone and its associated rain belt. Regardless of the exact cause, this is another dramatic example of significant climate change not associated with atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations or humans. Please see articles under "The Changing Climate."

Number of the Week: 65. According to the European Nuclear Society, there are 65 nuclear reactors under construction world-wide. China has 27 under construction (the World Nuclear Association now reports more than 25), The Russian Federation 11, India 5, Republic of Korea 5, Bulgaria, Taiwan, Japan, Slovak Republic, Ukraine have 2 each, Argentina, Brazil, Finland, France, Iran, Pakistan, and US have 1 each. Please see article under "Energy Issues." That Japan, the only country to experience the hostile use of nuclear weapons, and that the Ukraine, the country that experienced the greatest nuclear plant disaster, are building nuclear reactors reveals the extent to which nuclear fears control policies in other countries.

Readers in Australia, UK, US may wish to alert their legislators that their countries are losing the nuclear power race with Bulgaria and the Slovak Republic!

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see: www.sepp.org.

1. On the House Vote to Defund the IPCC

By Roy Spencer, droyospencer.com, Feb 19, 2011

<http://www.droyospencer.com/2011/02/on-the-house-vote-to-defund-the-ipcc/>

2. What do Climate Data Really Show? The Berkeley Climate Data Project

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Feb 19, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/02/what_do_climate_data_really_sh.html

3. Stronger Than Disaster

Editorial, IBD, Feb 22, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=563897&p=1>

[SEPP Comment: Unfortunately the article does not mention the world class disaster relief program discussed in an article by Bob Carter appearing in last week's TWTW.]

4. Spent Nuclear Fuel Is Anything but Waste

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Feb 21, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/02/110220091832.htm>

[“Failure to pursue a program for recycling spent nuclear fuel has put the U.S. far behind other countries and represents a missed opportunity to enhance the nation's energy security and influence other countries, the former chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said.”]

5. \$100 Oil Is Devil's Due For Drilling Bans

Editorial, IBD, Feb 23, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/564048/201102231857/The-Devils-Due.htm>

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

IG Finds NOAA Climategate Emails ‘Warrant Further Investigation.’ Top Scientist Thwarts Transparency Law

Press Release, Senator Inhofe, [H/t Anthony Watts, WUWT]

http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=597ab372-802a-23ad-468b-765a651134b0&Region_id=&Issue_id=

[SEPP Comment: This is Version # 1]

Scientists Are Cleared of Misuse of Data

By Leslie Kaufman, NYT, Feb 24, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/25/science/earth/25noaa.html?ref=earth>

[SEPP Comment: This is Version # 2]

United States Department of Commerce

The Inspector General

Report of Investigation of NOAA: Feb 18, 2011

http://www.oig.doc.gov/oig/reports/correspondence/2011.02.18_IG_to_%20Inhofe.pdf

[SEPP Comment: Actual report]

Defenders of the Orthodoxy

White House Science Advisor: Climate Change Skeptics are ‘Heretics’

By Cris Neefus, CNSNews, Feb 17, 2011 [H/t Bud Bromley]

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/holdren-climate-change-skeptics-there-ar>

War and Peace Over Holdren's Climate Testimony

By Jeffrey Mervis, Science Insider, Feb 18, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2011/02/war-and-peace-over-holdrens-climate.html?ref=hp&utm_source=buzzuk&utm_medium=site

Models guiding climate policy are ‘dangerously optimistic’

Computer models predicting future climate change are underestimating emissions and overestimating technology, warns climate scientist Kevin Anderson

By Nadya Anscombe, Guardian, UK, Feb 24, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]

[SEPP Comment: Same headline but different argument: none of the models indicate any possibility of a future ice age.]

‘Black carbon’ key to tackling climate threat: UN report

By Staff Writers (AFP) Feb 23, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Black_carbon_key_to_tackling_climate_threat_UN_report_999.html

Extreme Weather

Can Record Snowstorms & Global Warming Coexist?

By David Herring & Wayne Higgins & Mike Halpert, NOAA Climate Services, Mar 25, 2010 [H/t Anthony Watts, WUWT]

<http://www.climatewatch.noaa.gov/2010/articles/can-record-snowstorms-global-warming-coexist>

“Our modern understanding of the difference between weather, climate variability, and climate change reinforces the important points that not all parts of the globe will warm at the same rate, nor will warming proceed continuously.”

