

The Week That Was: 2012-02-18 (February 18, 2012)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

Quote of the Week:

"I have received, monsieur, your new book against the human race. I thank you for it...no one has ever employed so much intellect in the attempt to prove us beasts. A desire seizes us to walk on four paws when we read your work. Nevertheless, as it is more than sixty years since I lost the habit, I feel, unfortunately, that it is impossible for me to resume it." Voltaire on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book *Discourse on Inequality* incorporating the concept of the Noble Savage [H/t David Deming]

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Number of the Week: \$24,700 Million (rough estimate) for FY 2010

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THIS WEEK:

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

The Heartland Flap: According to a Heartland press release a person, unknown, used false pretenses to obtain confidential Heartland records. These were quickly posted on some web sites along with an apparently false document of a strategic plan by Heartland to address climate science. Immediately, alarmist web sites went viral. This was proof of a conspiracy to challenge climate science, as alarmists define it. Once dependable newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor* immediately trumpeted the news.

The Christian Science Monitor falsely claimed that the Charles C. Koch Foundation was undermining climate science. However, the Koch Foundation stated its donations to Heartland were for health care. The Monitor story avoided the fact that there were no major contributions from oil companies, but it linked to stories such as: "Are climate-change deniers guilty of treason?"

The reports stated that Heartland was paying three scientists a total of \$18,267, and some expenses, per month, or \$219,204 per year, for work on the reports of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC). The NIPCC reports include reviews of published scientific articles that are systematically ignored by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

It never occurred to the reporters and the editors of the newspapers that \$219,204 per year is an insignificant amount when countering big science, which is a big business. It is peanuts to the environmental industry that promotes global warming alarmism as well. For example, for FY 2011 the National Resources Defense Council spent \$105 Million and paid its president in excess of \$300,000. http://www.nrdc.org/about/NRDC_auditedfinancialstatements_FY2011.pdf

What is most disturbing about this flap is the dogmatic attitude of many reporters and editors to those who challenge the reports of the IPCC. Without evidence, they declare those who challenge the IPCC are attacking climate science, which is not the case. Climate science, as expressed by the IPCC, is totally inadequate and needs to be improved, significantly. Contrary to what is commonly believed there is no solid physical evidence that changes in carbon dioxide are the primary cause of changes in the earth's climate.

A note on Fred Singer: Singer was identified as receiving \$5000 per month plus up to \$1000 for expenses. The report is wrong! The moneys went to SEPP. Singer is the President of SEPP and is the principal founder of NIPCC. He receives no salary. All the moneys to SEPP are used in educational activities and for research, including challenging the IPCC. His latest research includes the IPCC's failure to adequately account for the chaotic nature of the IPCC models, and questions regarding the reported surface

temperatures from 1979 to the super El Niño year of 1998. The surface data are inconsistent with atmospheric temperatures.

Please see the links under “Heartland – Leak or Theft?” and “Funding Fights.” Of especial note are the comments by Roy Spencer and the exceptional comments of Craig Idso in response to Andy Revkin’s editorial in the *New York Times*, Dot Earth.

Number of the Week: \$24,700 Million (rough estimate): In May 2011, the General Accountability Office (GAO) reported that for the Fiscal Year 2010, that ended September 30, 2010, the US government allocated \$8,771 Million for Climate Change Funding, of which \$2,122 Million went to the category called climate science. This did not include the \$26,140 Million of funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (stimulus bill) which was allocated generally over three years, but was not broken out by year. The figure also did not include the \$7,230 Million allocated as tax credits for FY 2010. These are classified as tax expenditures.

Assuming that only one-third of the funds from the stimulus bill were spent in FY 2010, the funding for climate change (including tax credits, etc) by the Federal government in FY 2010 roughly totals \$24,700 Million. Putting it differently, Federal government expenditures in 5 minutes during FY 2010 were greater than Heartland’s annual expenditures for the three co-authors of the NIPPC reports who dare to present reports challenging the scientific basis used to justify the expenditures.

No wonder those who defend the orthodoxy are so outraged with Heartland. With a total budget of \$4.6 million for all activities in 2011, Heartland is among the few organizations that have raised serious scientific objections to the global warming express and its massive expenditures. It frightens the defenders of the orthodoxy that the American taxpayers may realize that they are getting an extremely poor return for these enormous expenditures. The 2011 Heartland total budget is less than 0.02% of the Federal government expenditures on climate change in FY 2010. Yet, for that paltry sum, the science produced by NIPCC and many independent contributors present the vital balance to the biased science of the IPCC. <http://www.gao.gov/assets/320/318556.pdf>

Freedom of Information Act: Anti-nuclear groups are suing the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to stop withholding what is called critical information concerning the \$8.3 Billion loan guarantee for the nuclear plant with 2 third generation AP 1000 reactors that the NRC approved last week. Contrary to statements in the article linked below, the reported costs of the facility at \$14 Billion are far greater than the loan guarantee. However, since taxpayers eventually must bear the burden of a default, there should be transparency as to the conditions of the loan. This principle should not only apply to the nuclear industry, but also to other subsidized industries. Please see link under “Litigation Issues.”

