The Week That Was: 2011-05-28 (May 28, 2011)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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

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SAVE THE DATE: Heartland Institute is sponsoring the Sixth International Conference on Climate Change (ICCC-6) to take place in Washington, DC from breakfast Thursday, June 30, to noon Friday, July 1, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. This event will be more modest than in the past, yet as informative and, perhaps, even more challenging to the orthodoxy. The principal speakers include S. Fred Singer, Craig Idso, and Bob Carter – all major contributors to the NIPCC reports. Of course, SEPP is a co-sponsor. http://www.heartland.org/events/iccc2011

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Quote of the Week:

"[T]he sign [positive or negative] of the climate change radiative feedback associated with the combined effects of dynamical and temperature changes on extratropical clouds ***is still unknown."*** [Emphasis added.] IPCC AR4, WG1, p 637

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Number of the Week: 90 to 99 % Certain

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THIS WEEK:

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

Several readers of last week's TWTW commented that TWTW may be giving too much credit to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and others, by stating standard greenhouse theory projects that a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) may cause an increase in temperatures of about 1.2 deg C. The comments centered on the omission of a discussion of negative feedbacks. The comments were well taken. The calculated effect is derived from experiments under very simplified conditions. How the earth responds to an increase in temperatures from an increase in CO2 is another matter entirely.

The IPCC orthodoxy assumes that the earth will amplify the slight warming from an increase in CO2, a net positive feedback. To the orthodoxy, the climate system is unstable. The models used by the IPCC project the amplified warming will occur from an increase in water vapor over the tropics, water vapor having a strong greenhouse effect. These projections are not supported by empirical investigation and remain nothing more than speculative assumptions.

Other researchers suggest that the net feedback response will be negative, resulting in a warming less than the theoretically calculated warming. They consider that the climate system is inherently stable, and tends to dampen changes in temperatures rather than amplify them. Researchers continue to face a vexing problem. Clouds can vary as a feedback to temperature and for reasons other than temperature. When they vary for reasons other than temperature they cause temperature changes. Disentangling the difference from the data is a real problem. Thus far, the net negative feedback hypothesis also needs empirical verification.

Several other natural influences add to the problem of understanding climate change. One is natural oscillations in the earth's climate system, such as, the oscillations of the oceans, which may lead researchers to falsely project that a short term trend is indicative of a long term trend. The 50 year time period covered by the IPCC in its Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) is considered by many researchers as being too short. It covers a period of net warming and ignores periods of cooling. In AR4, the IPCC

essentially ignored the Medieval Warm Period, now increasingly empirically demonstrated, and its findings cannot explain the cooling of the Little Ice Age.

Another possible natural influence is external to the earth – the solar-cosmic ray hypothesis whereby cosmic rays, modulated by solar wind and solar magnetism, influence the low lying cloud cover over the earth, more low level clouds cause a cooling. This influence was discussed in last week's TWTW as well.

There is much to be learned, and contrary to the IPCC, and others, the science is not settled. Unfortunately, scientific funding by governments appears to be focused on model simulation supporting preconceived views rather than the development of scientific theory by hypothesis testing.
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Number of the Week: 90 to 99 percent certain. The percentage of certainty stated by the EPA that human emissions of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) are the primary cause of recent warming and are harmful to human health and welfare.
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EPA: Several readers have suggested that TWTW is unduly harsh on the US EPA. Now that litigation filings have been submitted to the court, it is opportune to discuss some of EPA justifications for its finding that GHG emissions, namely CO2, endanger human health and welfare (Endangerment Rule, ER).

EPA claims a 90 to 99% confidence in its ER that is based on three lines of evidence: 1) its "basic physical understanding" of the climate system, 2) output from computer models, and 3) recent temperatures are unusual in climate history. As discussed above and in the last TWTW, the second justification is absurd. The models have never been validated. Anyone familiar with climate history will know the third claimed line of evidence is simply false.

EPA's claim of basic physical understanding of the climate system is unfounded, as the quote of the week illustrates. Moreover, Table 2.11 in Appendix C, of Working Group 1, in the AR4 gives levels of understanding of various possible "forcings" (influences) on climate (temperatures). The influence of natural (ocean) oscillations and solar wind and magnetism are not considered. Of the 16 influences considered, the table states the level of understanding for each influence: for 5 influences the Level of Understanding (LOU) is very low, for 6 influences the LOU is low, for 2 the LOU is medium to low, for 2 the LOU is medium, and for one, GHG, it is high.

Given the methodology used by the IPCC, first to calculate natural influences and then, using these, to calculate human influences, including GHGs, it is scientifically impossible to derive a high level of understanding for the influence of GHGs. Using data with very low certainty, one cannot calculate a result and claim it has high certainty.

Another great inconsistency in the EPA-ER is use of different time periods to calculate a trend. EPA states that the failure of temperatures to rise since 1998 is too short and any trends may be misleading. Yet, elsewhere, EPA claims climate change is happening faster than previously estimated, global CO2 emissions since 2000 have been higher, Arctic sea ice melting faster, sea level rise more rapid, etc.

If anything, the lack of temperature change for over ten years would invalidate the models depended upon by the EPA, but these models have never been validated. The other issues may be responses to the current plateau. The alarmist view of the EPA ER is also repeated in the recent report by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) that was discussed in the May 14, 2011, TWTW. The AMAP used six years of data (ignoring contradictory data) to project Arctic conditions ninety years hence. Among the alarmists, there is no scientific consensus of what constitutes a scientific trend.

The above are but a few of the scientific issues that demonstrate how far EPA has departed from modern empirical science in its ER and its justifications for it. Please see referenced articles under "Litigation Issues."

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Extreme Weather: As suggested by Joe D'Aleo of ICECAP and Weather Bell, in an article referenced in the March 5, 2011, TWTW, this spring continues to be a harsh one for the southeastern and middle section of the United States. The indicators were not "global warming" but two cooling conditions. Cold conditions in the upper Mid-west, Canada, and the Ohio Valley caused major temperature differentials between those areas and the Gulf of Mexico. Temperature differences drive intense storms. The second condition was the cooling of the mid-Pacific due to a La Niña. Such conditions change the jet stream pattern, and tend to shift thunderstorms and tornadoes further to the southeast US than usual. Fortunately, for the southeast, but not for the Great Plains, the La Niña appears to be abating.

The flooding of the lower Mississippi continues to a large part from heavy flows from the Ohio River and now increased by storms in the Midwest. The Mississippi delta is flat, broad flood plain with extensive layers of sediments. What is not commonly understood is that the Mississippi delta does not start at or below New Orleans, but starts over 600 miles up-stream, roughly at the convergence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers at Cairo, Illinois. Unlike the fan-like Nile alluvial delta, the Mississippi alluvial delta is very long and relatively narrow. Over its course the delta has a very gradual change in elevation, an average of less than 0.01 percent, resulting in a slow current during ordinary water levels. In the 1800s, large paddle-wheeled boats which had low power were able to navigate up the river.

When the levees are breached, whether they are natural or man-made, it takes a long time, often several months, before the flood waters fully recede from the flooded areas. Such is the plight of those whose homes and farms have been flooded by actions to protect cities and sacrifice rural areas.

