

The Week That Was: 2012-12-08 (December 8, 2012)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *"No known mode of natural climate variability can cause sustained, global-scale warming of the troposphere and cooling of the lower stratosphere."* By Benjamin Santer

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Number of the Week: Between 8 inches (0.2 meters) and 6.6 feet (2.0 meters), with 90% certainty.

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In 2013 we will face a large number of proposed EPA regulations that will do little for the environment but will certainly retard or even stop economic growth. For a (partial) listing see http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/10/obamas_epa_plans_for_2013.html

Our task for 2013 is to show that most of these regulations are destructive, unscientific, and unnecessary. For a more complete statement of goals please see www.SEPP.org.

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

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THIS WEEK:

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

Doha Over? As of this writing it appears that the 18th Annual Conference of Parties (COP 18) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Doha, Qatar, ended its two-week session to try to reach an agreement for the control of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions to replace the expiring Kyoto Protocol. It ended in an all too typical 24 hour negotiating marathon in which it appears little was accomplished except to do it again. The Kyoto Protocol was extended to 2020 for the countries that agreed. (Details are not yet clear.)

The Green political groups, partially funded by the US government, criticized the lack of progress (read economic penalties self-inflicted on wealthy countries). China and India would have none of this blood-letting. The UK taxpayers appear to be big losers with Ed Davey, the Climate Change Secretary, agreeing to some deal that will commit Britain to spending billions of pounds, part of which will go to subsidize inferior sources of electricity in Africa under some green fund with details to follow. No doubt, few of the claimed benefits will actually be delivered to those who need it the most.

Of course, the alarmists claim a deal must be struck immediately because their science states that unless carbon dioxide emissions are limited, the end is near. Their science does not consider the fact that the HadCRU surface temperatures show no global warming trend in 16 years. Do not let facts to get in the way of ideological belief! The touching moment came when the Philippine climate change commissioner fought back tears when claiming the typhoon that hit the Philippines was exacerbated by global warming / climate change. Simply because he believes it so does not make it so. The cyclone data contradict his claims.

With usual aplomb, Christopher Monckton commandeered a microphone during a break and announced to the climate change diplomats that nature is not obeying their science and their models. He was quickly escorted out of the room and his credentials seized. The pompous do not care to be reminded of their ignorance.

In the run-up to Doha, numerous organizations made outrageous predictions of the extent of global warming / climate change if CO2 emissions are not controlled. An informal survey shows that the World Bank was the winner of the most outlandish prize. The Bank claimed that temperatures will rise by 4 degrees C (7.2F) in about fifty years (as early as the 2060s). Also the Bank claimed that the Arab world would suffer the most. This was politically very appropriate, because the conference was being held in part of the Arab world.

However, its claims demonstrate that the World Bank's climate experts are apparently ignorant of climate history. According to H.H. Lamb, during the period of about 5500 to 8000 years ago the Sahara was wet and populated with elephants, hippopotami, crocodiles, etc. Subsequent archeological research shows cultures relying on agriculture, including dairy. The Northern Hemisphere, if not the world, was warmer during this period. The tropical rains that brought life giving water failed as the hemisphere cooled. But why consider messy climate history, when you have a beautiful, unvalidated, computer model? Please see links under Challenging the Orthodoxy, Defending the Orthodoxy, Dire Doha, and Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

The State of the Earth: Craig Idso, of CO2 Science, and a lead author of the reports of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC) titled **Climate Change Reconsidered**, just published a lengthy report: *The State of Earth's Terrestrial Biosphere: How is it Responding to Rising Atmospheric CO2 and Warmer Temperatures?* Using hundreds of empirical studies, the report refutes the claims of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is stressing natural plants and human agriculture by reducing plant growth and development.

Over the past few decades, plants are growing robustly thanks to increases in atmospheric CO2 concentrations. Plants should be able to adapt to increasing temperatures, assuming the IPCC models are correct, and increase water use efficiency. Increasing CO2 concentrations are a boon to agriculture and humanity, not the threat the IPCC claims. The report categorizes the studies by continents and identifies countries such as China by natural category (grasslands, deserts, etc.). Over the past 50 years, the net carbon uptake has doubled and there is no evidence that the uptake will decline from rising temperatures.

The report is a valuable, empirical contribution on the effects of carbon dioxide emissions. One wonders how many “climate experts” in organizations such as the World Bank will read such a report. Please see links under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

The New AGU: Reports from the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) indicates that the new executive director of the AGU, Chris McEntee, is leading the venerable institution directly into politics and targeting those members of Congress who are skeptical about the IPCC version of global warming / climate change. This is unfortunate because it may prove to be disastrous for American science if the IPCC is wrong, as TWTW asserts. It is a path of a new form of Lysenkoism that proved to be destructive for Soviet biological science.

One is reminded of the statement by Jane Lubchenco, the current Administrator of NOAA, made in her lecture as retiring president of AAAS: “Urgent and unprecedented environmental and social changes challenge **scientists to define a new social contract**...a commitment on the part of all scientists to devote their energies and talents to the most pressing problems of the day, in proportion to their importance, **in exchange for public funding**.” [Boldface added]. Making false claims about science will surely reduce government funding of science eventually.

The New Fingerprint? The quote of the week comes from Benjamin Santer, who is lead author of a new paper claiming to have discovered a new distinct human fingerprint of late 20th century warming. The old Santer fingerprint was the claimed human caused warming trend in the atmosphere above the tropics, which was found in the climate models. However, as reported by Douglass, Christy, Pearson, and Singer, weather balloon data of measurements at the appropriate altitudes and latitudes failed to show the pronounced warming trend. NIPCC 2008 Fig 10:

http://www.sepp.org/publications/NIPCC_final.pdf

Without going into details of the research, the statement has significant problems. It is a classic in *Argumentum ad ignorantiam* (an appeal to ignorance). *I cannot think of any other explanation, so my conclusion must be correct.*

As discussed in recent TWTWs, hindcasting, fitting the climate models to historic data is fraught with uncertainty. The internal uncertainty in the models allows them to be fitted to significantly varying data. In the past, surface data was used. Now, satellite data is used. Yet, there is a significant variance between surface data and satellite data that the climate establishment largely ignores. The method of hindcasting is roughly analogous to pouring warm gelatin into a mold. It will fit whatever mold one chooses.

In the past the IPCC has largely ignored the satellite data and relied on surface data. Further, the satellite data shows little or no warming trend from 1979 to the late 1990s, then a jump, followed

by a no warming trend for over a decade. Needless to say, the relationship between atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations and temperatures is weak. An additional issue is that the satellite record clearly shows that the warming is concentrated in the northern part of the Northern Hemisphere and hardly global.

According to the reports, the new research will be a scientific core to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR-5), due out in 2013 and 2014. It will be interesting. Please see links under Defending the Orthodoxy.

Oil Spill and Consequences: Several studies were released questioning the value of dispersants that were used in the BP Gulf Oil Spill. According to the first study, injecting the dispersants directly into the well was unnecessary and provided no real benefit. According to the second study mixing dispersants with oil greatly increased the toxicity of the oil. An additional important area of research would be studying microbes for use in future events as well as comprehending the speed of recovery after the use of dispersants. Please see links under Oil Spills, Gas Leaks & Consequences.