Wind Subsidies: The Federal government program giving developers of wind farms 30% of cost upon completion of the project expired last year, although these subsidies remain for already approved projects. The program of wind production subsidies to wind farms is scheduled to expire at the end of this year. Given that it is an election year, not much will be happening in Washington. Many in the wind industry fear that the industry will be unsustainable without these subsidies. Thus, intense political fights can be expected.

This leads to several issues. One, the subsidy program has existed for 20 years. It was temporary to allow the infant wind industry time to grow, even though wind generated electricity has been around since the 1880s. How long does it take for an infant industry to grown-up? Also, full disclosure is in order. Hard production data should be required from those receiving subsidies comparing the promises of the promoters with actual performance, including the cost of back-up that is necessary when wind fails. Such data is very difficult to obtain. Please see links under “Subsidies and Mandates Forever.”

California Snowpack: Shortly after he took office, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu held a press conference in Southern California declaring that global warming will melt the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, resulting in the destruction of California agriculture. He was wrong, now on two counts. As articulated in a prior TWTW (April 2, 2011), only southern part of the Central Valley requires water from the snowpack. However, that water is stored in reservoirs until it is needed for agriculture. As long as the moisture falls in the winter and spring, the plants do not care if it is snow or rain.

Now, Secretary Chu is wrong on a second count. John Christy of the University of Alabama, Huntsville, a native of Fresno in the Central Valley, announced a new study of the historic records of the snow packs of the Sierra Nevada Mountains with some records going as far back 1880s. There is no statistically significant change.

No doubt this study will be as displeasing to some as a prior study by Christy, et al. that reported the southern Central Valley has warmed, but from irrigation and urbanization, not carbon dioxide. The nearby Sierra Nevada Mountains showed no warming.

Methane Hydrates: Japan Oil, Gas and Metals Corporation has started a program of drilling four deep water wells (1000 meters below sea level) into methane hydrates to determine if these frozen mixtures of natural gas and water can be developed as a source of fuel. If the methane hydrates can be economically developed, then the world’s natural gas inventory would change dramatically. For example, there are extensive deposits in the Gulf of Mexico and in other locations. Please see link under “Oil and Natural Gas – The Future or the Past.”

Hydraulic Fracturing: A new study presented at the AAAS conference reported that contamination of well sites from hydraulic fracturing (fracking) occur from improper procedures at the surface such as properly covering the well casing and disposal of wastewater, not from the deep underground fracking. No doubt the study will be highly controversial among opponents to energy and the EPA. Please see links under “Oil and Natural Gas – The Future or the Past.”

Language of the Times: The global warming alarm has affected the language of many new services. As stated above, criticism of the IPCC science is labeled as an attack on climate science. A number of news services are describing the protracted extreme cold in Europe as a “cold snap.” Weeks of intense cold with temperatures as much as 15 deg C below normal is a snap? Please see links under “Changing Weather.”

Quote of the Week: The quote was taken from an opinion paper by David Deming entitled “The Noble Savage. Please see link under “Environmental Industry.”

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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. Texans Are Baffled by the Keystone Decision

China will get the oil from Canada that could have come to the U.S.

By Rick Perry, WSJ, Feb 13, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203824904577215623915733132.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0

2. Clean-Energy Aid Racks Up Losses

By Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Feb 11, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204642604577215491968442440.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Science: Is the Sun Rising?

German skeptics Lüning and Vahrenholt respond to criticism

Guests Posts by Sebastian Lüning and Fritz Vahrenhold

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Feb 13, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/02/13/german-skeptics-luning-and-vahrenholt-respond-to-criticism/>

[SEPP Comment: The authors of The Cold Sun respond to their critics. Natural climate cycles are not taken into consideration by the IPCC. Further, Svensmark's solar-cosmic ray hypothesis better explains the warming and cooling of the earth over the past 10,000 years than the IPCC's CO2 hypothesis. Neff's study of stalagmites in Oman is mentioned.]

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Interview of Fred Singer

By Sasha Foo, KUSI, San Diego, Feb 13, 2012

<http://www.kusi.com/video?clipId=6740164&autostart=true>

[SEPP Comment: Singer's comment on 20th century warming refers to the period between 1979 and the years before the super El Niño event of 1998. The temperature rise reflected in the surface data is not supported by atmospheric data or proxy data.]

CO2 is not a Greenhouse Gas that Raises Global temperature. Period!

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Feb 15, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/co2-is-not-a-greenhouse-gas-that-raises-global-temperature-period/>

[SEPP Comment: A different view from one who has studied the earth's climate history over past 10,000 years.]

Study: Sierra snowfall consistent over 130 years

By Peter Fimrite, San Francisco Chronicle, Feb 15, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2012/02/14/BA8N1N7HNQ.DTL>

Post-Modern Science and the Scientific Legitimacy of the IPCC's WG1, AR5 Draft Report

By Arthur Rörsch, the Netherlands, A working paper, No date [H/t NFC]

http://climatescienceinternational.org/images/pdf/post_modern_science_ipcc.pdf

[SEPP Comment: An analysis of the draft of the IPCC's AR5 – more of the same faulty science.]

Closed Minds at the IPCC

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Feb 12, 2012

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/02/12/closed-minds-at-the-ipcc/>

All fourteen chapters of the IPCC report **start from the assumption** that atmospheric CO2 is a dominant forcing agent for global temperature. [bold added]. See the paper immediately above.