NOAA Climate Services

CSI: NOAA Climate Scene Investigators

<http://www.climatewatch.noaa.gov/2009/articles/csi-noaa-climate-scene-investigators>

Floods are manmade, you say now?

By JoNova, Australia, Feb 21, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/02/floods-are-manmade-you-say-now/#more-13400>

La Niña – she’s the wild child of weather and she’s causing havoc here and around the world.

Insight, SBS, Australia, Feb 22, 2011 [H/t Stewart Franks]

<http://news.sbs.com.au/insight/episode/index/id/346#overview>

<http://news.sbs.com.au/insight/episode/index/id/346#watchonline>

BP Oil Spill and Administration Control of Drilling

BP could have prevented blowout: investigator

By Staff Writers, AFP, Feb 20, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iYvig_7Y6vCAaamlV-JFwaGNEmeA?docId=CNG.2feda1c6289a29f15f093bf828524495.9a1

Energy independence means more domestic production

By Diana Furchtgott-Roth, Washington Examiner, Feb 24, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/02/energy-independence-means-more-domestic-production>

Pressures Mount to Resume Drilling

By Tennille Tracy and Ryan Tracy, NYT, Feb 25, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703905404576164792761814146.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

Let the Games Begin

House Passes Luetkemeyer Amendment to Halt Taxpayer Financing of UN Climate Panel

Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer, Press Release, Feb 19, 2011

<http://luetkemeyer.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=26§iontree=6,26&itemid=644>

Put the REINS on EPA

The "Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny" Act could put the kibosh on the EPA's greenhouse regulatory surge.

By Marlo Lewis, Pajamas Media, Feb 25, 2011

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/put-the-reins-on-epa/?singlepage=true>

Congress to NASA: Study Space! (Not Climate. That's Not Space)

The budget battle has come to NASA, where a massive amount of money is being spent on something that has nothing to do with NASA's mission.

By Art Norn, Pajamas Media, Feb 18, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/congress-to-nasa-study-space-not-climate-thats-not-space/>

Environmental groups launch effort to pressure House GOP on spending votes

By Andrew Restuccia, The Hill, Feb 19, 2011

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/677-e2-wire/145297-green-public-health-groups-to-pressure-house-gop-over-spending-votes>

Congress should stop funding Big Green lawsuits against the government

By Ron Arnold, Washington Examiner, Feb 24, 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/02/ron-arnold-congress-should-stop-funding-big-green-lawsuits-against-govern>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

PM to set price on carbon from July 1, 2012

By Anna Caldwell and Steven Scott, Courier-Mail, Feb 24, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/pm-to-set-price-on-carbon-from-july-1-2012/story-e6freon6-1226011295526>

[SEPP Comment: Sad news from Australia]

Does the lie matter? Only if you think Democracy does

By Jo Anne Nova, JoNova, Feb 26, 2011

<http://joannenova.com.au/2011/02/does-the-lie-matter-only-if-you-think-democracy-does/#more-13534>

[SEPP Comment: In response to Australia's proposed tax on carbon]

New Hampshire smacks down cap and trade

By Phil Kerpen, Daily Caller, Feb 23, 2011 [H/t Bud Bromley]

<http://dailycaller.com/2011/02/23/new-hampshire-smacks-down-cap-and-trade/#ixzz1EqriPbB4>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

E.P.A. Scales back Emission Rules

By John Broder, NYT, Feb 23, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/24/science/earth/24emissions.html?_r=1&emc=eta1

The EPA's Latest Unscientific Power Grab

By Jeff Stier, Townhall, Feb 23, 2011

http://townhall.com/columnists/jeffstier/2011/02/23/the_epas_latest_unscientific_power_grab

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Robbing California of energy

The House's decision to rescind about \$2 billion in Recovery Act funds and loan authority has jeopardized some \$40 billion of private industry investment in clean energy.

By US Senator Dianne Feinstein, Los Angeles Times, Feb 23, 2011

[SEPP Comment: The Federal government stopping certain taxpayer funded, highly questionable alternative energy programs is robbing California?]