Grid Costs of Renewables: The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency released a study of the costs of introducing erratic renewables, such solar and wind, onto an electrical grid system made up of reliable sources of electricity (coal, gas and nuclear) which are termed as dispatchable technologies. The findings should give pause to those who are considering the merits of different types.

“The study considers six technologies in detail: nuclear, coal, gas, onshore wind, offshore wind and solar. It finds that the so-called dispatchable technologies - coal, gas and nuclear - have system costs of less than \$3 per MWh, while the system costs for renewables can reach up to \$40 per MWh for onshore wind, \$45 per MWh for offshore wind and \$80 per MWh for solar. The costs for renewables vary depending on the country, technology and penetration levels, with higher system costs for greater penetration of renewables.” Please see link under Energy Issues – Non-US.

Number of the Week: Between 8 inches (0.2 meters) and 6.6 feet (2.0 meters), with 90% certainty. “Global sea level rise has been a persistent trend for decades. It is expected to continue beyond the end of this century, which will cause significant impacts in the United States. Scientists have very high confidence (greater than 90% chance) that global mean sea level will rise at least 8 inches (0.2 meter) and no more than 6.6 feet (2.0 meters) by 2100.” From: the NOAA Climate Program Office.

Actual global sea level rise has been ongoing for about 180 centuries – far longer than a persistent trend for decades. NOAA appears to be adopting the disinformation of James Hansen who predicts 6 meters (19.7 feet) of rise, but along a strongly exponential curve with most of the rise in the last few decades of the century. It is impossible to prove him wrong for many years. Is this what EPA is thinking with it declares to Federal judges that it is 90 to 99% certain about its science? Please see link under Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see this week's TWTW at: www.sepp.org. The articles are at the end of the pdf.

1. Energy Economics in One Lesson

Natural gas exports are good for America.

Editorial, WSJ, Dec 7, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324001104578163491822943984.html?mod=W>
[SJ Opinion AboveLEFTTop](#)

2. Playing Chicken in Oil-Patch Politics

Another green gambit by the Obama crowd to stop the energy boom.

By David Porter, WSJ, Dec 5, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323901604578157163958369742.html?mod=IT>
[P opinion 0](#)

3. Floods Put Pipelines at Risk

Records Suggest Erosion of Riverbeds Jeopardizes Oil and Gas Infrastructure

By Jack Nicas, WSJ, Dec 3, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323622904578128884280719580.html?mod=IT>
[P pageone 1](#)

4. Global Gas Push Stalls

Firms Hit Hurdles Trying to Replicate U.S. Success Abroad

By Russell Gold and Marynia Kruk, WSJ, Dec 2, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324355904578155591443631854.html?mod=IT>
[P pageone 0](#)

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Challenging the Orthodoxy

The State of Earth's Terrestrial Biosphere: How is it Responding to Rising Atmospheric CO2 and Warmer Temperatures?

By Craig Idso, CO2 Science, Dec 5, 2012

<http://www.co2science.org/education/reports/greening/greening.php>

The State of Earth's Terrestrial Biosphere

By Craig Idso, Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change, via GWPF, Dec 6, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/state-earths-terrestrial-biosphere/>

[SEPP Comment: Brief comments on the report linked immediately above.]

Global Tropical Cyclone Landfalls 2012

By Roger Pielke Jr, His Blog, Dec 5, 2012

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2012/12/global-tropical-cyclone-landfalls-2012.html>

Anyone who'd like to argue that the world is experiencing a "new normal" with respect to tropical cyclones is simply mistaken. Over the past 4 years, the world is actually in the midst of a very low period in tropical cyclone landfalls -- at least as measured over the past 43 years.

The war of words over climate change

By Joseph Bast, Letter, Washington Post, Dec 3, 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-war-of-words-over-climate-change/2012/11/30/dab1285e-38c1-11e2-9258-ac7c78d5c680_story.html

A problem: nearly one third of CO2 emissions occurred since 1998, and it hasn't warmed

By Tom Fuller, WUWT, Dec 6, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/12/06/a-problem-nearly-one-third-of-co2-emissions-occured-since-1998-and-it-hasnt-warmed/>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Human-Caused Climate Change Signal Emerges from the Noise

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Nov 29, 2012 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/11/121129143504.htm>

A human-caused climate change signal emerges from the noise

By Anne M Stark, Press Release, LLNL, Nov 29, 2012

<http://www.llnl.gov/news/newsreleases/2012/Nov/NR-12-11-05.html>

Holding back the sea

Editorial, Washington Post, Dec 1, 2012 [H/t Dennis Manuta]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/holding-back-the-sea/2012/12/01/80d05e80-398f-11e2-a263-f0ebffed2f15_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

With Carbon Dioxide Emissions at Record High, Worries on How to Slow Warming

By Justin Gillis and John Broder, NYT, Dec 2, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/03/world/emissions-of-carbon-dioxide-hit-record-in-2011-researchers-say.html?_r=0

[SEPP Comment: No global warming in 16 years; but why bother reporting it? To the New York Times CO2 emissions are no different than temperatures.]

Obama urged by environmental groups to take on climate change in next term

Activists step up pressure on president to turn vague promises made since re-election into concrete policies for the future

Suzanne Goldenberg, Guardian, UK, Dec 4, 2012

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/dec/04/obama-environmental-groups-climate-change>

Clinton Calls for 'Global Network' to Address Climate 'Crisis'

By Fred Lucas, CNS News, Dec 3, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/clinton-calls-global-network-address-climate-crisis>

[SEPP Comment: We already have a global network, but it is failing because the climate crisis is a government invention not supported by nature.]

Wind farms in Africa will save British lives, says Minister

Climate change: The UK will “pay the price in British lives” if the Government fails to spend money helping poor countries deal with climate change, according to Greg Barker, the Environment Minister.

By Louise Gray, Telegraph, UK, Dec 5, 2012

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/9723542/Wind-farms-in-Africa-will-save-British-lives-says-Minister.html>

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Anti-Science Climate Deniers On The Retreat In Germany

By James Taylor, Forbes, Dec 6, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2012/12/06/anti-science-climate-deniers-on-the-retreat-in-germany/>

[SEPP Comment: Climate deniers being those who consider climate change is unusual.]

Fasullo and Trenberth find spurious success, make headlines, but still the models crash

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Dec 6, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/12/fasullo-and-trenberth-find-spurious-success-make-headlines-but-still-the-models-crash/#more-25278>

[SEPP Comment: More on an issue discussed in previous TWTWs.]

The Political Corrosion of the CSIRO

By Tom Quirk, Quadrant, Dec, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2012/12/the-political-corrosion-of-the-csiro>

[SEPP Comment: A thought provoking essay on Australia’s The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).]

Standing up for misconduct

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Dec 5, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/12/5/standing-up-for-misconduct.html>

[SEPP Comment: The Royal Society stumbles again.]