Defending the Orthodoxy

French researchers complete new simulations for the next IPCC report

By David Whitehouse, The Observatory, Feb 15, 2012

<http://www.thegwgf.org/the-observatory/4984--french-researchers-complete-new-simulations-for-the-next-ipcc-report-.html>

[SEPP Comment: A series of 'retrospective forecasts' for the past 59 years results in more precision in the models with projections of temperature increases in this century from 2 deg to 5 deg C. Certainly a cooling is not in the plans of the IPCC.]

Extreme summer temperatures occur more frequently

By Anne M Stark for LLNL News, Livermore, CA (SPX) Feb 17, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Extreme_summer_temperatures_occur_more_frequently_999.html

[SEPP Comment: A cut-off date of 2000 of a study starting in 1975 showed a good agreement between models and observations. Why the artificially early cut-off date? Data was available to 2010. Could it be that models have a problem after 2000? Is it that the models reflect a specialized case, a specific time period, and cannot be applied to a broader period?]

AAAS – “science is not enough”

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Feb 17, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/02/17/aaas-science-is-not-enough/#more-56837>

[SEPP Comment: AAAS presidents have a history of attacking those who dare question its orthodoxy, including Bjørn Lomborg – of the Skeptical Environmentalist.]

Climate scientists not cowed by relentless climate change deniers

By Toni Feder, Physics Today, Feb 2012 [H/t Malcolm Field]

http://www.physicstoday.org/resource/1/phtoad/v65/i2/p22_s1?ver=pdfcov&bypassSSO=1

[SEPP Comment: Those who exaggerated global warming are seeking protection from their false claims. Statements that climate change is happening means little, except to those who promote Mr. Mann's hockey-stick.]

Low-carbon technologies 'no quick-fix', say researchers

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 17, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Low_carbon_technologies_no_quick_fix_say_researchers_999.html

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Voodoo Environomics

By H. Leighton Steward, Energy Tribune, Feb 17, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/9849/Voodoo-Environomics>

[SEPP Comment: Environmentalists are not interested in what is best for the environment.]

The futility of emissions reduction targets

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Feb 17, 2012

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/futility-emissions-reduction-targets>

Whatever climatic changes may be in store, investment in adaptation and resilience is needed and this, at least, will benefit society. Throwing taxpayers' money at unachievable targets will do nothing positive, but simply accelerate Europe's seemingly inevitable deindustrialisation and decline.

The Global Warming Hoax is Now Killing People

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Feb 13, 2012

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2012/02/global-warming-hoax-is-now-killing.html>

[SEPP Comment: The severe winter in Europe is taking a toll on humanity.]

On Self-Regulation Of The Climate System – A New Analysis By Willis Eschenbach

By Roger Pielke Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Feb 14, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/02/14/on-self-regulation-of-the-climate-system-an-excellent-new-analysis-by-willis-eschenbach/>

[SEPP Comment: On the need to explore possible self-regulating climate systems that seem to place an upper bound on temperatures.]

Questioning European Green

Germany's Sunshine Daydream

By Bjørn Lomborg, Project Syndicate, Feb 16, 2012 [GWPF]

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/lomborg81/English>

The fight over UK wind power is not over yet

From Civil War and Braveheart to the Battle of the Pylons

By Chris Cragg, European Energy Review, Feb 13, 2012

<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=3524>

Spain: FIT suspension knocks wind sector

By Jason Deign, Wind Energy News, Feb 9, 2012

http://social.windenergyupdate.com/turbine-supply-chain/spain-fit-suspension-knocks-wind-sector?utm_source=WEU%2BE-Brief%2B1402&utm_medium=WEU%2BE-Brief%2B1402&utm_campaign=2092

The Spanish government has called time on renewable energy with a law suspending feed-in tariffs for new projects from 2013. What is the likely impact on the renewable energy goliath's wind energy sector? [SEPP Comment: Spain's wind bubble is bursting, and the wind industry is claiming the government has not paid them enough because they cannot collect what they need from the consumers. A new concept – the tariff deficit – subsidies were inadequate!]

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Hillary Clinton Announcing Climate Change Initiative -- After Big Donor Deserts Obama Over Climate Change

By Susan Jones, CNSNews, Feb 16, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/hillary-clinton-announcing-climate-change-initiative-after-big-donor-deserts-obama-over>

[SEPP Comment: US taxpayers should underwrite programs that political donors demand?]

Problems within the Orthodoxy

Report Seeks to Integrate Microbes Into Climate Models

By Staff Writers, ScienceDaily, Feb. 14, 2012,

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/02/120214145337.htm>

Heartland: Leak or Theft?

Heartland Institute Responds to Stolen and Fake Documents

Press Release, Jim Lakely, Feb 15, 2012

<http://heartland.org/press-releases/2012/02/15/heartland-institute-responds-stolen-and-fake-documents>

Heartland Memo Looking Faker By the Minute

By Megan McArdle, Atlantic, Feb 17, 2012 [H/t Cooler Heads]

<http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/02/heartland-memo-looking-faker-by-the-minute/253276/>

I Heart Heartland

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Feb 16, 2012

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2012/02/i-heart-heartland/>

The Heartland Files and the Climate Fight

By Andrew Revkin, Dot Earth, Feb 15, 2012

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/15/documents-appear-to-reveal-broad-effort-to-amplify-climate-uncertainty/>

Quote of the Day: Andy Revkin

By Simon, Australian Climate Madness, Feb 16, 2012

http://www.australianclimatemadness.com/2012/02/quote-of-the-day-andy-revkin/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=quote-of-the-day-andy-revkin

The Anatomy of a Global Warming Smear

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Feb 16, 2012

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2012/02/anatomy-of-global-warming-smear.html>

[SEPP Comment: Addresses the New York Times article immediately below.]