Non-recourse finance set to increase in offshore wind sector

By Alison Ebbage, Wind Energy Update, Feb 16, 2011

http://social.windenergyupdate.com/industry-insight/non-recourse-finance-set-increase-offshore-wind-sector?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=WEU

“Markets that have favourable regulatory regimes will benefit most. Currently Germany, the UK and Belgium appeal most to lenders, as all have regulation in place to support offshore windfarm development as well as subsidies such as feed-in tariffs (FiTs) or Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs), which offer a guaranteed output price and thus reduce risk further for lenders.”

Your Tax Dollars at Risk

By Donn, Power America, Feb 23, 2011

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2011/02/23/your-tax-dollars-at-risk/>

[SEPP Comment: Another example of subsidizing alternative energy. There is some discrepancy between the cited costs of construction for new power facilities compared to those newly announced by the US Energy Information Administration. Also, SEPP has been unable to find any wind farm that publicly reports its production with an annual capacity significantly above 30%.]

Wind power will cost RI taxpayers \$1.5 M

By Tim White & Ted Nesi, WRPI com, Feb 18, 2011 [H/t Brad at Prescott]

http://www.wpri.com/dpp/target_12/wind-power-will-cost-ri-taxpayers

“In 2009, New Englanders got 42 percent of their electricity by burning natural gas and another 30 from nuclear power, according to ISO New England, the organization that manages the region’s 8,000-mile power grid. The next-biggest sources were coal, 12 percent; hydropower, 6 percent; and other renewables, 6 percent.” [SEPP Comment: No wonder so many attorney generals from New England are willing to beef up their political portfolios by demonizing coal.]

Energy Issues

Nuclear Reactors under Construction Worldwide

European Nuclear Society, Jan 19, 2011

<http://www.euronuclear.org/info/encyclopedia/n/nuclear-power-plant-world-wide.htm>

Westinghouse Launches Small Modular Reactor Design

By Staff Writers, Power News, Feb 23, 2011

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3477.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2148624&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e66050d0

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Drilling for an Oil Crisis

By Michael Lynch, NYT, Feb 24, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/25/opinion/25lynch.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha212>

[SEPP Comment: Peak oil is overblown.]

East Africa basks in big gas strikes

By Staff Writers, UPI, Feb 17, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujitat]

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/East_Africa_basks_in_big_gas_strikes_999.html

U.P.S. Finds a Substitute for Diesel: Natural Gas, at 260 Degrees Below Zero

By Matthew Wald, NYT, Feb 22, 2011

<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/u-p-s-finds-a-substitute-for-diesel-natural-gas-at-260-degrees-below-zero/?hp>

Alternative, Green Energy

Plant closure bursts Ga.'s biomass bubble

By Dan Chapman, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Feb 15, 2010 [H/t Jim Rust]

<http://www.ajc.com/business/plant-closure-bursts-ga-838588.html>

Panel: Green jobs company endorsed by Obama and Biden squandered \$535 million in stimulus money

By John Rossomando, Daily Caller, Feb 22, 2011 [H/t Catharine French]

<http://dailycaller.com/2011/02/22/panel-green-jobs-company-endorsed-by-obama-and-biden-squandered-535-million-in-stimulus-money/print/>

Obama's jolt to economy: 'Tripling' your electric bill

Experts forecast costs will skyrocket under burden of power-line financing

By Gene Koprowski, WorldNetDaily, Jan 9, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]

<http://www.wnd.com/?pageId=248109>

Obama's deprivation nation

Administration goes green while Europe retreats

Editorial, Washington Times, Feb, 22, 2011 [H/t Randy Randol]

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/feb/22/obamas-deprivation-nation/>

California Dreaming

Solar Energy Faces Tests On Greenness

By Todd Woody, NYT, Feb 23, 2011

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/24/business/energy-environment/24solar.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha25

[SEPP Comment: The green industry is opposed to coal, natural gas, oil, hydro, wind power, transmission lines, and now solar. It is opposed to electricity.]

Oh Mann!