Dr. Hans Labohm On Scepticism In Europe: “The Tide Is Turning...Very Much Alive And Kicking”

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Dec 7, 2012

<http://notrickszone.com/2012/12/07/dr-hans-labohm-on-scepticism-in-europe-the-tide-is-turning-very-much-alive-and-kicking/>

Global Warming Realist Marc Morano EXPOSES Bill Nye the SO CALLED Science Guy on Climate Change

By Noel Sheppard, ICECAP, Dec 4, 2012

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

Humans And Everything They Do Are Natural.

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Nov 30, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/humans-and-everything-they-do-are-natural/>

Questioning European Green

Osborne's gas plans will break climate promises, says Cabinet minister

Climate change: a dash for gas will risk the UK breaking its own climate change laws, Ed Davey has insisted, putting him on the war path with the Chancellor.

By Louise Gray, Telegraph, UK, Dec 5, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/9723803/Osbornes-gas-plans-will-break-climate-promises-says-Cabinet-minister.html>

Balderdash, dishonesty and woo

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Dec 4, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/12/4/balderdash-dishonesty-and-woo.html>

Britain creates shale gas office to simplify regulation

By Karoline Schaps, Reuters, Dec 5, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/05/britain-economy-shale-idUSL5E8N580G20121205>

Chancellor confirms UK will chase US shale gas glut

By Vicky Ellis, Energy Live News, Dec 5, 2012

<http://www.energylivenews.com/2012/12/05/chancellor-confirms-uk-will-chase-us-shale-gas-glut/>

[SEPP Comment: What a headline! Due to shale gas, the prices of natural gas have gone down to about one-fourth (about 25%) of what they had been before. Most consumers enjoy such a glut!]

Let's get fracking, and slash our gas bills

State backing for the shale revolution is what Britain's economy has been crying out for

By Matt Ridley, Telegraph, UK, Dec 4, 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/9721493/Lets-get-fracking-and-slash-our-gas-bills.html>

Questioning Green Elsewhere

So, how's your green energy stock doing?

By Steve Goreham, Washington Times, Dec 6, 2012 [H/t George Nicholas]

<http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/climatism-watching-climate-science/2012/dec/6/so-hows-your-green-energy-stock-doing/>

Expanding the Orthodoxy – AGU

The 'New AGU' ... Talking Up Its Policy Backbone

AGU leadership professes its willingness to head-up an aggressive public policy and 'education' campaign directed at congressional skeptics.

By Bud Ward, Yale Forum on Climate Change, Dec 3, 2012 [H/t Climate Etc.]

<http://www.yaleclimatemediaforum.org/2012/12/the-new-agu-talking-up-its-policy-backbone/>

AGU highlights

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Dec 6, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/12/06/agu-highlights/#more-10580>

Dire Doha

Is Africa in an emissions arm lock?

First World industrialized nations are trying to prevent African development

By Kelvin Kemm, SPPI, Dec 5, 2012

<http://sppiblog.org/news/is-africa-in-an-emissions-arm-lock#more-8871>

[SEPP Comment: The solar-cosmic ray hypothesis is more related to solar wind than solar magnetism.]

Christiana's nightmare – for the rest of us

By Craig Rucker, Canada Free Press, Dec 5, 2012

<http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/51560>

Climate change funds earmarked for Africa 'are going to corporations'

Climate change: British taxpayers' money for climate aid is going to large businesses such as Walmart rather than going directly to help poor people, according to campaigners.

By Louise Gray, Telegraph, UK, Dec 5, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/9723731/Climate-change-funds-earmarked-for-Africa-are-going-to-corporations.html>

EU, US rule out climate funding pledges in Doha

By Staff Writers, Doha (AFP), Dec 5, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/EU_US_rule_out_climate_funding_pledges_in_Doha_999.html

The road to a climate change deal goes through Doha

Editorial, Washington Post, Dec 3, 2012 [H/t Dennis Manuta]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-road-to-a-climate-change-deal-goes-through-doha/2012/12/03/03d88826-3d09-11e2-ae43-cf491b837f7b_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

US says climate plan on track, EU wants more

Washington says cutting emissions in line with Obama plan

* Cuts by 2020 far short of scientists' advice

* EU says China, U.S. should do more to fight global warming

By Humeyra Pamuk and Regan Doherty, The Hill, Dec 3, 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/03/climate-talks-idUSL5E8N3HAV20121203>

Todd Stern: Shale gas boosting US climate action

By Staff Writer, RTCC, Dec 5, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.rtcc.org/stern-shale-gas-boosting-us-climate-action/>

[SEPP Comment: Washington taking credit for the success of something it has tried to suppress.]

Tensions over climate financing complicating UN talks in Doha

By Associated Press, Washington Post, Dec 5, 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/ap-interview-un-chief-says-rich-countries-caused-climate-change-must-take-lead-in-fixing-it/2012/12/05/e7f5be46-3eb9-11e2-8a5c-473797be602c_story.html

£2bn of UK aid to help Third World go green

Britain yesterday pledged almost £2 billion in “climate aid” to help finance foreign projects including wind turbines in Africa and greener cattle farming in Colombia.

Rowena Mason and Louise Gray, Telegraph, UK, Dec 4, 2012 [H/t GWPF]
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/9722767/2bn-of-UK-aid-to-help-Third-World-go-green.html>

Doha is dead. On to COP 19!

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Dec 6, 2012

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/12/06/peter-foster-doha-is-dead-on-to-cop-19/>

Environmental groups have a business model similar to Acme Window Smashing and Glazing

Doha: dead — Kyoto: kaput, but NGO's win anyway

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Dec 5, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/12/doha-dead-kyoto-kaput-but-ngos-win-anyway/#more-25865>

Fund May Use \$100 Billion a Year to Encourage Carbon Price

By Mathew Carr, Bloomberg, Dec 6, 2012

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-12-06/green-fund-may-use-100-billion-a-year-to-encourage-carbon-price.html>

Renewable subsidies in 2011, including biofuels, amounted to \$88 billion, the International Energy Agency in Paris said Nov. 12. Over the period to 2035, they need to amount to \$4.8 trillion, over half of which has already been committed to existing projects or needed to meet 2020 targets, it said.

Is the U.S. being hoodwinked on climate change?

By Tom Harris, Canada Free Press, Dec 6, 2012

<http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/51599>

Monckton on his smashing the U.N. wall of silence on lack of warming, and censure

By Monckton, WUWT, Dec 7, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/12/07/monckton-on-his-smashing-u-n-wall-of-silence-on-lack-of-warming-and-censure/>

Seeking a Common Ground

The worst of the BEST

By Nir Shaviv, Science Bits, Dec 6, 2012

[SEPP Comment: A technical discussion centering on where Shaviv thinks the Best Team went wrong, particularly in its conclusions.]

El Niño-Southern Oscillation Myth 1: El Niño and La Niña Events are Cyclical

By Bob Tisdale, WUWT, Dec 3, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/12/03/el-nino-southern-oscillation-myth-1-el-nino-and-la-nina-events-are-cyclical/>

[SEPP Comment: Explaining why the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is not a true oscillation in period and frequency.]

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

Global Sea Level Rise Scenarios for the United States National Climate Assessment

By Staff Writers, NOAA Climate Program Office, Dec 6, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://www.cpo.noaa.gov/reports/sealevel/>

Snow cover hits record lows

By Staff Writers, Paris (ESA), Dec 04, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Snow_cover_hits_record_lows_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Comparing year to year snow cover near the beginning of summer does not address the issue of global warming.]