Reality is Not Good Enough

By Roger Pielke Jr, His Blog, Feb 16, 2012

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2012/02/reality-is-not-good-enough.html>

Leak Offers Glimpse of Campaign Against Climate Science

By Justin Gillis and Leslie Kaufman, NYT, Feb 15, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/16/science/earth/in-heartland-institute-leak-a-plan-to-discredit-climate-teaching.html?_r=1&sq=Leak%20Offers%20Glimpse%20of%20Campaign%20Against%20Climate%20Science&st=cse&adxnnl=1&scp=1&adxnnlx=1329404626-dtk+7YhCzj9Olrfne/0Ag

Documents reveal Koch-funded group's plot to undermine climate science

Documents leaked from the 'free-market' Heartland Institute reveal payments to prominent climate-change deniers, a plan to create a fossil-fuel-friendly curriculum for Kindergartners, and efforts to 'keep opposing voices' out of the media.

By Stephanie Pappas, Christian Science Monitor, Feb 15, 2012

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Science/2012/0215/Documents-reveal-Koch-funded-group-s-plot-to-undermine-climate-science>

[SEPP Comment: Why bother to check the facts when you can make things up? This story is complete with a photo of a power plant emitting steam which is misidentified as smoke. But it contains a quiz asking the reader: "Are you scientifically literate?"]

Notes on the faked Heartland document

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Feb 15, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/02/15/notes-on-the-fake-heartland-document/#more-56736>

[SEPP Comment: The Koch Foundation contribution was for health care, not global warming.]

Funding Fights

Big bucks

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Feb 15, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/2/15/big-bucks.html>

Big Oil Money for Me, But Not for Thee

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Feb 17, 2012

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/02/17/big-oil-money-for-me-but-not-for-thee/>

DeSmog Blog's Bogus Exposé of the Heartland Institute

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming.org, Feb 13, 2012
<http://www.globalwarming.org/2012/02/17/desmog-blogs-bogus-expose-of-the-heartland-institute/#more-13089>

Fakegate: the smog blog exposes irrational rage, innumeracy, and heartland's efficient success.

By Jo Anne Nova, JoNova, Feb 16, 2012
<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/02/logic-gate-the-smog-blog-exposes-irrational-rage-innumeracy-and-heartlands-efficient-success/>

[SEPP Comment: Jo Nova's list of climate funding from various sources.]

UK Universities Receive £72 Million p.a. For Climate Research

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Feb 13, 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]
<http://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2012/02/13/uk-universities-receive-72-million-p-a-for-climate-research/>

[SEPP Comment: A list of universities and amounts received for climate change research. The Research Council reports it spent £235 Million in FY 2009-10 of which £50 Million was for Climate Science.

Seeking a Common Ground

Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature

By Staff Writers, Updated dataset, Feb 2012
<http://berkeleyearth.org/data/>

[SEPP Comment: Removed seasonal influences and reports three data sets, an average, a minimum, and a maximum]

Flowers Love CO2

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Feb 15, 2012
<http://www.worldclimaterreport.com/index.php/2012/02/15/flowers-love-co2/#more-528>
[SEPP Comment: Flowers flourishing with CO2 levels about **26 times** atmospheric level.]

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

Cold Snap Across Europe

By Staff Writers, NASA Earth Observatory, Feb 10, 2012 [H/t Jo Nova]
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=77126>
[SEPP Comment: Weeks of extreme cold are hardly a cold snap. Great map of cold areas.]

215 Russians die in cold snap; well over 600 in Europe

By Staff Writers, AFP, Feb 13, 2012
http://www.terradaily.com/reports/215_Russians_die_in_cold_snap_well_over_600_in_Europe_999.html

Models v. Observations

An NRC Study “A National Strategy for Advancing Climate Modeling” – A Missed Opportunity

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Feb 17, 2012
<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/02/17/an-nrc-study-a-national-strategy-for-advancing-climate-modeling-a-missed-opportunity/>

[SEPP Comment: It is the regional changes that are important, not the top-down models.]

An Example Of The Application Of The Bottom-Up, Resource-Based Approach To The Assessment Of Vulnerability

By Roger Pielke Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Feb 13, 2012
<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/02/13/an-example-of-the-application-of-the-bottom-up-resource-based-approach-to-the-assessment-of-vulnerability/>

[SEPP Comment: Although relying on climate models for predictions that have no meaning, this study is a beginning to understand regional changes of climate from on the basis environmental changes in the region, in the case the California Central Valley Flood Management Program.]

Changing Weather

California Snow Not Disappearing Says Research

By Joe D'Aleo, Weatherbell Analytics, Feb 14, 2012

<http://www.weatherbell.com/weather-news/california-snow-not-disappearing-says-research/>

D'Aleo-Solar Cycle 24 Length and Its Consequences

By David Archibald, Weatherbell LLC, Feb 14, 2012

<http://www.weatherbell.com/newsletter-2-14-12-e>

Do underwater volcanoes have an effect on ENSO?