Of course, the continuing extreme weather has brought out the usual chorus singing the dangers of global warming, failing to explain how carbon dioxide emissions caused the cold in the upper Midwest and Canada, and how it causes La Niñas. The chorus has been amplified by the usual main stream media alarmists. Fortunately, many meteorologists are standing up to the chorus. Please see articles referenced under "Extreme Weather."

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Hurricanes: The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), among others, have forecast an above normal Atlantic hurricane season for the US. A politically conservative group challenged NOAA's forecast with a group of 5th grade students. Tropical storm expert Ryan Maue chastised the conservative group for ridiculing the dedicated scientists and the scientific expertise needed to make hurricane forecasts.

Ryan Maue is correct. Dedicated scientists should not be so satirized. However, the leadership of NOAA invites ridicule. It classifies the hurricane forecasting group under the Climate Prediction Center, National Centers for Environmental Prediction, NOAA / National Weather Service. Weather forecasting (with rigorous empirical testing) and Climate / Environmental Prediction (without rigorous empirical testing) are not complementary disciplines.

At least, NOAA has replaced its recent, absurd slogan: "NOAA *understands and predicts* changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. "

Now NOAA's slogan is a bit more restrained, though still megalomaniac: "NOAA's *mission is to understand and predict changes* in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources."

Please see articles referenced under "Extreme Weather."

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ARTICLES:

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

1. A religion without a God
By Derk Jan Eppink, Speech, Vaclav Klaus web site, May 26, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]
http://www.klaus.cz/clanky/2839

2. Inconvenient Truths About 'Renewable' Energy
By Matt Ridley, WSJ, May 21, 2011
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703421204576327410322365714.html

3. The running out of resources myth
By Brian Lee Crowley, Financial Post, May 26, 2011
http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/05/26/the-running-out-of-resources-myth/

4. Value Adding in Australia – the Beginning of the End?
By Viv Forbes, WUWT, May 23, 2011
http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/05/23/value-adding-in-australia-%E2%80%93-the-beginning-of-the-end/

5. The Myth of Killer Mercury
Panicking people about fish is no way to protect public health.
By Willie Soon and Paul Driessen, WSJ, May 25, 2011
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703421204576329420414284558.html?mod=djemEditorialPage_h

6. Oil "subsidy" and "tax breaks" nonsense
By Paul Driessen, Canada Free Press, May 21, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]
http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/36764

7. My Experience With A Lack of Proper Diligence and Bias In the NSF Review Process for Climate Proposals
By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, May 26, 2011
http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/
[SEPP Comment: As summarized: Please see the complete post.]

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Science: Is the Sun Rising?
Did Quiet Sun Cause Little Ice Age After All?
By Govert Schilling, Science Now, May 26, 2011
http://news.sciencemag.org/sciencenow/2011/05/did-quiet-sun-cause-little-ice-a.html
[SEPP Comment by Fred Singer: Both Schrijver and Foukal are missing the main point. It is solar wind and magnetic activity that's important -- not sun spots or faculae. Increased cosmic ray incidence produced more cloudiness -- hence cooling.

Climategate Continued
Climategate Documents Confirm Wegman's hypothesis

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, May 23, 2011
http://climateaudit.org/2011/05/23/climategate-documents-confirm-wegmans-hypothesis/#more-13628

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Lord Turnbull Trashes the IPCC
By Donna Laframboise, No Consensus, May 26, 2011 [H/t Bud Bromley]
http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/2011/05/26/lord-turnbull-on-the-ipcc/

The Personal Costs of Spurning Green Misanthropy
Book Review: By Daryl McCann, Quadrant, May 2011
http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2011/5/the-personal-costs-of-spurning-green-misanthropy

Atlantic 'conveyor belt' current – still going strong
Posted by Anthony Watts, WUWT, May 22, 2011
http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/05/22/atlantic-conveyor-belt-current-still-going-strong/

Polar Ice Rapture Misses Its Deadline
By James Taylor, Forbes, May 25, 2011
http://blogs.forbes.com/jamestaylor/2011/05/25/polar-ice-rapture-misses-its-deadline/

Defenders of the Orthodoxy

Freedom of information laws are used to harass scientists, says Nobel laureate
Sir Paul Nurse says climate scientists are being targeted by campaigns of requests designed to slow down their research
By Alok Jha, Guardian, UK, May 25, 2011 [H/t Timothy Wise]
http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/25/freedom-information-laws-harass-scientists
[SEPP Comment: Those making false, unsubstantiated claims should never be challenged? When have Freedom of Information laws been asserted prior to publication of results?]

A link between climate change and Joplin tornadoes? Never
By Bill McKibben, Washington Post, May 23, 2011 [H/t David Manuta]
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-link-between-climate-change-and-joplin-tornadoes-never/2011/05/23/AFrVC49G_story.html

Military advisors say climate change must factor into foreign policy
By Eric Berger, Houston Chronicle, May 24, 2011 [H/t Joe Bast]
http://blog.chron.com/sciguy/2011/05/military-advisors-say-climate-change-must-factor-into-foreign-policy/
[SEPP Comment: Military advisors took the warming activist PEW climate change bait hook, line, and sinker, now cannot admit their gullibility.]

US promotes climate aid to skeptical Congress
By Staff Writers, AFP, May 25, 2011
http://www.terradaily.com/reports/US_promotes_climate_aid_to_skeptical_Congress_999.html
[SEPP Comment: Federal agencies promoting a failed concept.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

On The Road To Rio+20
OECD's anti-Marshall Plan backs UN's follow-up to Rio
By Peter Foster, Financial Post, May 26, 2011 [H/t GWPF]

http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/05/26/peter-foster-on-the-road-to-rio20/

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate?

Report a push for Australia carbon tax?
By Staff Writers, UPI, May 24, 2011
http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Report_a_push_for_Australia_carbon_tax_999.html
[SEPP Comment: Panic the public to achieve political control!]

Measurement Controversy

I Stick to the Science
By Michael Lemonick, Interview with Richard Muller, Scientific American, June 2011
http://climateprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Muller.pdf

Comments by Anthony Watts:
http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/05/23/scientific-americans-interview-with-dr-richard-muller/

Extreme Weather

The Tornado – Pacific Decadal Oscillation Connection
By Roy Spencer, his blog, May 25, 2011
http://www.drroyspencer.com/

How to Make American Tornadoes
By John Steele Gordon, Commentary Magazine, May 24, 2011 [H/t Best of the Web]
http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/05/24/how-to-make-american-tornadoes/

No link between tornadoes and climate change: US
By Staff Writers, AFP, May 23, 2011
http://www.terradaily.com/reports/No_link_between_tornadoes_and_climate_change_US_999.html

Tornadoes and global warming – still no linkage
By Anthony Watts, WUWT, May 27, 2011
http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/05/27/tornadoes-and-global-warming-still-no-linkage/

Mississippi's floodbeaters
Editorial, IBD, May 23, 2011
http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/573045/201105231836/Mississippis-Floodbeaters.htm
[SEPP Comment: Why wait for the government to rescue you?]