Projecting doom from our current wildfire year using climate models

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Dec 5, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/12/05/projecting-doom-from-our-current-wildfire-year-using-climate-models/>

[SEPP Comment: The climate models are failing but they are useful in creating fears.]

Arctic's Record Melt Worries Scientists

By Tia Ghose, Yahoo News, Dec 6, 2012

http://news.yahoo.com/arctics-record-melt-worries-scientists-123834411.html?_esi=1

[SEPP Comment: What is most worrisome is that the scientists apparently have no knowledge of the history of climate change.]

Deadly 2012 Atlantic storm season officially ends

By Staff Writers, Miami (AFP), Nov 30, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Deadly_2012_Atlantic_storm_season_officially_ends_999.html

[SEPP Comment: With no Class 3 storms making landfall.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Arab world to bear brunt of climate change: World Bank

By Staff Writers, Doha (AFP), Dec 5, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Arab_world_to_bear_brunt_of_climate_change_World_Bank_999.html

The widening gap between present emissions and the two-degree target

By Staff Writers, Canberra, Australia (SPX), Dec 04, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/The_widening_gap_between_present_emissions_and_the_two_degree_target_999.html

[SEPP Comment: More on the invented, artificial target.]

Is this the planet we want to leave behind?

By Eugene Robinson, Washington Post, Nov 29, 2012 [H/t Dennis Manuta]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/eugene-robinson-climate-change-talks-need-us-support/2012/11/29/2cfe9ee2-3a5d-11e2-8a97-363b0f9a0ab3_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

Models v. Observations

Once again, reality trumps models – Pacific SST's are flat

By Bob Tisdale, WUWT, Dec 6, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/12/06/once-again-reality-trumps-models-pacific-ssts-are-flat/>

[SEPP Comment: Satellite era from 1994 to Nov 2012]

Changing Weather

477 dead, homeless swell after Philippines typhoon

By Staff Writers, New Bataan, Philippines (AFP), Dec 6, 2012

http://www.terradaaily.com/reports/477_dead_homeless_swell_after_Philippines_typhoon_999.html

Connecting the Global Cooling Dots

By Alan Caruba, Warming Signs, Dec 2, 2012

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2012/12/connecting-global-cooling-dots.html>

[SEPP Comment: Without a clear trend in the data, global cooling is as questionable as global warming.]

Changing Seas

Sea level rise is the most reliable way to see global temperature trends

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Dec 1, 2012

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/12/sea-level-rise-is-most-reliable-way-to.html>

Meteorologist Klaus-Eckart Puls: Sea Level Rise Has Slowed 34% Over The Last Decade!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Dec 6, 2012

<http://notrickszone.com/2012/12/06/meteorologist-klaus-eckart-puls-sea-level-rise-has-slowed-34-over-the-last-decade/>

It is obvious to see that sea level rise has slowed down significantly. In view of the relatively short time frame in which the measurements have been made, it should not be speculated on whether the deceleration in the rise is a trend change or if it is only noise. What is certain is that there is neither a 'dramatic' rise, nor an 'acceleration'. Conclusion: Climate models that project an acceleration over the last 20 years are wrong."

Mercury in coastal fog linked to upwelling of deep ocean water

By Tim Stephens, UC Santa Cruz Press Release, Nov 4, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://news.ucsc.edu/2012/12/coastal-mercury.html>

[SEPP Comment: Something else for the EPA to regulate. Not a health concern until the EPA applies its linear no-threshold model.]

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Plant Stress Paints Early Picture of Drought

By Kathryn Hansen for Goddard Space Flight Center

Greenbelt MD (SPX) Dec 07, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Plant_Stress_Paints_Early_Picture_of_Drought_999.html

Cloud nein

Is global drought really getting worse?

By Staff Writers, Economist, Dec 1, 2012

<http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21567313-global-drought-really-getting-worse-cloud-nein>

Making sustainability policies sustainable

By Staff Writers, East Lansing MI (SPX), Dec 04, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Making_sustainability_policies_sustainable_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Making agriculture more dependent on government.]

Carbon dioxide could reduce crop yields

By Staff Writers, Dortmund, Germany (SPX), Dec 06, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Carbon_dioxide_could_reduce_crop_yields_999.html

[SEPP Comment: One experiment v. a wealth of evidence to the contrary.]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

The Trouble with Clouds

Reference: Del Genio, A.D. 2012. Representing the sensitivity of convective cloud systems to tropospheric humidity in general circulation models. *Surveys in Geophysics* 33: 637-656.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/dec/4dec2012a1.html>

The Biofuels Mandate and U.S. Corn Prices

Reference: Hertel, T.W. and Beckman, J. 2011. In: Zivin, J.G. and Perloff, M. (Eds.). *The Intended and Unintended Effects of U.S. Agricultural and Biotechnology Policies*. NBER and University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/dec/5dec2012a1.html>

CO2 Effects on Nitrogen Fixation in Soybeans

Reference: Lam, S.K., Hao, X., Lin, E., Han, X., Norton, R., Mosier, AR., Seneweera, S. and Chen, D. 2012. Effect of elevated carbon dioxide on growth and nitrogen fixation of two soybean cultivars in northern China. *Biology and Fertility of Soils* 48: 603-606.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/dec/5dec2012a2.html>

A 370-Year History of Tropical Cyclones in the Lesser Antilles

Reference: Chenoweth, M. and Divine, D. 2012. Tropical cyclones in the Lesser Antilles: descriptive statistics and historical variability in cyclone energy, 1638-2009. *Climatic Change* 113: 583-598.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/dec/5dec2012a3.html>

Going Back in Time: The (un)Predictability of Climate

Reference Lorenz, E. N. 1963. Deterministic Nonperiodic Flow. *Journal of the Atmospheric Sciences* 20: 130- 139.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/dec/5dec2012a4.html>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Carbon Tax: NRDC Serves Up Stale Leftovers

By David Kreutzer, The Foundry, Dec 6, 2012

<http://blog.heritage.org/2012/12/06/carbon-tax-nrdc-serves-up-stale-leftovers/>

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

7 Myths About the Wind Production Tax Credit

By David Kreutzer, The Foundry, Dec 4, 2012

<http://blog.heritage.org/2012/12/04/7-myths-about-the-wind-production-tax-credit/>

[SEPP Comment: Also, wind power is unsustainable, both naturally (if varies) and financially (it needs subsidies).

Ethanol Mandate Turns King Corn Into A Pauper

Editorial, IBD, Dec 3, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/120312-635564-ethanol-mandate-costs-us-its-corn-export-markets.htm?p=full>

[SEPP Comment: Government policy destroying economically viable exports.]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Oyster Farm Loses To Federal Bullies And Eco-Fanatics

Editorial, IBD, Dec 4, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/120412-635724-drakes-bay-oyster-shut-down-by-interior-department.htm>

[SEPP Comment: Based on personal observations, another abusive use of governmental power.]