A Climate Skeptic With a Bully Pulpit in Virginia Finds an Ear in Congress

By John Collins Rudolf, NYT, Feb 22, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/23/science/earth/23virginia.html?src=twrhp>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Arctic vs. Global Air Temperature Change

Reference: Chylek, P., Folland, C.K., Lesins, G., Dubey, M.K. and Wang, M. 2009. Arctic air temperature change amplification and the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation. *Geophysical Research Letters* 36: 10.1029/2009GL038777.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/23feb2011a5.html>

Millennial-Scale Cycling of Climate in China's Salawusu River Valley

Reference: Lu, Y., Li, B., Wen, X., Qiu, S., Wang, F., Niu, D. and Li, Z. 2010. Millennial-centennial scales climate changes of Holocene indicated by magnetic susceptibility of high-resolution section in Salawusu River Valley, China. *Chinese Geographical Science* 20: 243-251.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/23feb2011a4.html>

Effects of Seawater acidification on Phytoplankton Growth Rates

Reference: Berge, T., Daugbjerg, N., Andersen, B.B. and Hansen, P.J. 2010. Effect of lowered pH on marine phytoplankton growth rates. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 416: 10.3354/meps08780.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/22feb2011a5.html>

Soil Moisture Trends: IPCC Simulations vs. Real-World Observations

Reference: Li, H., Robock, A. and Wild, M. 2007. Evaluation of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment soil moisture simulations for the second half of the twentieth century. *Journal of Geophysical Research* 112: 10.1029/2006JD007455.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/feb/23feb2011a3.html>

The Changing Climate

Ancient Catastrophic Drought Leads to Question: How Severe Can Climate Change Become?

Extreme megadrought in Afro-Asian region likely had consequences for Paleolithic cultures

Press Release, National Science Foundation, Feb 24, 2011 [H/t WUWT]

http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=118718&org=NSF&from=news

[SEPP Comment: The alarmist tone of the press release takes away from the contents of the research.]

Pitt-Led Researchers Report 6,000-Year Climate Record Suggests Longer Droughts, Drier Wet Periods for Pacific Northwest

By Morgan Kelly, U. of Pittsburg News, Feb 21, 2011 [H/t Anthony Watts, WUWT]

<http://www.news.pitt.edu/news/Abbott-wet-dry-cycles-American-West>

[“The multi-university team used a sediment core from Washington state’s Castor Lake to unravel regional wet/dry cycles since 4,000 BCE and found longer, more extreme periods have occurred since 1200 AD, possibly associated with changing El Niño/La Niña patterns, according to a report in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*”]

Other Scientific Issues

Worldwide Government Spending On Space To Flatten Over The Next Five Years

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 18, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Worldwide_Government_Spending_On_Space_To_Flatten_Over_The_Next_Five_Years_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Several experts in space travel have privately commented to SEPP that China is aggressively moving forward with space exploration with the intent of colonizing the moon. If true, and if successful, this would be a true sputnik moment.]

Scientists say ocean currents cause microbes to filter light

By Denise Brehm, MIT Press Release, Feb 23, 2011 [H/t Anthony Watts, WUWT]

<http://web.mit.edu/press/2011/stocker-microbes.html>

Greater Germ Exposure Cuts Asthma Risk

By Shirley Want, WSJ, Feb 23, 2011

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704520504576162660949338624.html?mod=WSJ_hp_MIDDLENexttoWhatsNewsSecond

[SEPP Comment: May be behind a paywall.]

Mud made of fish poop

Fish excrement found in seafloor sediment forces scientists to rethink the way they reconstruct earth's climate history

By Hannah Waters, F1000, Feb 22, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]

<http://www.the-scientist.com/news/display/58022/>

Other Issues that May Be Of Interest

A Mini-Compromise in California's Water Wars

By Felicity Barringer, NYT, Feb 25, 2011

<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/25/a-mini-compromise-in-californias-water-wars/?ref=earth>

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

A Budget Blow to Our Climate

By Christina Simeane, Repower America, Feb 22, 2011

http://repoweramerica.org/blog/a-budget-blow-to-our-climate/?source=em-fwd&utm_source=crm_email&utm_medium=email

[SEPP Comment: Carbon dioxide is now called global warming pollution.]

The Dirty Energy Party

Editorial, NYT, Feb 21, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/opinion/22tue1.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha211>

[SEPP Comment: Those who dare question the orthodoxy are in favor of dirty energy – please do not tell plants carbon dioxide is dirty.]