Guest Post by AJ Strata

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Feb 15, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/02/15/do-underwater-volcanoes-have-an-effect-on-ens0/#more-56673>

[SEPP Comment: Controversial issue. Ian Plimer has also suggested the same.]

New Peer-Reviewed Paper on Global Tropical Cyclone Landfalls

By Roger Pielke, Jr, His Blog, Feb 15, 2012

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com.au/2012/02/new-peer-reviewed-paper-on-global.html>

[SEPP Comment: An improved version of an earlier paper. Increasing cost of tropical storms (hurricanes in the Atlantic) is due to increasing wealth, not increasing intensity or frequency of major storms. There are regional variations of land falls but not global variations.]

The Big Freeze: Thousands Trapped in Europe as Death Toll Rises to 600

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Feb 15, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/02/the-big-freeze-thousands-trapped-in-europe-as-death-toll-rises-to-600/#more-20291>

Changing Climate

50 Years After the Great Flood: Thoughts on Disaster Suffers

Wolfgang Röhl, Achse des Guten, Feb 16, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/opinion-pros-a-cons/4992-50-years-after-the-great-flood-thoughts-on-disasters-suffers.html>

[SEPP Comment: The worst floods occurred during the Little Ice Age.]

Changing Earth

Unknown Volcanoes Caused the Little Ice Age

By Dennis Avery, CGFI, Feb 14, 2012

<http://www.cgfi.org/2012/02/unkown-volcanoes-caused-the-little-ice-age-by-dennis-t-avery/>

[SEPP Comment; Avery questions the claim that the Little Ice Age was caused by volcanoes.]

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Response of Plant Species to CO2 Levels

By Dennis Avery, CGIF, Feb 5, 2012

<http://www.cgfi.org/2012/02/response-of-plant-species-to-co2-levels-by-dennis-t-avery/>

[SEPP Comment: An overview of the benefits of CO2 and the work of Sherman, Keith, and Craig Idso.]

The Political Games Continue

Obama administration slows environmental rules as it weighs political cost

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, Feb 12, 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/obama-administration-weighs-political-cost-of-environmental-rules/2012/02/07/gIQAvJzx8Q_story.html

[SEPP Comment: Proposed EPA regulations are more about politics than public health.]

Litigation Issues

Secrecy Over \$8 Billion Vogtle Nuclear Reactor Deal Challenged in Court

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 16, 2012

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Secrecy_Over_8_Billion_Vogtle_Nuclear_Reactor_Deal_Challenged_in_Court_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The lack of transparency is disturbing. According to reports the total project cost is \$14 Billion while the guarantee is \$8.33 Billion.]

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

European airfare war

Editorial, Washington Post, Feb 12, 2012 [H/t David Mantuta]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/european-air-fare-war/2012/02/08/gIQAZrAN9Q_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

[SEPP Comment: An editorial based upon the idea that the gas of life is a pollutant.]

Steel industry slams emissions 'set-aside'

By Staff Writers, UPI, Feb 15, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Steel_industry_slams_emissions_set-aside_999.html

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Wind Power Panic: AWEA's Last Stand (death spiral looms for taxpayer-dependent industry)

By Lisa Linowes, Master Resource, Feb 13, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/02/wind-panic-awea-ptc/>

[SEPP Comment: The 20 year temporary subsidy may actually expire.]

End of tax credit a blow for wind power industry

Up to 37,000 jobs, many in Illinois, could be lost as projects are halted or abandoned

By Julie Wernau, Chicago Tribune, Feb 17, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-biz-0217-wind-ptc--20120217,0,7153601_story

[SEPP Comment: The reported subsidies to oil and gas are misleading. The oil industry was well developed before any special tax write-offs were established. These came with the new income tax laws and especially with the extremely high income taxes enacted to pay for WW I. The nation needed oil to win the war.]

Expiration of tax credit looms for Newton wind energy manufacturers

By Mike Mendenhall, Newton Daily News, Feb 16, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.newtondailynews.com/2012/02/16/expiration-of-tax-credit-looms-for-newton-wind-energy-manufacturers/au01lmy/>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

California Rules

Editorial, NYT, Feb 14, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/14/opinion/californias-clean-car-rules.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha211

[SEPP Comment: One of the justifications by the EPA for the new fuel economy rules is to make the Federal rules consistent with California's rules. Now California is changing its rules, no doubt the EPA will argue it should change its rules again. The California Air Resources Board is one of the most radical environmental organizations in existence basing its rules on whatever it thinks it can get away with rather than any substantiated public health benefits.]

Clearing the air

Satellite data reveal the true scope of China's pollution problem
By Staff Writers, The Economist, Feb 11, 2012 [H/t Tom Sheahen]
<http://www.economist.com/node/21547215>

[SEPP Comment: There is little relationship between China's pollution problem and the Western nations except what drifts to the US, etc. If EPA were truly interested in protecting the health of the US citizens it would address the problems from China and India.]

Energy Issues – Non-US

Smart grids move from research to early industrialisation phase

By James Osborne. European Energy Review, Feb 9, 2012
<http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id=3513>

[SEPP Comment: Critical for achieving the dream of European politicians for decentralized power – numerous sources of alternative energy. As all too typical it needs: “...a proper regulatory framework that provides the right incentives for investments.” That is: either subsidies or forcing others to comply.]