NOAA 2011 Atlantic Season Outlook
Press Release, NOAA, May 19, 2011
http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/outlooks/hurricane.shtml

No Long-term Trend in Atlantic Hurricane Numbers
By Patrick Michaels, et al, World Climate Report, May 26, 2011
http://www.worldclimatereport.com/index.php/2011/05/26/no-long-term-trend-in-atlantic-hurricane-numbers/#more-492

Litigation Issues

Joint Opening Brief of Non-State Petitioners and Supporting Intevenors v. EPA

Coalition for Responsible Regulation, et al. May 20, 2011
http://www.nam.org/~/media/EB928803C0584BDA87D616CC7BF9D73A/Industry_Brief_in_Coalition_for_Responsible_Regulation_v_EPA_DC_Cir_Endangerment_rule.pdf

Brief of Texas for State Petitioners and Supporting Intervenors v. EPA
Coalition for Responsible Regulation, et al. May 20, 2011
https://www.oag.state.tx.us/newspubs/releases/2011/052311endangerment_brief.pdf

15 States Claim EPA Violated Clean Air Act with Endangerment Finding
By Staff Writers, Power News, May 25, 2011
http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3747.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2207488&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e660500d0
[SEPP Comment: So did many private organizations.]

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Chris Christie Strikes a Major Blow Against Cap-and-Trade
By Phil Kerpen, Fox News, May 26 2011
http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2011/05/26/chris-christie-strikes-major-blow-cap-trade/#ixzz1NVJyCMv8
[SEPP Comment: A small, first blow would better describe it.]

EPA asks NJ governor to reconsider decision to leave regional greenhouse gas initiative
By Angela Delli Santi, AP, May 26, 2011 [H/t Marc Morano, Climate Depot]
http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/ed66bd8a7290458d8b24a90f243b47ff/NJ--Christie-Cap-and-Trade/
[SEPP Comment: EPA Administrator defending her pet project.]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

FERC grants transmission rate incentives
By Staff Writers, Wind Energy Update, May 16-23, 2011
http://social.windenergyupdate.com/weekly-brief/weekly-intelligence-brief-may-16-23?utm_source=http%3a%2f%2fcommunicator.firstconf.com%2flz%2f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=24+may+WEU+ebrief&utm_term=Offshore+wind+skills+shortage&utm_content=533066
[SEPP Comment: Additional ratepayer subsidies to offshore wind.]

EU hails UK decision to cut emissions by 50 percent
By Andrew Willis, EUobserver, May 18, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]
http://euobserver.com/885/32350
[SEPP Comment: Of course, but who pays the cost?]

EU steps up pressure for maritime emissions deal
By Andrew Willis, EUobserver, May 17, 2011 [H/t Catherine French]
http://euobserver.com/885/32346
[SEPP Comment: The emissions are minuscule compared with the emissions of China.]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

EPA's green tyranny stifles America
By Rich Trzupek, Washington Examiner, May 25, 2011
http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/2011/05/epas-green-tyranny-stifles-america

Mercury
By Donn Dears, Power America, May 24, 2011 [H/t Joe Bast]
http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/
[SEPP Comment: The scientific concept of toxicity is totally lost on regulators such as the EPA.]

The United Nations-States Environmental Protection Agency
By Dennis Ambler, SPPI, May 27, 2011
http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/originals/the_un_states_epa.html
"In view of the rejection by the EPA of challenges to their endangerment finding, why would we be surprised to find that they have a long-term stake in the IPCC's climate models and in the continuance of the IPCC itself."

Environmental report raises public health, pollution concerns about Virginia coal-fired plant
By Staff Writers, AP, May 23, 2011
http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/environmental-report-raises-public-health-pollution-concerns-about-virginia-coal-fired-plant/2011/05/23/AFxSGd9G_story.html
[SEPP Comment: A report using EPA models devoid of scientific rigor is used to challenge affordable, needed electricity.]

EPA Admits Error in Proposed Mercury MACT Rule
By Staff Writers, Power News, May 25, 2011
http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/3746.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2207488&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e660500d0
[SEPP Comment: Perhaps court challenges are affecting EPA's arrogance of invincibility.]

Next Generation Fuel Economy Sticker – To Boldly Label What No Agency Has Labeled Before
By Marlo Lewis, Cooler Heads Digest, May 25, 2011
http://www.globalwarming.org/2011/05/25/next-generation-fuel-economy-sticker-to-boldly-label-what-no-agency-has-labeled-before/#more-8784

Regulators on the March Around the World

Water isn't the problem
Water reform does not have to be water torture
By Ron Pike, Quadrant, AU, May 27, 2011
http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2011/05/water-isn-t-the-problem

Energy Issues

Energy Myths of the Left
By Ross Kaminsky, American Spectator, May 27, 2011
http://spectator.org/archives/2011/05/27/energy-myths-of-the-left
[SEPP Comment: And on the political Right]

Natural Gas a Natural Winner? Let the (Transportation) Market Decide!
By E. Calvin Beisner, Master Resource, May 24, 2011
http://www.masterresource.org/2011/05/natural-gas-natural-winner/#more-15146

Nuclear Fears & Responses

Unusual earthquake gave Japan tsunami extra punch

By Staff Writers, SPX, May 27, 2011
http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Unusual_earthquake_gave_Japan_tsunami_extra_punch_999.html
[SEPP Comment: No one knows how to plan for the unknown, unknown.]

U.N. opens probe into crippled nuke plant
Cores likely melted at all three reactors
By Malcolm Foster & Mari Yamaguchi, AP, May 25, 2011
http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/may/25/un-opens-probe-into-crippled-nuke-plant/

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?
Shale motherloade brings world of change
By Ben Wolfgang, Washington Times, May 22, 2011
http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/may/22/marcellus-shale-motherlode-brings-world-of-change/
[SEPP Comment: First of two parts – no subsidies needed, or requested.]

Locals cash in on natural gas boom in Pa.
By Ben Wolfgang, Washington Times, May 23, 2011
http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/may/23/locals-cash-in-on-pennsylvanias-natural-gas-boom/
[SEPP Comment: See above.]

Using the energy in oil shale without releasing carbon dioxide in a greenhouse world
By Staff Writers, SPX, May 27, 2011
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Using_the_energy_in_oil_shale_without_releasing_carbon_dioxide_in_a_greenhouse_world_999.html
[SEPP Comment: How to limit the production from one of the most extensive oil deposits in the world.]

BP Oil Spill and Administration Control of Drilling
"The Worst Environmental Disaster in U.S. History!" (One Year Later)
By Humberto Fontova, Townhall, May 26, 2011
http://townhall.com/columnists/humbertofontova/2011/05/26/the_worst_environmental_disaster_in_us_history!_one_year_later
[SEPP Comment: Little remains except the excessive fears and the regulations destructive to the American oil industry.]

BP oil spill partly blamed for Gulf dolphin deaths
By Staff Writers, AFP, May 27, 2011
http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ike6DDr-0U21frwfiNb8gR5_M2Og?docId=CNG.786a247f547d853c8e2d1faaf7adddf7.1301
[SEPP Comment: This is scientific reporting?: …so the deaths "may also be seeing an indirect effect stemming from the BP oil spill," he said.]