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ARTICLES:

1. On the House Vote to Defund the IPCC

By Roy Spencer, droyspencer.com, Feb 19, 2011

<http://www.droyspencer.com/2011/02/on-the-house-vote-to-defund-the-ipcc/>

The climate change deniers have no one but themselves to blame for [last night's vote](#).

I'm talking about those who deny NATURAL climate change. Like Al Gore, John Holdren, and everyone else who thinks climate change was only invented since they were born.

Politicians formed the IPCC over 20 years ago with an endgame in mind: to regulate CO2 emissions. I know, because I witnessed some of the behind-the-scenes planning. It is not a scientific organization. It was organized to use the government-funded scientific research establishment to achieve policy goals.

Now, that's not necessarily a bad thing. But when they are portrayed as representing unbiased science, that IS a bad thing. If anthropogenic global warming – and ocean 'acidification' (now there's a biased and

totally incorrect term) — ends up being largely a false alarm, those who have run the IPCC are out of a job. More on that later.

I don't want to be misunderstood on this. IF we are destroying the planet with our fossil fuel burning, then something SHOULD be done about it.

But the climate science community has allowed itself to be used on this issue, and as a result, politicians, activists, and the media have successfully portrayed the biased science as settled.

They apparently do not realize that 'settled science' is an oxymoron.

The most vocal climate scientists defending the IPCC have lost their objectivity. Yes, they have what I consider to be a plausible theory. But they actively suppress evidence to the contrary, for instance attempts to study natural explanations for recent warming.

That's one reason why the public was so outraged about the ClimateGate e-mails. ClimateGate doesn't prove their science is wrong...but it does reveal their bias. Science progresses by investigating alternative explanations for things. Long ago, the IPCC all but abandoned that search.

Oh, they have noted (correctly I believe) that a change in the total output of the sun is not to blame. But there are SO many other possibilities, and all they do is dismiss those possibilities out of hand. They have a theory — more CO₂ is to blame — and they religiously stick to it. It guides all of the research they do.

The climate models are indeed great accomplishments. It's what they are being used for that is suspect. A total of 23 models cover a wide range of warming estimates for our future, and yet there is no way to test them for what they are being used for! *climate change predictions*.

Virtually all of the models produce decadal time scale warming that exceeds what we have observed in the last 15 years. That fact has been known for years, but its publication in the peer reviewed literature continues to be blocked.

My theory is that a natural change in cloud cover has caused most of the recent warming. Temperature proxy data from around the world suggests that just about every century in the last 2,000 years has experienced warming or cooling. Why should today's warmth be manmade, when the Medieval Warm Period was not? Just because we finally have one potential explanation – CO₂?

This only shows how LITTLE we understand about climate change...not how MUCH we know.

Why would scientists allow themselves to be used in this way? When I have pressed them on the science over the years, they all retreat to the position that getting away from fossil fuels is the 'right thing to do anyway'.

In other words, they have let their worldviews, their politics, their economic understanding (or lack thereof) affect their scientific judgment. I am ashamed for our scientific discipline and embarrassed by their behavior.

Is it any wonder that scientists have such a bad reputation among the taxpayers who pay them to play in their ivory tower sandboxes? They can make gloom and doom predictions all day long of events far in the future without ever having to suffer any consequences of being wrong.

The perpetual supply of climate change research money also biases them. Everyone in my business knows that as long as manmade climate change remains a serious threat, the money will continue to flow, and climate programs will continue to grow.

Now, I do agree the supply of fossil fuels is not endless. But we will never actually “run out”...we will just slowly stop trying to extract them as they become increasingly scarce (translation – more expensive). That’s the way the world works.

People who claim we are going to wake up one morning and our fossil fuels will be gone are either pandering, or stupid, or both.

But how you transition from fossil fuels to other sources of energy makes all the difference in the world. Making our most abundant and affordable sources of energy artificially more expensive with laws and regulations will end up killing millions of people.

And that’s why I speak out. Poverty kills. Those who argue otherwise from their positions of fossil-fueled health and wealth are like spoiled children.

The truly objective scientist should be asking whether MORE, not less, atmospheric carbon dioxide is what we should be trying to achieve. There is more published real-world evidence for the benefits of more carbon dioxide, than for any damage caused by it. The benefits have been measured, and are real-world. The risks still remain theoretical.