EPA's engine destroying gas may be coming soon

By Rebekah Rast, Net Right Daily, Dec 6, 2012

<http://netrightdaily.com/2012/12/epas-engine-destroying-gas-may-be-coming-soon/>

EPA continues multimillion-dollar crackdown on glass manufacturing

By Paul Conner, Daily Caller, Dec 3, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://dailycaller.com/2012/12/03/epa-continues-multimillion-dollar-crackdown-on-glass-manufacturing/>

Energy Issues – Non-US

Levelling the playing field of grid cost

By Staff Writers, WNN, Nov 29, 2012

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/EE-Levelling_the_playing_field_of_grid_cost-2911128.html

The study considers six technologies in detail: nuclear, coal, gas, onshore wind, offshore wind and solar. It finds that the so-called dispatchable technologies - coal, gas and nuclear - have system costs of less than \$3 per MWh, while the system costs for renewables can reach up to \$40 per MWh for onshore wind, \$45 per MWh for offshore wind and \$80 per MWh for solar.

Saudis seek oil in Red Sea 'safe zone'

By Staff Writers, Yanbu, Saudi Arabia (UPI), Dec 6, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Saudis_seek_oil_in_Red_Sea_safe_zone_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Doubtful Greens will have much influence with the Kingdom.]

Nuclear Energy and Renewables: System Effects in Low-carbon Electricity Systems

By Staff Writers, OECD, Nov, 2012

http://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/c5hdpp/nuclear_energy

[SEPP Comment: Efforts to blend erratic sources of electricity generation with those that work when needed. The erratic sources reduce revenues to the reliable ones, thus the reliable ones will not be replaced when needed.]

Canada seeks access to new oil markets

By Staff Writers, Montreal (AFP), Dec 1, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Canada_seeks_access_to_new_oil_markets_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The US is no longer a trustworthy trading partner.]

Energy Issues -- US

Macroeconomic Impacts of LNG Exports from the United States

By David Montgomery, et al, NERA, Dec 3, 2012

http://www.fossil.energy.gov/programs/gasregulation/reports/nera_lng_report.pdf

Report: LNG Exports to Have Net Economic Benefits, Impact Domestic Power Sector

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Dec 6, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5218.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2576878&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: Comments on the study linked immediately above.]

Report warns against increased LNG exports

By Staff Writers, Washington (UPI), Nov 30, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Report_warns_against_increased_LNG_exports_999.html

[SEPP Comment: From the Sierra Club that does not care about the economic benefits. See links immediately above.]

American Shale Gas Goes Global

By Walter Russell Mead, Via Meadia, Dec 6, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2012/12/06/american-shale-gas-goes-global/>

AEO2013 Early Release Overview

By Staff Writers, EIA, Dec 2013

<http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/aeo/er/pdf/0383er%282013%29.pdf>

[SEPP Comment: The findings will be discussed in next week's TWTW.]

EIA Projects Faster Growth of Natural Gas Production, Gas Generation

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Dec 6, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5222.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2576878&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: Comments on the study linked immediately above.]

EIA Levelized Costs Can be Misleading

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Dec 7, 2012

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2012/12/07/eia-levelized-costs-can-be-misleading/>

Enbridge to proceed with \$6.2B pipeline to ship light oil

By Lauren Krugel, National Post, Dec 7, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/12/07/enbridge-to-proceed-with-6-2b-pipeline-to-ship-canadian-u-s-light-oil/>

[SEPP Comment: Since Washington stopped a pipeline to deliver heavy oil from Canada to the US, why not build a system to deliver light oil from the US to Canada, and beyond?]

Washington's Control of Oil and Gas

Obama Says No to Oil Leases, But Yes to Windmills, Off the Atlantic Coast

By Susan Jones, CNS News, Dec 3, 2012 [H/t Randy Randol]

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/obama-says-no-oil-leases-yes-windmills-atlantic-coast>

DOI Unveils First-Ever Competitive Lease Sales for Wind Energy Along Atlantic Coast

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Dec 6, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5223.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2576878&hq_l=11&hq_v=5e660500d0

Return of King Coal?

IEA, OPEC and DOE agree: Coal marches on.

By Mark Mills, Energy Facts, Dec 3, 2012

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=2db0d1eb61&e=>

Oil Spills, Gas Leaks & Consequences

Numerical study suggests subsea injection of chemicals didn't prevent oil from rising to sea surface

By Staff Writers, Miami FL (SPX), Dec 06, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Numerical_study_suggests_subsea_injection_of_chemicals_didnt_prevent_oil_from_rising_to_sea_surface_999.html

Gulf of Mexico Clean-Up Makes 2010 Spill 52-Times More Toxic

Press Release, Georgia Tech, Nov 30, 2012

<http://www.gatech.edu/newsroom/release.html?nid=174381>

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Enel Drops Participation in Flamanville EPR as Project Costs Soar by \$2.6B

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Dec 6, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5219.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2576878&hq_l=8&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: The European Pressurized Reactor (EPR) seems to be undergoing many of the same issues the plagued US reactors decades ago – no realistic cost estimates and delivery schedules.]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

Apple Doubles Renewable Project at Expense of Duke Energy Customers

By Paul Chesser, NIPC, Dec 6, 2012

<http://nlpc.org/stories/2012/12/06/apple-doubles-renewable-project-expense-duke-energy-customers>

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

Synthetic fuels could eliminate entire U.S. need for crude oil, create 'new economy'

By John Sullivan for Princeton News, Princeton NJ (SPX), Dec 06, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Synthetic_fuels_could_eliminate_entire_US_need_for_crude_oil_create_new_economy_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Amazing! Devote more agriculture land to Biofuels at questionable costs as US oil and gas production are increasing significantly!]

Geoscientists cite 'critical need' for basic research to unleash promising energy resources

By Mark Schwartz of the Precourt Institute for Energy at Stanford University.

Stanford CA (SPX) Dec 04, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Geoscientists_cite_critical_need_for_basic_research_to_unleash_promising_ergy_resources_999.html

California Dreaming

Cap & Tax: California's Recipe To Feed The Texas Economy

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Dec 4, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/12/04/cap-tax-californias-recipe-to-feed-the-texas-economy/>

Health, Energy, and Climate

Declining air pollution levels continue to improve life expectancy in US

By Staff Writers, Boston MA (SPX), Dec 06, 2012

http://www.terradaaily.com/reports/Declining_air_pollution_levels_continue_to_improve_life_expectancy_in_US_999.html

"However, the extent to which more recent regulatory actions have benefited public health remains in question. This study provides strong and compelling evidence that continuing to reduce ambient levels of PM2.5 prolongs life,"

[SEPP Comment: A seven year period is far too short to evaluate the benefits new regulations. There is little issue that the limiting of airborne particles since the 1920s have benefited health. The issue is the value of the latest increments to those regulations.]

Environmental Industry

A fanatical and self-righteous green religion stalks Britain. Now it wants to evangelise the Third World

By Cristina Odone, Telegraph, UK, Dec 5, 2012

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/cristinaodone/100192867/a-fanatical-and-self-righteous-green-religion-stalks-britain-now-it-wants-to-evangelise-the-third-world/>

We Won't Prevent Cancer Until We Prevent Exposure to Cancer-Causing Chemicals

By Jennifer Sass, NRDC, Nov 30, 2012

http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/jsass/we_wont_prevent_cancer_until_w.html

For cynical manipulation of science, NRDC never disappoints

By Staff Writers, ACSH, Nov 3, 2012

<http://www.acsh.org/for-cynical-manipulation-of-science-nrdc-never-disappoints/>

[SEPP Comment: See link immediately above.]