The Administration's No New Energy Policy
By Elizabeth Ames Jones, American Thinker, May 27, 2011
http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/05/the_administrations_no_new_ene.html

China gets massive deep-water rig
By Staff Writers, UPI, May 25, 2011 [H/t Toshio Fujita]
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/China_gets_massive_deep-water_rig_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Is the US losing the race for deep-water drilling to China? Given US government policies, this may be more plausible than the US is losing the alternative energy race to China.]

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy

Non-fossil fuels to take up 11.4% of China's energy use
By Staff Writers, China Daily, Mar 4, 2011
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2011-03/04/content_12117490.htm
[SEPP Comment: Contrary to what Western alternative-energy politicians claim, in China, hydro and nuclear will constitute most of alternative energy. Coal will remain the king.]

Performance of an arch dam affected by the relaxation of its foundation following excavation
By Staff Writers, SPX, May 24, 2011
http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Performance_of_an_arch_dam_affected_by_the_relaxation_of_its_foundation_following_excavation_999.html
[SEPP Comment: Possibly the greatest non-natural human and environmental disasters have come from dam failures.]

New York wind: Much ado for so little
By Staff Writers, Wind Action, May 9, 2011 [H/t Randy Randol]
http://www.windaction.org/faqs/31912

FERC grants transmission rate incentives
By Staff Writers, Wind Energy Update, May 16-23, 2011
http://social.windenergyupdate.com/weekly-brief/weekly-intelligence-brief-may-16-23?utm_source=http%3a%2f%2fcommunicator.firstconf.com%2flz%2f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=24+may+WEU+ebrief&utm_term=Offshore+wind+skills+shortage&utm_content=533066

Charging Ahead
To speed along the success of the electric car, improvements in battery chemistry will matter as much as the price of oil
By Ronald Bailey, Reason, May 23, 2011
http://reason.com/archives/2011/05/23/charging-ahead

Master Short Seller Jim Chanos Targets First Solar and Renewables
By Agustino Fontevecchia, Forbes, May 26, 2011 [H/t Conrad Potemra]
http://blogs.forbes.com/afontevecchia/2011/05/26/master-short-seller-jim-chanos-targets-first-solar-and-renewables/?partner=yahootix

California Dreaming

Aggressive Efficiency and Electrification Needed to Cut California Emissions
By Staff Writers, SPX, May 27, 2011
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Aggressive_Efficiency_and_Electrification_Needed_to_Cut_California_Emissions_999.html

Interesting News from California
By Donn Dears, Power America, May 27, 2011
http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2011/05/27/interesting-news-from-california/

Oh Mann!

Court Orders University of Virginia to Produce Documents of Dr. Michael Mann
Press Release, American Tradition Institute, May 25, 2011
http://www.atinstitute.org/court-orders-university-of-virginia-to/

Still Hiding The Decline?
Editorial, IBD, May 26, 2011
http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/573513/201105261840/Still-Hiding-The-Decline-.htm

Audit 'Big U'
By Max Borders, Washington Examiner, May 27, 2011
http://washingtonexaminer.com/blogs/opinion-zone/2011/05/audit-big-u
[SEPP Comment: University "stonewalling" prompts a response]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC
For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

Active Tornado Seasons, Big Outbreaks and Stronger tornadoes Have been Shown to Be Associated With La Ninas and Natural Variability in the Pacific
Reference: Knowles, J.B. and Pielke Sr., R.A. 2005. *The Southern Oscillation and its effect on tornadic activity in the United States*. Atmospheric Science Paper No. 755, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, 15 pp. (Originally prepared in 1993, published as a Atmospheric Science Paper in March 2005).
http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/may/24may2011a1.html

Ocean pH Tolerance in Two Important Antarctic Invertebrates
Reference: Ericson, J.A., Lamare, M.D., Morley, S.A. and Barker, M.F. 2010. The response of two ecologically important Antarctic invertebrates (*Sterechinus neumayeri* and *Parborlasia corrugatus*) to reduced seawater pH: effects on fertilization and embryonic development. *Marine Biology* **157**: 2689-2702.
http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/may/24may2011a2.html

What Does the World Health Organization Study of global Health Risks Imply about Global Warming's Health Risks?
Reference: de Jager, C. and Duhau, S. 2009. Episodes of relative global warming. *Journal of Atmospheric and Solar-Terrestrial Physics* 71: 194-198.
http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2011/may/24may2011a3.html

Climate Models Need to Render the Past Before Projecting the Future
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Food for Fuel

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Study details path to sustainable aviation biofuels industry in Northwest
By Staff Writers, SPX, May 27, 2011
http://www.biofueldaily.com/reports/Study_details_path_to_sustainable_aviation_biofuels_industry_in_Northwest_999.html
[SEPP Comment: The Clinton Administration banned cutting of Western "old growth forests." Now we can cut them? Biofuels were the major non-muscle power (human and animal) of the US until wood was supplanted by coal in the 1880s. By then, most of the forests in the east had been cut down.]

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ARTICLES:

1. A religion without a God
By Derk Jan Eppink, Speech, Vaclav Klaus web site, May 26, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]
http://www.klaus.cz/clanky/2839

Last weekend on May 21, American Christian preacher Harold Camping, once again encountered his 'Disappointment Day'. For years he announced the end of times, predicting May 21 to be Judgment Day. On that day, the world would be destroyed and only 'a chosen few' would make it to heaven.

On Judgment Day, the preacher took a seat in front of his television to await news events. He expected a live report of CNN covering a wave of earthquakes that ultimately would lead to global demise.

But nothing happened.

Instead, CNN focused on the Frenchman Dominique Strauss-Kahn who lost his way and senses in a New York hotel room. For 'DSK' indeed, the world collapsed. The preacher was disappointed that apocalypses remained confined to only one person and possibly some of his friends in Paris belonging to *la gauche caviar*. The preacher fled to a motel to escape international media.

Generally, the advantage of religion is that you do not have to take 'facts' into account. Like doomsday announcer Camping, you simply believe and preach, hoping that facts will follow. Western political elites live in a secularized world, a world without God. But religion - a matter of belief - does apparently remain a need of human mankind. In particular, progressive political elites have abolished God, while clinging to notoriously religious features like 'fear', 'guilt', 'final judgement', 'redemption', 'sin' and 'salvation', as part of their political philosophies.

God is gone, but the rest stayed on. Climate Change is just an example of this phenomenon. The concept can only be effective if there is 'guilt' (politically incorrect behaviour of human mankind), 'fear' (doomsday), if there is 'sin' (acts of unprincipled unbelievers), and finally salvation (brought about by the NGO´s of the Green Movement). And if there is somehow a substitute Jesus on top, as impersonated by Al Gore, secular religion gets rooted in political communities trying to turn it into public policy all people have to adhere to.

It takes courage to withstand religion-based political philosophies. You will be depicted as a heretic, as anti-human, as narrow-minded, as autistic and stupid. In fact, like in theocracies any opponent should be dispatched to the dustbin of history. When climate change was minted into religion and subsequently put on the political agenda, carefully orchestrated by celebrities and media consultants, it became a wave of self-righteousness. There was no way to escape.

Yet a few risk-daring politicians rose to the occasion. The first was Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic and a dissident by inclination. He simply raised factual questions secularized religions can hardly cope with.

That is what he did with Communism which was, after all, an elaborated quasi-religious philosophy pretending to lead human mankind to the 'Promised Land' on Earth. And here again, even as President of an EU member state he challenged the fundamentals of a policy pretending to save the world from Doomsday.