Carbon dioxide is necessary for life on Earth. That it has been so successfully demonized with so little hard evidence is truly a testament to the scientific illiteracy of modern society. If humans were destroying CO2 — rather than creating more — imagine the outrage there would be at THAT!

I would love the opportunity to cross examine these (natural) climate change deniers in a court of law. They have gotten away with too much, for too long. Might they be right? Sure. But the public has no idea how flimsy – and circumstantial – their evidence is.

In the end, I doubt the IPCC will ever be defunded. Last night’s vote in the House is just a warning shot across the bow. But unless the IPCC starts to change its ways, it runs the risk of being totally marginalized. It has almost reached that point, anyway.

And maybe the IPCC leadership doesn’t really care if its pronouncements are ignored, as long as they can jet around the world to meet in exotic destinations and plan where their next meeting should be held. I hear it’s a pretty good gig.

2. What do Climate Data Really Show? The Berkeley Climate Data Project

By S. Fred Singer, American Thinker, Feb 19, 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/02/what_do_climate_data_really_sh.html

The e-mails leaked from the University of East Anglia in November 2009 produced what is popularly called "Climategate." They exposed the thoroughly unethical behavior of a group of climate scientists, mainly in the UK and US, involved in producing the global surface temperature record used and relied on by governments.

Not only did these climate scientists hide their raw data and their methodology of selection and adjustment of temperature data, but they fought hard against all attempts by independent outside scientists

to replicate their results. They also undermined the peer-review system and tried to make it impossible for skeptical scientists to publish their work in scientific journals. There is voluminous evidence in the e-mails to this effect. In the process, they damaged not only the science enterprise -- full publication of data and methods, replication of results, open debate, etc -- but they also undermined the public credibility of all scientists.

However, the most serious revelation from the e-mails is that they tried to "hide the decline" in temperatures, using various "tricks" in order to keep alive a myth of rising temperatures in support of the dogma of anthropogenic global warming. There have now been a number of investigations of the activities of this group, mainly in the UK. These have all turned out to be complete whitewashes, aimed to exonerate the scientists involved. None of these investigations has even attempted to learn how and in what way the data might have been manipulated.

Much of this is described in the "Hockey Stick Illusion: Climategate and the corruption of science" by A. W. Montford. Meteorologist Joseph D'Aleo and others have made a commendable effort to show how data might have been altered. But an independent effort to reconstruct the global temperature results of the past century really demands a dedicated project with proper resources.

The Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature (BEST) Project aims to do what needs to be done: That is, to develop an independent analysis of the data from land stations, which would include many more stations than had been considered by the Global Historic Climatology Network. The Project is in the hands of a group of recognized scientists, who are not at all "climate skeptics" -- which should enhance their credibility. The Project is mainly directed by physicists, chaired by Professor Richard Muller (UC Berkeley), with a steering group that includes Professor Judith Curry (Georgia Tech) and Arthur Rosenfeld (UC Santa Barbara and Georgia Tech).

I applaud and support what is being done by the Project -- a very difficult but important undertaking. I personally have little faith in the quality of the surface data, having been exposed to the revealing work by Anthony Watts and others. However, I have an open mind on the issue and look forward to seeing the results of the Project in their forthcoming publications.

As far as I know, no government or industry funds are involved -- at least at this stage. According to the Project's website www.berkeleyearth.org, support comes mostly from a group of charitable foundations.

3. Stronger Than Disaster

Editorial, IBD, Feb 22, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=563897&p=1>

[SEPP Comment: Unfortunately the article does not mention the world class disaster relief program discussed in an article by Bob Carter appearing in last week's TWTW.]

Freedom: The 6.3 quake that rocked Christchurch, New Zealand, was a bad hit to a city that six months ago didn't realize it lived on a fault line. But amid the rubble, this country has the civil culture to recover quickly.

Sometimes the most telling indicators can be seen in little things. Hours after the quake struck, a British tourist posted a film on the Internet showing a huge rock slide rumbling down to houses on a street just outside Christchurch — and in the background, a Kiwi resident diligently sweeping away the debris so the cars could still get through.

Meanwhile, news photos showed other New Zealanders, acting on their own initiative, marching over to the badly damaged hotel district in the center of the city, and offering homeless tourists their beds.

Such acts can probably be more easily performed in a small country of 4 million than, say, a big U.S. city.