Energy Issues -- US

Proponents of EVs and PHEVs are Worried

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Feb 17, 2012
<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2012/02/17/proponents-of-evs-and-phevs-are-worried/>

[SEPP Comment: Electric vehicles and hybrids are not selling well.]

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

Fracking Doesn't Harm Drinking Water, Study Says.

By Ronald Bailey, Reason.com, Feb 17, 2012
<http://reason.com/blog/2012/02/17/fracking-doesnt-harm-drinking-water-stud>

Surface Woes Blamed for Fracking Flaws: Study

By Staff Writers, AFP, Feb 16, 2012
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Surface_woes_blamed_for_fracking_flaws_study_999.html

"Most of what we have seen happening related to shale gas development that impacts the environment was at or near the surface,"

[SEPP Comment: Referencing the same study as the above article.]

Gas companies could start fracking in Hampshire

By Jon Reeve, Daily Echo, Feb 14, 2012 [H/t GWPF]
http://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/9530552.Hampshire_gas_reserves_could_be_worth_millions/

[SEPP Comment: Will natural gas replace the splendid wind turbines in England?]

How the US Shale Boom Will Change the World

By Gary Hunt, Oil Price, Feb 15, 2012 [H/t GWPF]
<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Natural-Gas/How-the-US-Shale-Boom-Will-Change-the-World.html>

To shale or not to shale: that is not the (only) question

By Roderick Kefferpütz, European Energy Review, Feb 9, 2012

http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id_mailing=247&toegang=3cec07e9ba5f5bb252d13f5f431e4bbb&id=3518

[SEPP Comment: By eliminating US demand for LNG, natural gas from shale is changing the economics of energy in Europe. No wonder Russian Premier Putin fears this new technology. A discussion of the possible limitations of this new technology for Europe is found in the footnotes.]

Tight oil the future of energy in North America

Claudia Cattaneo, Financial Post, Feb 15, 2012

http://business.financialpost.com/2012/02/15/tight-oil-the-future-of-energy-in-north-america/?_lsa=a4b7b521

Japan begins preparatory drilling for methane hydrate production

By Staff Writers, Mainichi Daily News, Feb 15, 2012

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20120215p2g00m0dm089000c.html>

Return of King Coal?

The Next Decade of Coal is Here

By Frank Clemente, Energy Facts, Feb 15, 2012

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=29bc7d5d85828d574f86c157a&id=6c20776dc7&e=>

Domestic Power Sector Coal Consumption Slumped in 2011, but Exports Ramped Up

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Feb 12, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4393.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2384453&hq_l=9&hq_v=5e66050d0

[SEPP Comment: Exports of steam coal as well as metallurgical coal are up sharply.]

Nuclear Energy and Fears

DOE to Spend Millions to Strengthen U.S. Competitiveness in Global Nuclear Sector

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Feb 15, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4391.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2384453&hq_l=12&hq_v=5e66050d0

[SEPP Comment: Secretary Chu announces new programs in research for nuclear energy, including modular plants.]

More Canadian uranium China-bound

By Staff Writers, World Nuclear News, Feb 10, 2012

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NP-More_Canadian_uranium_China-bound-1002127.html?utm_source=World+Nuclear+News&utm_campaign=678dfeb597-WNN_Weekly_7_13_February_2012_13_2012&utm_medium=email

A newly negotiated agreement will enable Canada to increase uranium exports to China.

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy

Could hurricanes wreck \$700m offshore wind farms in U.S.? Experts predict HALF of proposed turbines will be ruined in 20 years

Pittsburgh researchers' study follows up on U.S. energy report in 2008

Energy officials want wind farms to generate 20% of electricity by 2013

Plans for farms in Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina & Texas

Experts say current design can only withstand Category 3 hurricanes

By Mark Duell, Daily Mail, Feb 15, 2012

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2101766/Experts-predict-half-proposed-wind-farm-turbines-destroyed-just-20-years.html>

New Documentary Illustrates Global Backlash Against Big Wind

By Robert Bryce, Energy Tribune, Feb 13, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/9800/New-Documentary-Illustrates-Global-Backlash-Against-Big-Wind>

Energy Conversion Devices files for bankruptcy as solar energy lags

By Katherine Yung, Detroit Free Press, Feb 14, 2012

<http://www.freep.com/article/20120214/BUSINESS06/120214023/Energy-Conversion-Devices-bankruptcy-ECD?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

Biofuels

Will Seaweed be the Biofuel Solution?

By Dennis Avery, CGFI, Jan 29, 2012

<http://www.cgfi.org/2012/01/will-seaweed-be-the-biofuel-solution-by-dennis-t-avery/>

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Extreme Cold and Deadly European Winter Weather in 2011/12

Reference: Lockwood, M., Harrison, R.G., Woollings, T. and Solanki, S.K. 2010. Are cold winters in Europe associated with low solar activity? *Environmental Research Letters* 5: doi:10.1088/1748-9326/5/2/024001.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/feb/15feb2012a3.html>

[SEPP Comment: Associating European extreme cold with the North Atlantic Oscillation index and /or low sunspot activity.]