Many politicians publish books. Very often, these books are written by other people. Very often, these books are glossy and self-glorifying. Very often, these books make no impact whatsoever and they are finally shelved in the basement of the party headquarter. Mostly, these books are dead upon arrival in the bookstore.

Klaus takes on nonsensical thinking regardless of the status of the author himself. In 2009, he visited the European Parliament to tell his audience that they were 'disconnected' from reality. He stated that a Parliament without a legitimate opposition is not really a Parliament. In fact, it is a church singing the gospel of the 'ever closer Union'. Some members were shocked, left the Plenary and started crying in the corridor. Yesterday, Ivo Belet one of those weeping members, published an opinion article in a Flemish newspaper denouncing NVA-figurehead Bart De Wever for meeting the Anti-Christ from the Czech Republic. Belet, a slavish poodle of EU figureheads, is barking up the wrong tree. The European elite demand flattery and praise; not to criticism, let alone unconventional thinking.

It takes courage to challenge fashionable thinking. For 5 years, I worked in the cabinet of former Commissioner Frits Bolkestein. The Dutch Commissioner was a non federalist and a climate change sceptic in the Commission. For most of his colleagues he was the 'devil in disguise'. You can imagine the bumpy ride he had in Brussels; he was a 'non believer' in a church of devoted federalists.

Once he got a letter from former Belgian Commissioner, Etienne Davignon, a self-appointed viceroy of the United States of Belgium, who said that a non federalist should not be member of the European Commission. He demanded a purge to restore the purity of the Institution.

Ten years ago, Bolkestein publicly said that the Euro would derail if not underpinned by sound monetary policy and iron-clad criteria of the Stability and Growth Pact. He also stated that a common EU immigration policy based on unenforced external borders would generate a political backlash beyond belief. He was laughed at. But now, the political elite of the EU is not laughing anymore. They wasted ten years of policy-making and still, they would rather drive into a brick wall than to admit that they made mistakes.

Jean Marie Dedecker equally has the courage to stick out his neck. As a former Judo player and coach he is not risk adverse. On the contrary, he likes the fray and smashing his opponents on the ground, sooner the better.

And that is precisely why he has written the introduction to the Dutch version of the book President Klaus is launching here today. He belonged to the first in Belgium to challenge the preachers of doom and climate change. Belgium only recently abolished God, and for those who were still in doubt some catholic leaders and priests did the rest.

Flanders was in urgent need for a religious substitute that would be able to micromanage the lives of the people. Obviously, Dedecker was vilified by the political elites and the media which had turned into an extension of the green movement and its preachers in politics.

Both Klaus and Dedecker focused on facts, rather than on speculation and emotional manipulation. They challenged the issues head-on by raising difficult questions, and by doing so they gradually saw the narrative of climate change unravel. Later on, a series of scandals revealed that so-called scientific researchers had manipulated their work in order to serve the dogmas of their beliefs. The Copenhagen Summit resulted in failure and, demonstrations against climate change even had to be cancelled because it was to cold and frosty in the Danish capital.

Now, climate change does not have that mythical spot on the political agenda it had a few years ago. However, it remains on the agenda of political elites in the EU. Some people really do believe; others simply pretend in order to sustain a quasi-progressive image. But the man in the street never embraced climate change and why? The climate has been changing as long as there is a climate, even in times in which people were running around naked and living in caves. One slight change in the activity of the Sun has an impact on the entire galaxy. Human behaviour is just one of the many elements. Therefore, the religious zeal did not stick because 'human guilt' could not be established. And 'guilt' is what it takes to make a religion work, even a religion without a God.

Therefore, a democracy needs people like Klaus and Dedecker, people who speak out when nobody does, people who stand out when others follow the flow and people who lash out when many bend towards submission. This book will certainly be a much welcome recipe against political overheating in Flanders and the reality-check which is the necessary basis for any sound public policy.

Derk Jan Eppink, the speech on the occasion of launching Blauwe Planeet, t'Stadleest bookshop, Antwerp, May 25, 2011
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2. Inconvenient Truths About 'Renewable' Energy

By Matt Ridley, WSJ, May 21, 2011
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703421204576327410322365714.html

What does the word "renewable" mean?

Last week the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a thousand-page report on the future of renewable energy, which it defined as solar, hydro, wind, tidal, wave, geothermal and biomass. These energy sources, said the IPCC, generate about 13.8% of our energy and, if encouraged to grow, could eventually displace most fossil fuel use.

It turns out that the great majority of this energy, 10.2% out of the 13.8% share, comes from biomass, mainly wood (often transformed into charcoal) and dung. Most of the rest is hydro; less than 0.5% of the world's energy comes from wind, tide, wave, solar and geothermal put together. Wood and dung are indeed renewable, in the sense that they reappear as fast as you use them. Or do they? It depends on how fast you use them.

One of the greatest threats to rain forests is the cutting of wood for fuel by impoverished people. Haiti meets about 60% of its energy needs with charcoal produced from forests. Even bakeries, laundries, sugar refineries and rum distilleries run on the stuff. Full marks to renewable Haiti, the harbinger of a sustainable future! Or maybe not: Haiti has felled 98% of its tree cover and counting; it's an ecological disaster compared with its fossil-fuel burning neighbor, the Dominican Republic, whose forest cover is 41% and stable. Haitians are now burning tree roots to make charcoal.

You can likewise question the green and clean credentials of other renewables. The wind may never stop blowing, but the wind industry depends on steel, concrete and rare-earth metals (for the turbine magnets), none of which are renewable. Wind generates 0.2% of the world's energy at present. Assuming that energy needs double in coming decades, we would have to build 100 times as many wind farms as we have today just to get to a paltry 10% from wind. We'd run out of non-renewable places to put them.

You may think I'm splitting hairs. Iron ore for making steel is unlikely to run out any time soon. True, but you can say the same about fossil fuels. The hydrocarbons in the earth's crust amount to more than 500,000 exajoules of energy. (This includes methane clathrates—gas on the ocean floor in solid, ice-like form—which may or may not be accessible as fuel someday.) The whole planet uses about 500 exajoules a year, so there may be a millennium's worth of hydrocarbons left at current rates.

Contrast that with blue whales, cod and passenger pigeons, all of which plainly renew themselves by breeding. But exploiting them caused their populations to collapse or disappear in just a few short decades. It's a startling fact that such "renewable" resources keep running short, while no non-renewable resource has yet run out: not oil, gold, uranium or phosphate. The stone age did not end for lack of stone (a remark often attributed to the former Saudi oil minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani).

Guano, a key contributor to 19th-century farming, was renewable fertilizer, made from seabird dung harvested off Peruvian and Namibian islands, but it soon ran out. Modern synthetic fertilizer is made from the air and returns to the air via denitrifying bacteria, yet few would call it a renewable resource. Even fossil fuels are renewable in the sense that they are still being laid down somewhere in the world—not nearly as fast as we use them, of course, but then that's true of Haiti's forests and Newfoundland's cod as well.

And then there is nuclear power. Uranium is not renewable, but plutonium is, in the sense that you can "breed" it in the right kind of reactor. Given how much we dislike plutonium and breeder reactors, it seems that the more renewable nuclear fuel is, the less we like it.