But these acts are the acts of a cohesive society steeped in freedom and democracy. Along with the heroic efforts of rescuers digging victims out of downed buildings and crushed cars, they point to a nation rich in the human capital and civil cohesion that come of it.

And they correspond to New Zealand's stellar rankings on every measure of human freedom.

Freedom House, in its annual Freedom in the World report, ranks New Zealand No. 1 for political freedom. The World Bank ranks New Zealand No. 1 globally for opening a business with an overall score of three for ease of doing business.

Transparency International ranks New Zealand No. 1 (tied with Denmark and Singapore) in its 2010 corruption perceptions index as the least corrupt place on earth.

The Heritage Foundation's 2011 Index of Economic Freedom ranks New Zealand at No. 4 globally on all measures of economic freedom, with particularly high scores in business freedom and property rights.

Seems that those conditions of economic and political freedom are necessary for the kind of society where strangers willingly sweep roads and help each other.

But they are also critical to the kind of society that can recover — much faster than anyone imagines — from a devastating natural disaster.

Economic freedom fosters self-reliance, for one.

Nobody was waiting around for the government to tell the Kiwis what to do. They weren't waiting for aid.

Fact is, they just acted, and did so at a time when they must have been mourning, given that their beautiful Victorian city had just seen its most prized landmarks, including its landmark cathedral, collapse.

Economic freedom also fosters human rights, the same kind that enabled the rescue effort.

Economic freedom, particularly in its respect for property rights, also fosters physical wealth. That too is a critical element to recovery.

Kiwis will get up on their feet faster than nations like Haiti, which suffered a comparable quake last year, because unlike Haiti, New Zealanders live in a free society with its free institutions that make wealth possible.

Like Chile, which took a massive quake hit last year as Haiti did, the cost will be high, but it won't take long to recover. In Chile, a society New Zealand has much in common with, the scars from the quake are already nearly all gone. Unfree Haiti, by contrast, remains infantilized and incapacitated by its billions in aid.

But even as New Zealand asks for nothing and picks itself up from the fall, it doesn't mean there aren't things the U.S. should be doing.

New Zealanders, citing their country's military contributions to the U.S. war in Afghanistan, think the quake should spur the U.S. to pass a free trade treaty.

The Obama administration has been working on a free trade pact with seven Pacific nations, one of which is New Zealand, but the effort is moving slowly.

Trade is part of economic freedom, and as this earthquake shows, it's a big part of recovery, not just for an economy, but for a society downed by a devastating natural disaster that came out of the blue.

4. Spent Nuclear Fuel Is Anything but Waste

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Feb 21, 2011 H/t Toshio Fujita]

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/02/110220091832.htm>

["Failure to pursue a program for recycling spent nuclear fuel has put the U.S. far behind other countries and represents a missed opportunity to enhance the nation's energy security and influence other countries, the former chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said."]

Dale Klein, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Texas System, said largely unfounded concerns and "long-held myths" about the reprocessing of spent fuel have prevented the U.S. from tapping into an extremely valuable resource.

Spent nuclear fuel, which includes some plutonium, often is inaccurately referred to as waste, Klein said.

"It is not waste," he said. "The waste is in our failure to tap into this valuable and abundant domestic source of clean energy in a systematic way. That's something we can ill-afford to do."

Klein, who also serves as an associate director at UT Austin's Energy Institute, made his remarks February 20 at the American Association for the Advancement of Science's (AAAS) annual meeting, in Washington, D.C.

Compared to other fuels used in the production of electricity, the energy density of uranium is remarkable, Klein said, noting that 95 percent of the energy value in a bundle of spent nuclear fuel rods remains available to be re-used.

"The once-through nuclear fuel cycle, which is our practice in the U.S., is an enormous waste of potential energy," he said.

Critics cite the potential for nuclear weapons proliferation as the biggest reason to oppose recycling. But such concerns are largely unfounded, Klein said.

"While it is true that the plutonium in recycled nuclear fuel is fissionable, no country in the world has ever made a nuclear weapon out of low-grade plutonium from recycled high burn-up nuclear fuel," he said. "It just doesn't work for a strategic or a tactical nuclear weapon."

While the U.S. has sat on the sidelines, other countries, including France, Japan, the United Kingdom, Russia, India, and China have dedicated significant resources toward their reprocessing programs, Klein added.