The Continuing Demise of the Little Ice Age

Reference: Akasofu, S.-I. 2010. On the recovery from the Little Ice Age. *Natural Science* 2: 1211-1224.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/feb/15feb2012a2.html>

[SEPP Comment: Unless a new Little Ice Age is coming.]

Corals Dying from Weather-Induced Heating and Cooling ... But Surviving Climate-Induced Heating and Cooling

Reference: Kemp, D.W., Oakley, C.A., Thornhill, D.J., Newcomb, L.A., Schmidt, G.W. and Fitt, W.K. 2011. Catastrophic mortality on inshore coral reefs of the Florida Keys due to severe low-temperature stress. *Global Change Biology* 17: 3468-3477.

[SEPP Comment: An important distinction lost in the alarmist claims. Climate change is gradual, weather change can be abrupt. Attributing coral mortality from weather change to climate change is a spurious inference.]

A 4000-Year History of Greenland Surface Temperature

Reference: Kobashi, T., Kawamura, K., Severinghaus, J.P., Barnola, J.-M., Nakaegawa, T., Vinther, B.M., Johnsen, S.J. and Box, J.E. 2011. High variability of Greenland surface temperature over the past 4000 years estimated from trapped air in an ice core. *Geophysical Research Letters* 38: 10.1029/2011GL049444.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/feb/14feb2012a1.html>

[SEPP Comment: Using different methods to measure temperatures near the summit of the Greenland ice sheet, found 72 decades over the past 4000 years in which the temperatures were 1 to 1.5 C warmer than the present one. For estimating future sea level rise, what is happening on the top of the glaciers is probably more important than what is happening on the bottom of them – it's still cold, about minus 30 deg C. Great graph.]

Environmental Industry

The Noble Savage

By David Deming, LewRockwell.com, Feb 14, 2012 [H/t WUWT]

<http://lewrockwell.com/orig9/deming8.1.1.html>

[SEPP Comment: The idea of living in harmony with nature is a myth. Native Americans routinely burned areas such as the Shenandoah Valley and Yosemite to make them more bountiful for food and game. There is a distinction between stewardship of the land and environmentalism.]

Problems cast shadows of doubt on solar project

The unexpected deaths of kit foxes and discovery of ancient human settlements threaten to delay or even cancel a \$1-billion, 250-megawatt installation on federal land in the desert near Blythe.

By Louis Sahagun, LA Times, Feb 11, 2012

http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-solar-foxes-20120211_0,4708180.story

[SEPP Comment: Environmental regulations are so extensive and so onerous that large scale projects are extremely difficult.]

Other Scientific News

The quest for sugars involved in origin of life

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 17, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/The_quest_for_sugars_involved_in_origin_of_life_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Last week a study pronounced that sugars are toxic and addictive to humans, in this study they are vital to the origin of life.]

Infrared Sounder on NASA's Suomi NPP Starts its Mission

By Cynthia O'Carroll for Goddard Space Flight Center, SPX, Feb 14, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Infrared_Sounder_on_NASA_Suomi_NPP_Starts_its_Mission_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

Homeland Security takes on The Carrington Event

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Feb 14, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/02/14/homeland-security-takes-on-the-carrington-event/#more-56641>

[SEPP Comment: A fierce solar flare such as the one in 1859 could cause significant disruption to modern cities.]

UBC researchers use Google Earth to verify Mediterranean fish farming data

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 14, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/UBC_researchers_use_Google_Earth_to_verify_Mediterranean_fish_farming_data_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The spy in the sky.]

Organic foods may be an unsuspected source of dietary arsenic

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 17, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Organic_foods_may_be_an_unsuspected_source_of_dietary_arsenic_99.html

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Valentine's Day destroyed by climate change?

By Dean Kuipers, LA Times, Feb 10, 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/environment/la-me-gs-valentines-day-destroyed-by-climate-change-20120210,0,6234196.story?track=rss>

Shark attacks rising, study says humans to blame

By Staff Writers, AFP, Feb 13, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Shark_attacks_rising_study_says_humans_to_blame_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Global warming and overfishing of sharks are among the causes of increased shark attacks?]

Ocean warming causes elephant seals to dive deeper

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 13, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Ocean_warming_causes_elephant_seals_to_dive_deeper_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The article lacks temperature data required for the central premise.]

Fish of Antarctica threatened by climate change

By Staff Writers, SPX, Feb 16, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Fish_of_Antarctica_threatened_by_climate_change_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Assumes a uniform warming in the waters around the Antarctic]

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ARTICLES:

1. Texans Are Baffled by the Keystone Decision

China will get the oil from Canada that could have come to the U.S.

By Rick Perry, WSJ, Feb 13, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203824904577215623915733132.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper was in Beijing recently signing an agreement and touting his country's growing energy partnership with China. It's good news for Canada, which is rightfully looking to grow markets for its sizeable oil reserves. And it's particularly good news for China, which needs to keep tapping into fresh supplies to feed its growing economy and mounting demand for oil.

Unfortunately, it's bad news for Americans, particularly when you consider that one of the main reasons China has become such an attractive market to Canada was President Obama's recent rejection of the Keystone XL Pipeline. This cross-border connection would have provided a golden opportunity to partner with our neighbors to the north in producing massive amounts of energy, both for our country and the globe.