NRDC Urges EPA to Cut GHGs from Existing Fleet via Flexible Approach

By Gail Reitenbach, Power News, Dec 6, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5217.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2576878&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: More NRDC analysis.]

Lung Association Poll: Another Attempt to Influence Public Opinion in the Guise of Reporting It

By Marlo Lewis, Cooler Heads, Dec 3, 2012

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2012/12/03/lung-association-poll-another-attempt-to-influence-public-opinion-in-the-guise-of-reporting-it/>

Other Scientific News

NIST experiments challenge fundamental understanding of electromagnetism

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Nov 30, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/NIST_experiments_challenge_fundamental_understanding_of_electromagnetism_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

China aims to reduce air pollution

By Staff Writers, Beijing (UPI), Dec 6, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/China_aims_to_reduce_air_pollution_999.html

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Most Useless Flagrant Flop of Government (MUFFOG 2012): Finalist — Victorian Desal

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Dec 4, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/12/most-useless-flagrant-flop-of-government-muffog-2012-finalist-victorian-desal/>

Climate delegates in Qatar agree to wear gas masks

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Dec 5, 2012

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/12/climate-delegates-in-qatar-agree-to.html#more>

Kerosene lamps spew black carbon, should be replaced

By Sarah Yang for Berkeley News, Berkeley CA (SPX), Dec 04, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Kerosene_lamps_spew_black_carbon_should_be_replaced_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Replace them with what?]

More Potent than CO2, N2O Levels in California May be Nearly Three Times Higher Than Previously Thought

By Staff Writers, Berkeley CA (SPX) Dec 07, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/More_Potent_than_CO2_N2O_Levels_in_California_May_be_Nearly_Three_Times_Higher_Than_Previously_Thought_999.html

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ARTICLES:

1. Energy Economics in One Lesson

Natural gas exports are good for America.

Editorial, WSJ, Dec 7, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324001104578163491822943984.html?mod=W_SJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop

America's shale gas boom is so promising that it has some people discombobulated—including, naturally, our politicians. The same folks who complain about America's trade deficit now want the U.S. government to ban the export of liquefied natural gas (LNG). This is one way to ruin what has been a very rare piece of good U.S. economic news.

Unlike oil, which is a global commodity sold at a global price, the world natural gas market is fragmented by limits on supply. Gas has to be liquefied before it can be loaded on ships and transported. But with the natural gas price in the U.S. (\$3.70 per million BTUs) so much lower than it is abroad (\$17 in Japan, for example), suddenly LNG exports from the U.S. look like a potentially good investment.

And it's no surprise that is precisely what a report commissioned by the Department of Energy and released this week concludes. The experts at NERA economic consulting suggest that LNG exports would produce net economic benefits for the U.S. across a range of possible natural gas price changes. In all cases benefits increased as LNG exports increased.

"Benefits that come from export expansion more than outweigh the losses from reduced capital and wage income to U.S. consumers, and hence LNG exports have net economic benefits in spite of higher domestic natural gas prices," says the report. "This is exactly the outcome that economic theory describes when barriers to trade are removed."

This sounds like a case of the government discovering the law of supply and demand, but we should still be grateful. The Obama Administration has said the report will weigh heavily on its decision to allow LNG exports, and it will use any excuse if it wants to kill something.

Not that the report will mute the critics, who include Massachusetts Congressman Ed Markey and Oregon Senator Ron Wyden. Mr. Markey worries that exports will allow a "massive wealth transfer from working Americans to oil and gas companies." His economic logic seems to be that broadening the market for natural gas will raise prices for American consumers, never mind the other economic gains.

By such logic, the U.S. should never export anything because foreign buyers might bid up the price. Thus Iowa farmers should limit their corn sales to the 50 states because Chinese demand has raised corn prices. Try selling that one in Des Moines. Mr. Markey is arguing for economic autarky, which didn't work in the Middle Ages, much less in a modern global economy in which trade has lifted tens of millions out of poverty.

In the real world, growing demand for a product leads to rising prices and then an increase in supply. If world demand rises for LNG, natural gas prices will rise and U.S. producers will look for more gas. Many U.S. drilling rigs have moved to extract more oil rather than gas in the last

couple of years precisely because of a glut of gas in the U.S. market that saw prices fall to as low as \$2 per million BTUs. As exports rise, so will income for U.S. producers and workers.

Other opponents include environmentalists who want to kill any carbon energy. Michael Brune of the Sierra Club blasted the report for ignoring the threat of shale drilling to water safety and human health. But claims of such harm have been consistently shown to be false, and honest greens would acknowledge that the rise of natural gas has done more to reduce carbon dioxide emissions than has the Kyoto Protocol.

Then there are the companies that have made big bets on a future of relatively low natural gas prices in the U.S. Dow Chemical CEO Andrew Liveris is investing billions in new chemical manufacturing in America in the wake of the shale gas boom, which is to his credit. The Journal quotes him as saying this week that the U.S. should be "careful" to protect this comparative price advantage.

But a ban on exports is the worst way to do that. By reducing demand, it would encourage less domestic drilling and gas supply. Meanwhile, plenty of other domestic uses for shale gas could develop, such as light trucks that run on natural gas rather than gasoline.

Mr. Liveris is asking the government to protect the price of his raw materials to protect his profit potential by limiting the investment opportunities for other businesses. Government's job is not to protect any company's business model or investment.

The real threat to Dow Chemical's natural gas supply is government limits on drilling. Governor Andrew Cuomo continues to imitate the French ban on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) with his moratorium in New York state, while the Environmental Protection Agency is angling to supplant the 50 states as the main shale drilling regulator.

It makes no economic sense to complain that foreign markets are closed to American goods and then assert that U.S. interests are served by hoarding U.S. gas. American prosperity is best served by letting business exploit as many opportunities as possible, for the U.S. market or for export.

2. Playing Chicken in Oil-Patch Politics

Another green gambit by the Obama crowd to stop the energy boom.

By David Porter, WSJ, Dec 5, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323901604578157163958369742.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_0

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced that it will formally consider listing the Lesser Prairie Chicken—whose habitat includes some of the nation's major energy fields—as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. This clearly is another desperate ploy by the Obama administration to further its campaign against oil and gas drilling. Such egregious overreach has been a specialty of the Environmental Protection Agency in the past. The administration has now found another agency to do its bidding.

The Lesser Prairie Chicken is a ground-nesting bird native to portions of Texas, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico and Oklahoma. In Texas, it is found primarily in the Texas Panhandle and

the Permian Basin. Listing the bird as threatened or endangered would make drilling all but impossible in these economically thriving regions. The Permian Basin alone produces more than one million barrels of oil a day, accounting for almost 70% of Texas' total production and 20% of the nation's oil production. It also supports thousands of jobs and provides millions of dollars in state revenue.