"U.S. leadership in this area has been lost, and the underlying technological capability and intellectual capital needed to compete internationally have diminished to near irrelevance."

Reprocessing not only recovers significant energy value from spent fuel, it substantially reduces the volume and radiotoxicity of high-level nuclear waste.

Today, U.S. utilities operating nuclear power plants continue to store spent nuclear fuel rods on site in pools of water, before eventually moving them to dry cask storage. And while there is some debate over

whether the casks should be located in one central storage site, the practice is widely accepted as safe and secure.

"That's another myth -- that we don't know how to safely store nuclear spent fuel," Klein said.

Establishing a program to recycle nuclear fuel will require a public-private partnership that operates outside normal Congressional appropriations and has a charter to manage the fuel over a period of decades, he asserted.

The government's Blue Ribbon Commission, chartered by the Department of Energy, is charged with making recommendations for the safe, long-term management of spent fuel. The 15-member commission is to issue a draft report this summer, with a final report to be completed in January 2012.

"At a time when we are seeking ways to limit carbon emissions from the generation of electricity, the recycling of spent nuclear fuel would appear to be a particularly good fit.

5. \$100 Oil Is Devil's Due For Drilling Bans

Editorial, IBD, Feb 23, 2011

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/564048/201102231857/The-Devils-Due.htm>

Energy: President Obama talks much of moving to sustainable energy. But as he blocks domestic drilling, the reality is he's outsourced U.S. oil needs to mad-dog dictators like Libya's Moammar Gadhafi. That's even less sustainable.

Oil prices hit \$100 a barrel Wednesday as thousands of Libyans marched in Tripoli. The crazed Gadhafi vowed to fight to "the last bullet," denouncing his own countrymen as "greasy rats" and turning his weapons of war on 1,000 of them.

He also threatened to incinerate his nation's oil wells as he goes down, an unsubtle suggestion to Big Oil companies operating in his country that they should act to save his regime.

As a result, oil is soaring because markets worry that a string of petro-tyrants will go down like Gadhafi and energy may soon become scarce.

How did it come to this? U.S. dependence on imports — from dictators like Gadhafi — is a big factor.

The problem is that we have no political will to drill. The U.S. has plenty of oil resources. Yet our president seems set on pursuing boutique alternative energy schemes dependent on huge public subsidies.

As that happens, U.S. dependence on imports grows.

It's not just Gadhafi who supplies oil, but so many others — from the oligarchs of Saudi Arabia, to the satraps of the Gulf, to the lunatic running Venezuela. All are at high risk of ending up on the business end of revolution, making them unreliable suppliers.

"The situation in Libya and the Middle East should serve as a wake-up call to the Obama administration to stop its uprising against domestic oil production," said Dan Kish of the Institute for Energy Research.

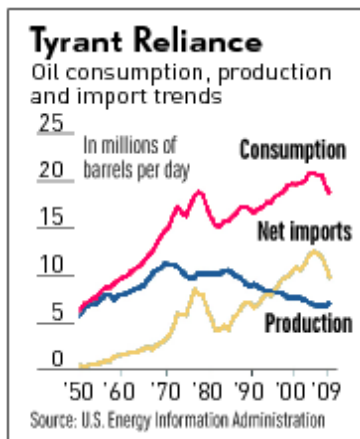
"Instead of rushing towards expensive and unreliable 'green' energy sources that rely on American taxpayer dollars," he said, "it is time to stop the embargo against our own American oil supplies."

This includes Obama's moratorium on oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska, and his subsequent refusal to issue Gulf permits, putting him in contempt of court.

America's energy needs are 17 times greater than they were 50 years ago, according to the Energy Department. But U.S. output of domestic energy has fallen by 40% in the same period.

That's a sorry picture given that the U.S. is surrounded by offshore oil and has 200 years' worth of shale oil on the mainland. Fact is, Obama's suppressing oil production here. And whether he knows it or not, he's outsourcing our energy future to the devil. Now we've been handed the bill, and the devil wants his due.

Energy: President Obama talks much of moving to sustainable energy. But as he blocks domestic drilling, the reality is he's outsourced U.S. oil needs to mad-dog dictators like Libya's Moammar Gadhafi. That's even less sustainable.



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