All in all, once you examine it closely, the idea that "renewable" energy is green and clean looks less like a deduction than a superstition.
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3. The running out of resources myth

By Brian Lee Crowley, Financial Post, May 26, 2011
http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/05/26/the-running-out-of-resources-myth/

The premise behind the question "Are we running out of natural resources?" is terribly mistaken. There is indeed a finite quantity of fossil fuels and other resources in the Earth's crust. But that does not mean that we will ever run out of them. In fact, human beings will likely cease using fossil fuels long before we have used them up, and this transition is independent of any policy designed to speed up the development of alternative energy sources.

Fears that we are running out of commodities are not new. In the 18th century, Thomas Malthus predicted that mass starvation would result from an inability of the food supply to adjust for rapid population growth. In the 1970s, the Club of Rome predicted massive shortages of natural resources due to overconsumption and overpopulation, with disastrous effects on human health and material well-being. In 1980, *The Global 2000 Report to the President* noted that: "If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically, and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now.… "

But the ecosystem hasn't collapsed. We haven't run out of oil. We are still successfully feeding ourselves. Our incomes are rising and our health status is improving around the globe. Why?

First, while it might be popular, it is quite incorrect to think of natural resources as not only exhaustible, but on the verge of being exhausted. If natural resources were actually getting scarcer, then their price would rise. That's part of what prices do: They signal shortages and availability, and trigger exploration and innovation where required.

But the price of natural resources has been remarkably steady or even declining for centuries. Yes, the recent entry of developing countries like China and India into the marketplace may have moved natural resources prices temporarily higher, but that increase is not because of shortages, but chiefly because of China's fondness for old-fashioned and highly inefficient mercantilism.

In fact, thanks to human ingenuity, the "carrying capacity" of the planet—its ability to support a greater human population with increasing living standards — is not fixed, but is hugely variable, depending on how much of our intelligence we mix with the natural world. Put another way, we could say that the availability of natural resources is not determined merely by the quantity of such resources in the earth, but by the interaction between such resources and our ability to squeeze more value out of them.

We now require less and less land to feed each human being. We need less steel for each car, and less gasoline for each mile travelled than ever before. And that minimum is falling all the time. Human ingenuity is creating cheaper alternatives, or finding ways to increase the supply, both of which ease shortages.

Consider the telephone. In the last century, a forest of utility poles carried hundreds of copper wires that connected telephones to each other. Today, if we had to run that many wires to every person wanting a phone, it would probably be beyond the limit of our planet's copper resources, and copper prices would be astronomical.

The reality is that the long-term price of copper has been stable or falling for years, overhead wires are disappearing, and those cables that do connect us are usually fibre-optic, made of cheap and plentiful materials that carry millions more bits of data per second than the old copper wires did. Moreover, we have developed a whole wireless technology that is not connected by any physical object at all. We are vastly extending the reach of the telephone, yet using fewer and fewer resources to do so.

A similar effect occurs with energy. The doomsayers of the 1970s thought we would have run out of oil by now because they compared knowledge about the state of supply then with rates of consumption then, and concluded that those available supplies would soon be exhausted. But we have consumed 40 more years' worth of oil since then and yet find ourselves with more reserves than we believed we had in 1970.

That is possible because the supply of oil isn't only what is in the earth's crust. Supply is also determined by the application of human intelligence to the problem of finding the oil we need. Today's extra reserves are not due chiefly to discoveries of new deposits, but from wringing more supply from already known reserves through enhanced recovery techniques.

Alberta's oil sands are a classic example. A few decades ago, people knew that the oil sands existed, but the oil they contained was not accessible, or the technology to make it so was too expensive when compared with more conventional sources of oil. But human ingenuity and financial capital have shifted the oil sands from theoretical but non-recoverable reserves into recoverable ones.

At current prices and technology, we can only recover about 10% of the oil in the oil sands. Yet that 10% is enough to make Canada's new reserves the second largest in the world. When we can increase the recovery rate to 20%, we will once again vastly increase the supply of oil available to humanity with no increase in the quantity in the earth's crust.

Another example of technological innovation opening vast new deposits of energy is hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. This new process has opened up enormous new deposits of natural gas worldwide. Indeed, some analysts predict that shale gas supplies will constitute as much as half of the natural gas production in North America in less than a decade. Similarly, we have not yet developed gas hydrates as an energy source because the technology to do so economically does not yet exist. Yet there is estimated to be more energy content in gas hydrate deposits around the world than in all other fossil fuels combined.

We are nowhere near to running out of natural resources. Human creativity and financial resources together will ensure a continued supply of all the resources we need. The exact form those resources will take cannot be known today, however. It relies on future innovations, which are, by their nature, unpredictable because they will be the fruit of our imagination and curiosity. That is why the human mind is the greatest natural resource of all.

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4. Value Adding in Australia – the Beginning of the End?

By Viv Forbes, WUWT, May 23, 2011

http://wattsupwiththat.com/2011/05/23/value-adding-in-australia-%E2%80%93-the-beginning-of-the-end/

The first industries of Australia were farming and mining and these two have been the backbone of the nation ever since. Both are threatened by the taxaholics in Canberra.

Shorthorn and Brahman cattle arrived with the first fleet and coal was discovered by convicts at Newcastle in 1791, just three years after the First Fleet arrived. The first Merino sheep arrived in 1797 and coal mining started in 1798. Since then mining and farming have earned the majority of Australia's income.

Wool and wheat, gold and silver, butter and cheese, copper and lead-zinc, leather and tallow, iron and steel, sugar and wine, coal and hydro-carbons, meat and mutton, aluminium and uranium, timber and fish, nickel and titanium – these comprise Australia's Magic Pudding.

But the Gillard/Green/Garnaut Carbon Tax Coalition hate our primary industries because they all depend on carbon fuels and produce the carbon dioxide that feeds our crops. Our backbone industries are seen as dreaded "polluters" and treated like noxious weeds and serpents to be removed from the green Garden of Eden.

Our pioneering squatters and prospectors blazed the trails which Cobb and Co turned into the roads of Australia. Wool from the merinos, almost alone, carried the nation until the 1850′s when metals started to create wealth – lead, copper and gold were discovered in the 1840′s and 1850′s. Mining started soon after and then cattle raising became profitable to feed the miners. Better roads, towns and then railways were built to move our primary products to the smelters, spinners, millers and tanners in Europe. Ever since, our great primary industries and the industries dependent on them have supported all Australians.

Mining is largely a materials handling operation, and it needs a lot of energy for mining, crushing, grinding, smelting, refining and transport.

The first copper mines extracted only high grade surface ore. They mined it selectively using human muscle power, packed it to the coast using camels, donkeys, horses and bullocks, and shipped it on sailing clippers to smelters in Europe. All stages used politically correct "green" energy.

But "green" transport moves slowly. Some loads of ore that looked profitable when they left the Peak Downs Copper Mine in central Queensland on donkeys, were sold at a loss, months later, when they landed at the copper smelter in Wales. Mining was thus an intermittent business – booming when metal prices were high, closing when prices fell.