It seems unimaginable, yet President Obama refused Trans-Canada's request to run its pipeline across the border from Canada to the Texas Gulf Coast. This extensive pipeline holds the potential of moving up to 830,000 barrels of crude oil per day—including oil produced in North Dakota and Montana—to refineries here in Texas. Translated into job numbers, that's up to 20,000 direct jobs and estimates of up to hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs created by this \$7 billion project.

Keystone would have provided a shot in the arm for our nation's uncertain economy, and it could have provided economic opportunity for tens of thousands of families, stretching from here in Texas all the way to the Canadian border.

Hoping to appease environmental radicals, President Obama said no, claiming he didn't have time to adequately consider the pipeline.

This is despite the fact the original request was made in September 2008, and Keystone was the subject of dozens of meetings on multiple levels of his own administration, as well as exhaustive environmental impact reviews. Certainly, three-and-half years is more than enough time to make a decision.

His reasoning becomes even more laughable when you put it up against his massive, ill-conceived so-called stimulus bill, which he muscled through Congress and signed within the first month of his presidency.

President Obama wants us to believe he is for jobs, economic opportunity and greater energy security, and his Keystone decision does help meet those goals—for the People's Republic of China. The American people get nothing.

President Obama simply caved to the more radical activist elements of his base who almost immediately decided they would vigorously oppose Keystone, regardless of the U.S. State Department's conclusion that it would be one of the safest pipeline systems in the United States.

President Obama put his personal political interests ahead of improving our country's economic climate.

His decision also relegates the U.S. to continued reliance on oil from volatile nations in the Middle East, where unrest, chaos and Iran's threats to block the oil supply moving through the Strait of Hormuz are driving gas prices ever closer to \$4 a gallon.

It's all reflective of a wrong-headed approach that vilifies energy companies, ignores the realities of energy markets, squeezes the pocketbooks of struggling Americans, and doesn't take us one step closer to energy independence.

In Texas, our approach has been steady and consistent, an "all of the above" energy portfolio that cultivates a vibrant energy market that includes traditional sources, as well as wind, solar and biomass.

We're still a long way from doing it all with renewables, and we need to continue finding and utilizing new supplies of traditional energy sources, like oil, natural gas, nuclear and coal, if we're going to keep our economy healthy in the years to come.

That's what Keystone was bringing us. And that's what President Obama rejected.

There are efforts in Congress to find a way around the president's roadblock, led by Texas Sen. John Cornyn, among others.

Unless President Obama changes his mind, or we find an alternate method of getting the pipeline built, all that oil will likely flow to China instead of here, taking with it an all-too-rare economic opportunity.

Mr. Perry, a Republican, is the governor of Texas.

2. Clean-Energy Aid Racks Up Losses

By Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Feb 11, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204642604577215491968442440.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1

The U.S. government could lose \$2.7 billion as a result of the loans and loan guarantees it offered to clean-energy companies, according to a White House-commissioned study carried out in the wake of Solyndra LLC's bankruptcy.

The Obama administration, which has defended its aid for clean energy in the wake of the solar-panel maker's demise, said the estimate was in line with its own projections.

Republicans have attacked President Barack Obama over the Department of Energy loan program, saying it wasted taxpayer dollars and put too much faith in unproven technologies. Solyndra closed in September after receiving \$528 million in U.S. government loans.

The White House in October acknowledged the need to review the program and ordered an independent analysis by Herb Allison, a former Merrill Lynch & Co. president who had served in the Bush and Obama administrations.

Mr. Allison's review depicted the Energy Department's process of making and monitoring loans as sometimes poorly organized and lacking in oversight, though he didn't discuss any specific decisions regarding Solyndra.

To improve the odds that taxpayers get paid back, the department should create a new position of chief risk officer and make sure individual managers, not committees, are held accountable for decisions, the report said.

The Energy Department has committed to provide more than \$23 billion in loans or loan guarantees to companies in solar, wind and other clean-energy areas, but it has dispersed only \$8.3 billion so far. A loss of nearly \$3 billion would represent 12% of the total program at the department.

The government should be prepared for many of the companies to seek relief from their loan-guarantee requirements, and officials need to clarify the conditions for granting it, the review said.

Actual losses in the Energy Department's loan-guarantee portfolio will depend on market conditions and other factors, but "more important to the ultimate performance of the portfolio will be DOE's management of it going forward," the review said.

It called for creating an "early warning system" to track the status of borrowers and loans, and said the department needs more professionals with private-sector experience to monitor risks.

Republicans stepped up their criticism of the program following Mr. Allison's report. "When taxpayers are the ones paying the price, this sort of managerial soul-searching should take place before billions of dollars are doled out, not after," said Rep. Fred Upton (R., Mich.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which is investigating Solyndra's loan guarantee and the broader program.

Energy Secretary Steven Chu said in a statement Friday that it was "very likely" other companies backed by the government would fail, given the inherent risk of backing new technologies, but "the vast majority of companies are expected to pay the loans back in full, on time, and with about \$8 billion in interest."

Mr. Chu said the report's estimate of \$2.7 billion in losses was lower than the Energy Department's own projection of \$2.9 billion.

"While the portfolio includes loans to a range of projects that carry different levels of risk, today's report finds that the Department of Energy has been judicious in balancing these risks," White House spokesman Eric Schultz said.

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