Several groups, including the Panhandle Producers and Royalty Owners Association and the Permian Basin Petroleum Association, have drafted something called a "Candidate Conservation Agreement With Assurances" in the hope that Fish and Wildlife will approve the plan and forgo listing the bird. The agreement describes oil and gas companies' involvement in habitat-conservation efforts and ideally will be merged with similar documents being developed in other states. Operators who choose not to participate in the voluntary conservation process will be held responsible for any reduction in wildlife or habitat and could be subject to penalties or even jail.

The Lesser Prairie Chicken matter isn't the first time the federal government has tried to use the Endangered Species Act as a tool in the war on drilling. Not that it is always successful. This summer, after months of research, Fish and Wildlife conceded that listing the Dunes Sagebrush Lizard as threatened or endangered wasn't warranted. The agency reviewed some 800 written comments and 147 comments from individuals or organizations at a two-day public hearing. Only 30 supported listing the lizard.

As it happens, the habitat of the Lesser Prairie Chicken largely overlaps that of the Dunes Sagebrush Lizard. Since Texas was able to produce a plan for the lizard that would work for environmentalists and operators alike, there is reason to hope that a similar plan being drafted for the Lesser Prairie Chicken will work.

Yet another issue of concern is the funding behind these efforts to list certain animals as endangered. Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson testified to Congress in June that taxpayer money is being spent in litigation over these listings. For instance, the petition to list the Dunes Sagebrush Lizard was originally filed by a radical environmental group, the Wild Earth Guardians. Interestingly, this group collected \$680,492 in tax money (as grants and the like) from Fish and Wildlife between 2007 and 2011. During that time the group sued the federal agency 76 times over alleged environmental violations.

The Wild Earth Guardians are also behind the petition to list the Spot-Tailed Earless Lizard under the Endangered Species Act. Not coincidentally, the range of this particular lizard includes portions of the Eagle Ford Shale in Texas, which is emerging as one of the top oil- and gas-producing regions in the country. Production in the nine-field formation is steadily increasing, reporting 310,370 barrels of oil a day in July of this year, compared with 120,532 barrels a day in July 2011.

By filing an outlandish number of lawsuits, groups like the Wild Earth Guardians are trying to overwhelm Fish and Wildlife resources and force settlements that the groups can dictate, instead of letting the courts decide. Such groups are willing to use extreme tactics to pursue their goal of shutting down the oil and gas industry with blatant disregard to how their actions will affect the economy or the power supply on which we all depend.

We must not allow the Obama administration to use the Endangered Species Act as a weapon against the oil and gas industry. The federal government needs to learn that we here in Texas best understand our unique geological, economical and regulatory environment—and to stop wasting taxpayers' money on frivolous lawsuits. One-size-fits-all regulation doesn't work, and thinly veiled attempts to control energy production masquerading as environmentalism don't fool anyone.

Mr. Porter is a member of the Texas Railroad Commission, which is the state's primary regulator of energy production and exploration.

3. Floods Put Pipelines at Risk

Records Suggest Erosion of Riverbeds Jeopardizes Oil and Gas Infrastructure

By Jack Nicas, WSJ, Dec 3, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323622904578128884280719580.html?mod=IT>
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A year after floodwaters eroded sections of the Missouri River basin, exposing two petroleum pipelines and triggering their rupture, federal records suggest the same thing could happen to dozens of others. The records highlight a gap in regulations that could imperil pipelines buried beneath rivers nationwide.

Federal investigators plan to announce soon that flood-caused erosion along the riverbed—known as scouring—exposed an Exxon Mobil Corp. pipeline on the Yellowstone River in Montana in 2011, causing it to break and spill 1,000 barrels of crude, said a senior federal pipeline official speaking on condition of anonymity.

A month later, an Enterprise Products Partners LLP pipeline burst after it was exposed by scouring in a Missouri River floodplain in Iowa, spilling 818 barrels of a gasoline additive.

The greater weight and speed of floodwater can scrape dozens of feet of soil and gravel off a river's bed, potentially exposing pipelines and leading to their rupture. Heavy snow and rain last year caused record flooding on the Missouri River basin, which includes the Yellowstone.

In January, Congress ordered a review of pipeline incidents at river crossings to determine if the pipelines' depths were a factor. The study is expected to help lawmakers determine whether regulations should be strengthened.

Meanwhile, even as rivers across the nation's midsection shrunk this year amid a severe drought, new federal records show more pipelines could be at risk during any flooding.

The U.S. Geological Survey found severe scour last year at 27 sites surveyed along the Missouri River from Kansas City to St. Louis, with the riverbed deepened in places by nine to 41 feet. Other unpublished USGS research found more severe scouring upstream.

Of the 55 oil and gas pipelines that cross the Missouri—which runs 2,300 miles from Montana to St. Louis—at least 24 have sections that lie 10 feet or less beneath the riverbed, within the range of scour observed on the river, according to federal records obtained via a Freedom of

Information Act request. During recent inspections, operators discovered at least two of those pipes, in Platte County, Mo. and near Boonville, Mo., were exposed but didn't break.

Federal law requires operators to bury pipelines a minimum of four feet beneath waterways. Many river engineers say that standard is grossly inadequate. A congressional research report this year said the 4-foot minimum "appears to be insufficient to prevent riverbed pipeline exposure."

The federal agency for pipeline safety, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, learned of the pipelines' depths through an optional survey of operators. When operators didn't report the depths of 12 pipelines in the survey, PHMSA said it didn't pursue the matter because it isn't required to track pipeline depths.

Under current rules, PHMSA leaves much of the oversight of pipelines to operators, who are required to inspect river crossings every five years.

"It is the operator's responsibility to weigh and assess the risks associated with its pipeline," PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman testified at a congressional hearing last year on the Exxon spill in Montana. "Especially in [flood conditions]. That is why we kept saying to them, 'You need to check this pipeline out and watch it.'"

In December 2010, in response to concerned PHMSA and Montana officials, Exxon said its pipeline was at least five feet beneath the bed of the Yellowstone River. In June 2011, as the Yellowstone flooded, Exxon told PHMSA the pipeline then had at least 12 feet of cover. A month later, the pipe was exposed by scouring and burst. A PHMSA spokesman said the agency is weighing whether to fine Exxon.

Exxon declined to comment on the cause of the Montana spill because the investigation isn't complete. The company said it is "committed to safe pipeline operations, and we have applied what we have learned into our operations."

Following the Exxon-pipeline rupture, PHMSA and Montana officials pushed pipeline operators to inspect their river crossings in the state. The review found that about a quarter of the roughly 90 pipelines inspected were dangerously close to exposure, said Richard Opper, director of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and chair of the state's pipeline safety council.

Those findings "tell me that we're vulnerable. But not just in Montana. The whole pipeline system across the country's vulnerable," Mr. Opper said. The pipeline companies are working to rebury the Montana pipelines, he said.

John Stoody, spokesman for the Association of Oil Pipe Lines, called scouring "a real but rare risk." Operators spent \$1.1 billion last year on managing the integrity of their pipelines, he said. Reinstalling shallow pipelines at river crossings across the nation would cost billions of dollars, he said, "and that would be a very high cost to consumers."