But the high grade surface ores never last long, and the deeper primary ore is generally much lower grade. It was OK to send 40% copper ore from Cloncurry to the coast using horses and drays, but ore containing just 2% copper would not cover the costs.

So the first metal processing started with primitive on-site smelters (often using wood and charcoal, both "green" energy). Smelters removed most of the impurities leaving crude metal with +95% copper which was exported to overseas refineries. Later, Australians developed the flotation process to produce metal concentrates to feed the smelters. And trucks and trains started to carry value-added products to the coast.

The great Mount Isa Mine was discovered in 1923 – lead smelting started in 1931 and metal smelting at Mount Isa has continued ever since – 80 years of value adding in Australia.

Early in World War II, Australia found itself short of copper and Mount Isa was asked if it could produce copper. A crash program took place to convert the lead smelter to producing copper and the first blister copper was poured at Mount Isa in1942. Refining of blister copper started in Townsville in 1959.

Mines can only be where the deposits are found. But smelters and refineries can be located anywhere between the mine and the ultimate customer for the metals. And just three factors dictate where metal processing is located – political costs, processing costs and transport costs. The political cost (tax burden) depends on the common sense of the electorate and their knowledge of where the real wealth is created. The processing and transport costs depend mainly on the local costs of wages and energy.

The first trains and power stations all used steam engines burning low cost local coal. Then came cheap diesel transport for trucks and trains. Now electric trains are again running on cheap Australian coal. This low cost carbon energy supported our high wages and ensured that mineral processing became a big business in Australia – iron and steel, lead-zinc-silver, copper, nickel, aluminium, gold, uranium, limestone, coal, oil and gas are all processed to some extent in Australia.

There is no point introducing a carbon tax that does not increase the cost and thus reduce the use of coal and diesel energy. Mining and mineral processing and transport probably consume over 50% of Australia's electricity, which is mainly coal powered with minor gas. And they are huge users of diesel for utes, trucks, shovels, dozers, scrapers, mobile power and drilling rigs. Therefore, no matter what they say, all of Australia's mineral processing advantages are threatened by their carbon tax.

The recent Xstrata decision to phase out their world class copper smelting and refining operations in Australia tells us that the taxes, processing, transport and energy costs that Xstrata expects in Australia are already uncompetitive.

The dreamers in the Canberra cocoon always drool about "value adding". Their carbon tax will surely cause all mineral processing plants in Australia to lose value, and some will surely close. Low cost coal and diesel power will no longer support our high wages. The value adding will take place in Asia.

We are watching a slow tragedy unfold – the end of an era. Once the mineral processing plants leave, they will never come back. We will be back to the pioneering era of mining – dig it out and ship it off.

And the final tragic irony of the Isa story is this – sending partly processed copper concentrate overseas, instead of smelting it at Mount Isa, will about triple the transport burden and do the same to carbon dioxide emissions.

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5. The Myth of Killer Mercury

Panicking people about fish is no way to protect public health.
By Willie Soon and Paul Driessen, WSJ, May 25, 2011
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703421204576329420414284558.html?mod=djemEditorialPage_h

The Environmental Protection Agency recently issued 946 pages of new rules requiring that U.S. power plants sharply reduce their (already low) emissions of mercury and other air pollutants. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson claims that while the regulations will cost electricity producers $10.9 billion annually, they will save 17,000 lives and generate up to $140 billion in health benefits.

There is no factual basis for these assertions. To build its case against mercury, the EPA systematically ignored evidence and clinical studies that contradict its regulatory agenda, which is to punish hydrocarbon use.

Mercury has always existed naturally in Earth's environment. A 2009 study found mercury deposits in Antarctic ice across 650,000 years. Mercury is found in air, water, rocks, soil and trees, which absorb it from the environment. This is why our bodies evolved with proteins and antioxidants that help protect us from this and other potential contaminants.

Another defense comes from selenium, which is found in fish and animals. Its strong attraction to mercury molecules protects fish and people against buildups of methylmercury, mercury's biologically active and more toxic form. Even so, the 200,000,000 tons of mercury naturally present in seawater have never posed a danger to any living being.

How do America's coal-burning power plants fit into the picture? They emit an estimated 41-48 tons of mercury per year. But U.S. forest fires emit at least 44 tons per year; cremation of human remains discharges 26 tons; Chinese power plants eject 400 tons; and volcanoes, subsea vents, geysers and other sources spew out 9,000-10,000 additional tons per year.

All these emissions enter the global atmospheric system and become part of the U.S. air mass. Since our power plants account for less than 0.5% of all the mercury in the air we breathe, eliminating every milligram of it will do nothing about the other 99.5% in our atmosphere.

In the face of these minuscule risks, the EPA nevertheless demands that utility companies spend billions every year retrofitting coal-fired power plants that produce half of all U.S. electricity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which actively monitors mercury exposure, blood mercury counts for U.S. women and children decreased steadily from 1999-2008, placing today's counts well below the already excessively safe level established by the EPA. A 17-year evaluation of mercury risk to babies and children by the Seychelles Children Development Study found "no measurable cognitive or behavioral effects" in children who eat several servings of ocean fish every week, much more than most Americans do.

The World Health Organization and U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry assessed these findings in setting mercury-risk standards that are two to three times less restrictive than the EPA's.

The EPA ignored these findings. Instead, the agency based its "safe" mercury criteria on a study of Faroe Islanders, whose diet is far removed from our own. They eat few fruits and vegetables, but they do feast on pilot-whale meat and blubber that is laced with mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)—but very low in selenium. The study has limited relevance to U.S. populations.

As a result, the EPA's actions can be counted on to achieve only one thing—which is to further advance the Obama administration's oft-stated goal of penalizing hydrocarbon use and driving a transition to unreliable renewable energy.

The proposed standards will do nothing to reduce exaggerated threats from mercury and other air pollutants. Indeed, the rules will worsen America's health and well-being—especially for young children and women of child-bearing age. Not only will they raise heating, air conditioning and food costs, but they will scare people away from eating nutritious fish that should be in everyone's diet.

America needs affordable, reliable electricity. It needs better health and nutrition. It needs an EPA that focuses on real risks, instead of wasting hard-earned taxpayer and consumer dollars fabricating dangers and evidence.

Mr. Soon, a natural scientist at Harvard, is an expert on mercury and public health issues. Mr. Driessen is senior policy adviser for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow.
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6. Oil “subsidy” and “tax breaks” nonsense

By Paul Driessen, Canada Free Press, May 21, 2011 [H/t ICECAP]
http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/36764

President Obama frequently says Americans “need to end our $4 billion in annual taxpayer subsidies to oil companies.” The latest Democrat bill would have repealed some $2 billion of what Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and others call “subsidies” and “special tax breaks” for Big Oil.

That’s baloney – shameless demagoguery that will inflict further damage on our struggling economy.

Subsidies are cash payments from government to the private sector. Money is taken from the 51% of Americans who still pay income taxes – and transferred by legislators and bureaucrats to companies and activities that “deserve” or “require” these wealth transfers, because the recipients perform an important service and/or could not remain in business unless subsidized with other people’s money (OPM).

The petroleum industry does not receive “subsidies” to produce oil and natural gas. It doesn’t even get “special tax breaks” or outright tax credits. What are falsely described in these terms are actually tax deductions for costs incurred by companies in the process of exploring, drilling, producing and refining the oil and natural gas that energize this nation’s economy and living standards.