In 1994, scouring on a flooded river near Houston exposed 37 pipelines, including eight that broke, spilling 35,000 barrels of petroleum. A decade later, at the urging of federal officials, the

American Petroleum Institute developed standards for designing pipelines across waterways and floodplains.

With those standards and new installation methods—horizontally drilling a hole 15 to 60 feet beneath waterways and feeding a pipe through—younger pipelines are less susceptible to scouring. But according to federal documents, nearly two-thirds of the pipelines that cross the Missouri were installed between 1930 and 1982 by digging a ditch, laying the pipe and burying it—a method far more vulnerable to scour.

Those older pipelines are also at risk to the long-term scour occurring along the Missouri riverbed. Scour is typically temporary, with the holes refilled by sediment over time. But since the 1960s, six major dams on the Missouri have held back sediment that would fill in natural scour downstream, leaving the bed 14 feet lower on average than 1940 near Kansas City, the USGS found.

4. Global Gas Push Stalls

Firms Hit Hurdles Trying to Replicate U.S. Success Abroad

By Russell Gold and Marynia Kruk, WSJ, Dec 2, 2012

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Exporting the U.S. shale energy revolution overseas turns out to be far tougher than anyone expected—giving the U.S. a significant competitive advantage.

Shale oil and natural gas have rejuvenated the North American energy industry and boosted the economy by supplying companies and consumers with cheap fuel. There are huge shale deposits outside of North America that global energy companies and governments are eager to tap.

But oil companies are running into obstacles as they try to replicate the U.S. experience on other continents. The result is that significant overseas shale energy production could be a decade away.

Among the reasons for the glacial pace abroad are government ownership of mineral rights, environmental concerns and a lack of infrastructure to drill and transport gas and oil. In addition, much less is known about the geology in most foreign countries than in the U.S., where drilling activity has been going on for more than a century.

The upshot: the U.S. and Canada could remain the main countries to reap the economic advantages of shale development for some time. In both countries, a glut of natural gas and ethane is luring petrochemical companies and fertilizer manufacturers to build new plants—a huge change after years of shifting production abroad. Meanwhile, states like Texas and North Dakota that actually have the shale deposits are getting additional boosts to their local economies from drilling activity.

Poland was once regarded as one of the more promising plays, but early wells have hit less gas than expected. In addition, community wariness of drilling and changes to the government's tax and royalty rules have dampened industry enthusiasm. Exxon Mobil Corp., an early proponent of

Polish shale, decided to throw in the towel after drilling just two wells, saying it didn't find enough oil or gas to justify additional drilling.

China is believed to have more shale oil and gas than the U.S. The problem is that most of it is in arid or heavily populated areas; oil companies worry they won't be able to obtain enough water to hydraulically fracture the rock—the process needed to free hydrocarbons from shale. "To create a flat drilling pad, we almost always have to take out some part of a hillside and basically someone's rice paddy," says Simon Henry, Royal Dutch Shell executive director for the Asia Pacific region.

Argentina recently nationalized the assets of a Spanish company that discovered an enormous shale deposit there that is estimated to hold nearly one billion barrels of oil. This has chilled outside investment, which already suffered from rules that made it difficult to import needed technology and export potential profits. Houston-based Apache Corp., which holds rights to drill in 450,000 acres of Argentine shale, says it can cost twice as much to drill a well there as the U.S., and then two to four times as much to frack the well so it can begin producing.

Other countries, like France and Bulgaria, have gone further and banned hydraulic fracking altogether because of environmental concerns, essentially stopping development in its tracks.

"There was enormous irrational exuberance for global shale development," says Joseph Stanislaw, an independent senior energy adviser to Deloitte LLP. "Then the industry ran into reality. Global shale will happen and when it does begin, it will take off with the same force we've seen in the U.S. But the timeline will take longer than people think."

The shale revolution began in the late 1990s when the first modern shale well was drilled a few miles north of Fort Worth, Texas. The technology was pioneered by small, independent companies willing to take enormous financial risks, and helped along by landowners who owned their mineral rights and were ready to sell for a share of the profits. Wall Street eagerly financed shale exploration efforts. The industry also benefited from a large existing pipeline network and ample number of drilling rigs.

This combination doesn't exist elsewhere in the world. "The mineral rights, the availability of small players to enter the market, the availability of geological data, these things are all part of an entrepreneurial model that is unique to the United States," says Julio Friedmann, the chief energy technologist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.

A key, but often overlooked, ingredient to the success of shale development in the U.S. is private ownership of much of the underground gas. That means that environmental concerns about drilling are countered by a built-in constituency of landowners looking to profit.

It is a "marvelously elegant system that ensures that all natural resources are fully developed," says Rex Tillerson, chief executive of Exxon Mobil, which produces more gas in North America than any other company. Outside the U.S., mineral rights are typically owned by governments, leaving locals with little reward for putting up with large-scale industrial drilling.

Another difficulty is that little is known about shale deposits around the world—unlike in the U.S. where tens of thousands of wells have been drilled and geologic data is usually made public by state regulators. Geologists know where shale deposits are overseas, but not if the rocks have particular characteristics that make fracking technology work.

Still, the prize could be significant and there are many formations around the world that industry experts believe could be as large, or larger, than the prolific Marcellus in Pennsylvania or the Bakken in North Dakota. Last year, a U.S.-government contracted study of 32 countries estimated they held 6.6 quadrillion cubic feet of shale gas, more than 50 years worth of current global consumption. The U.S. held 862 trillion cubic feet, or just 13% of the estimated resource.

The study didn't offer an estimate of either the volume of oil in global shales or the size of massive shale deposits in Russia and the Middle East. Other estimators have suggested this figure could be high, but nonetheless expect there is vast untapped energy in shales world-wide.

Companies that are investing in global shale are trying to damp down enthusiasm. Asked this summer about his expectation for shale gas development in Europe, Chevron's Vice Chairman George Kirkland said "You are really talking next decade before you get significant volumes."

Chevron and other companies still hope to create a shale-gas extraction industry in Poland. Chevron has acquired drilling rights there and hopes there is enough gas to make drilling economical. But the government is facing suspicion and resentment from citizens and has been slow to issue drilling permits. "Investors are right to complain, since our civil service hasn't yet adjusted to the emergence of this sector," says Deputy Environment Minister Piotr Wozniak.

He said a new energy law will provide generous compensation to local governments where drilling takes place, something he expects will help placate local opposition. In the Polish village of Lubocino, a farming community near the Baltic Sea, state-controlled energy company PGNiG SA has tried hard to convince locals that shale development is both safe and of benefit to them. It helped fund a local harvest festival, which was festooned with company logos. PGNiG has also paid for new linoleum floors and digital projectors at an elementary school.

This goodwill campaign, though, faces skepticism among some locals, who say that the only jobs offered to Lubocino residents at the drilling site have been security guard and cleaning lady. The company didn't respond to a request for comment on local employment.

Piotr Dampc, a villager who sold PGNiG the land where the well was drilled, said company officials told him the state owned the gas underneath his land and threatened to expropriate some of his 14 acres where the drilling pad was located. PGNiG declined to comment. "They said if we didn't agree to sell, it would take longer," he said. "But it would happen eventually."

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