These tax deductions are equivalent or similar to deductions claimed by every US business, large and small, for things like facilities depreciation, equipment, utilities, payroll, and research and development. They are intended to ensure that businesses, like individuals, recover their costs and get taxed only on their net incomes. For oil companies those deductions include:

* Geological and geophysical costs, for exploration to assess prospects prior to drilling;

* Intangible drilling costs – equipment, labor, fuel and supplies associated with drilling expensive wells;

* Expensing "tertiary injectants," water and chemicals injected into older wells to keep them producing;

* Domestic manufacturer's deductions of up to 6% of income earned from extracting oil and gas (farmers, manufacturers and other producers can deduct up to 9% of earned income);

* Percentage depletion allowance, allowing for gradual recovery of up-front investments in a petroleum (or iron, gold, limestone, et cetera) deposit that is gradually extracted and depleted. The allowance is not available to "integrated" companies that produce, refine and market oil.

White House, congressional and eco-activist claims that repealing these deductions will generate "billions in new revenues" reflect an abysmal grasp of basic business, economic and behavioral principles.

Thankfully, more Americans are beginning to understand that repealing any or all of these deductions will increase oil companies' individual project and overall operating costs. That means future bonus bids will decline, wells won't be drilled, fewer deposits will be profitable enough to develop, and wells and fields will be abandoned prematurely. Oil and gas will be left in the ground, crews will lose jobs, tax and royalty payments will dwindle, and the USA will send billions more overseas for imported oil.

Informed Americans also recognize that, in 2008, oil and natural gas provided 61% of the energy that powers America. Natural gas generates almost a quarter of our electricity. These fuels provided affordable energy 24/7/365, supported 9.2 million jobs, kept millions off welfare and food stamp rolls, and generated billions in revenue for federal, state and local governments.

Wind and solar combined accounted for barely 0.6% of total US energy, and 1.9% of electricity generation, in 2008 – providing expensive, intermittent, heavily subsidized energy 8/6/312 or less.

In subsidies per unit of energy actually produced, gas-fired electricity generation got 25*cents* per megawatt-hour in 2007 subsidies; coal received 44 *cents* (mostly for clean technology research). By comparison, wind turbines got 23.4 *dollars* and photovoltaic solar received 24.3 *dollars* per MWh.

One project alone – the $2-billion Shepherds Flat wind farm in north-central Oregon will transfer $500 million in hard cash subsidies, plus a subsidized loan guarantee of $1.1 billion to White House friend Jeffrey Immelt, General Electric and their partners. These OPM subsidies equal 80% of the $2-billion in tax breaks that Senators Reid and Schumer are so exercised about. The contract was GE's largest in FY 2009. (Ethanol subsidies totaled nearly $5 billion in 2010, more than double the senators' target.)

Shepherds Flat will be the world's largest wind farm: 338 gigantic 2.5 MW turbines, 97 miles of new roads and 167 miles of high voltage transmission lines sprawling across 32,000 to 83,000 acres (up to twice the size of Washington, DC) of the scenic Columbia River Gorge area. At best, the turbines may average one-third of the 2.5 MW stamped on their nameplates. At the whim of the winds, the farm will generate electricity at wild swings between zero and the turbines' combined rated capacity of 845 MW.

That's about one-quarter to one-half of what a single modern coal, gas or nuclear power plant generates 90-95% of the time, day after day, all year long … from a tiny fraction of the wind farm's land area.

As is the case with Pacific Northwest hydroelectric, Four Corners coal and Arizona nuclear power, Shepherds Flat will supply electricity for Southern California, so that state can maintain its lifestyle, meet its lofty renewable energy goals and be "green," by using energy generated in someone else's backyard.

Building and installing the turbines will require some 1.5 million pounds of rare earth metals (from Mongolian areas devastated by mining and smelting the metals), plus at least 700,000,000 pounds of concrete, steel, copper and fiberglass … accompanied by the fossil fuel energy, pollution and CO2 associated with mining, smelting and manufacturing these materials. The turbines will impact scenery and wildlife habitats, and kill numerous bats, falcons, hawks, eagles, owls, egrets, herons, ducks and curlews.

However, environmentalists, legislators and regulators treat those impacts – as well as noise, human health, airspace, Defense Department and other concerns – very differently from the way they handle hydrocarbon projects. In their quest for "green" energy at any cost, they simply brush these issues aside.

Our taxpayer subsidies are financing all of this, and generating impressive profits for their recipients. GE, for instance, generated over $5 billion in US profits in 2010 – but paid no US income taxes.

Compare this to Big Oil companies, which likewise made big profits last year… but also paid big taxes. ExxonMobil, for example, earned $30.5 billion in profits in 2010, on revenues of $383 billion, and paid $1.6 billion in US income taxes. Its combined lease bonuses, rents, royalties, taxes and other payments to the US Treasury totaled almost $10 billion last year. The company also paid state and local levies.

Overall, a Tax Foundation analysis of Energy Information Agency data shows, the largest integrated oil companies paid $1.95 trillion in corporate income, severance, property, excise and sales taxes, between 1981 and 2008. During that time, those companies' total combined profits (net of taxes and expenses, and after adjusting for inflation) were $1.4 trillion – or 40% less than they paid in total taxes.
The "green" agenda – to use mandates, subsidies, regulations and taxes to coerce a shift to "renewable" energy and "fundamentally transform" our energy, economic and social structure – is rationalized largely by fears of "dangerous manmade global warming." It is deceptive, costly, environmentally harmful, and devoid of genuine scientific evidence to support its alarmist claims.

Europe's catchy "20-20-20" climate action plan (20% renewable energy, 20% reduction in overall energy consumption, 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions, by 2020) carries a minimum price tag of OPM $300 billion. It may reduce average global temperatures by 0.1 degree F (0.05 Celsius) by 2100 … assuming climate change is actually driven by carbon dioxide, rather than by multiple, complex natural forces.

Only mad dogs, environmentalists, liberal Democrats and RINOs would buy into such nonsense.
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7. My Experience With A Lack of Proper Diligence and Bias In the NSF Review Process for Climate Proposals

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, May 26, 2011
http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/
[SEPP Comment: As summarized: Please see the complete post.]

This is a long post, so I have summarized the major experiences and findings here:

- NSF does not retain a record of e-mail communications
- NSF is cavalier in terms of the length of time proposals are under review.

- NSF has decided to emphasize climate modeling and of funding multi-decadal climate predictions, at the expense of research which can be tested against real-world observations.
- NSF penalizes scientists who criticize their performance.

My recommendations include:

- Guarantee that the review process be completed within 6 months [my most recent land use and climate proposal was not even sent out for review until 10 months after its receipt!)
- Retain all e-mail communications indefinitely (NSF staff can routinely delete e-mails, such that there is no record to check their accountability)
- Require external independent assessments, by a subset of scientists who are outside of the NSF, of the reviews and manager decisions, including names of referees. This review should be on all accepted and rejected proposals (as documented in the NSF letter at the end of this post, since they were so late sending out for review, they simply relied on referees of an earlier (rejected) proposal; this is laziness at best).

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