

The Week That Was: 2012-1-28 (January 28, 2012)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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On the Road Again: Fred Singer will be traveling to the Southwest and West US to spread the joyous news that the NIPCC Reports are correct and the IPCC models do not conform to observations. Humanity has little to fear from the false claims of unprecedented and dangerous global warming. Although his schedule is not final, his stops include: Houston-Austin from Feb 6 to 8; Southern California from Feb 8 to 12, with a talk at Chapman University on Feb 9, additional meeting in San Diego on February 13 & 14 and the key Sigma Xi lecture at the University of New Mexico on Feb 16.

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Quote of the Week:

“...we redistribute de facto the world’s wealth by climate policy... One has to free oneself from the illusion that international climate policy is environmental policy. This has almost nothing to do with environmental policy anymore...” IPCC co-chair of Working Group 3, Dr. Ottmar Endenhofer, November 13, 2010 interview [H/t Dr. Charles Battig]

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Number of the Week: 65% and 46%

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THIS WEEK:

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

SEPP / VA-SEEE Forums in Tidewater VA: SEPP / VA-SEEE gave forums this week in Mathews and in Virginia Beach, VA. At these Forums, Fred Singer addressed the issue of sea level rise, which he believes will be about 8 inches in this century. The local impact would depend on what is happening to the land area. Is it subsiding or perhaps rising? Ken Haapala addressed the divergence between temperature observations and the projections from models as well as briefly touching on energy issues.

However, it was the presentation by Charles Battig, MD, President of the Piedmont Chapter of VA-SEEE that should be most disturbing to local residents and property owners. Dr. Battig addressed the current effort by internationalists to expand their control of local land use in the United States. Those seeking control are aided and abetted by funds and activates from Federal agencies such as the Department of State, Department of Interior, and the EPA. The quote of the week is taken from his presentation.

Traditionally, in the US local land use decisions were left to the localities – the people who lived in the area. Thus, the use of natural resources on private land was largely local issue with the land owner. In recent decades, Federal agencies have greatly expanded their powers to control land use. For example, wetlands were once considered land of marginal value and mosquito breeding grounds. Wetlands were drained to control malaria which was spread by mosquitoes. After World War II, malaria was finally eliminated in the US. In addition, the Department of Agriculture promoted the draining of wetland to expand the useful farmland in the country. Several decades ago, many began to realize the value of wetlands for the ecological balance of various regions. Rather than simply stop promoting and funding the drainage of wetlands, Federal government agencies have actively controlled the use of such lands and punished landowners who do not obey their demands.

The Constitution gave the Federal government the power to control the navigable waters of the United States. The definition of navigable waters has been twisted beyond meaning. Isolated prairie ponds that are visited by migrating ducks have been declared navigable waters of the US. Isolated depressions in the desert which have visible water only a few times each decade are also so identified; meadows and intermittent stream channels with leaves are also targeted. Building a dam to store water in a wetland is

considered the same as filling it with dirt. Throughout this process the costs are borne by the private landowner, but the control of the private property is with the Federal government.

After witnessing this expansion of power for the past 30 years, it is not difficult to imagine the pernicious effect that expansion of international power, as described by Dr. Battig, will have over local property owners. As with wetlands, the Federal government cannot be expected to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens.

The general effort is embodied in UN Agenda 21, which was adapted during the Rio Conference in 1992. This was the same conference that led to the dysfunctional Kyoto Protocol to control world-wide carbon dioxide emissions under the false claim that the emissions are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming.

As presented by Dr. Battig, there are many code words used to disguise this expansion of power including smart growth, sustainability, comprehensive planning, growth management, etc. Many of the concepts were embedded in the US Policy articulated in "Towards a Sustainable America," issued in 1999 under President Clinton. Specific programs include: International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), which was renamed Local Governments for Sustainability and President Obama's Rural Councils. Private organizations such as the Sierra Club have incorporated the goals in its "Cool Counties" program.

Many of these programs are largely funded by the Federal Government and attract organizations seeking such funds, such as the American Planning Association.

The next major meeting for the internationalists will be the Rio+20 Earth Summit to take place from 20 to 22 June 2012. TWTW will periodically report on the activities leading to Rio+20. For the slides prepared by Dr. Battig on Agenda 21, please see his web site: www.climateis.wordpress.com. For an article on the smaller forum in Virginia Beach, please see Article # 2. Unfortunately the article relies on false reports regarding the sources of funding of SEPP.

No Drastic Action Needed: An impressive array of distinguished scientists from numerous countries published an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal asserting that no drastic action is required to address global warming / climate change. The physical evidence that carbon dioxide emissions are harmful does not exist, and economic growth using fossil fuels is a greater benefit to humanity than any benefits assumed under greenhouse gas controls. What is needed is greater understanding of climate change rather than the simplistic notion that carbon dioxide controls climate. Please see Article # 1.

Alternative Sources of Electricity: Someone experienced in analyzing potential investments in innovative industries may be surprised by the lack of hard data on the performance of solar and wind in generating electricity. Certainly, it is understandable that solar and wind companies may wish to keep certain trade secrets from the public, such as manufacturing design and techniques. But if the results are as solid as the promoters claim, than one would expect the promoters would give the hard data on performance. Yet these are being withheld on the claims that such data is proprietary – confidential.

Slowly, information is leaking from nations that have spent heavily on wind and solar, such as Germany. This information should give pause to those touting solar and wind, including politicians. England is pulling back from wind, Germany has announced drastic cut-backs on its subsidies to solar, and Spain has announced the elimination of subsidies for renewable power. These actions are not the result of success. The erratic nature of these sources is well established. Further, electricity is rather unique among energy types – it cannot be stored on an affordable, commercial scale.

The leaders of countries that have spent heavily on solar and wind assumed that the erratic nature of these sources, and that the lack of storage, can be compensated by installing the facilities over a broad geographical area. They were wrong. A winter high pressure system can cover a broad area of Europe, rendering wind turbines useless when solar panels can generate little electricity, and none at night. Reports are indicating that at least 80% conventional back-up is needed. [One exception may be Denmark which relies on pumped hydro storage from Norway and Sweden, selling excess wind generated electricity to pump up reservoirs when possible and buying the hydroelectricity when needed. The pricing should be quite interesting.]

A further complication is that fast back-up from conventional sources, such as coal or natural gas, is very demanding on the equipment, inefficient, and polluting – the pollution control devices do not work properly when heat output varies. According to reports, no coal plants have been de-commissioned in northern Europe rendering the claim of lower carbon dioxide emissions questionable.

Those proclaiming the virtues of wind and solar should be compelled to reveal actual output data from these sources, the required back-up, and data on the actual reduction of carbon dioxide and other emissions when alternative sources are used. Please note that SEPP does not agree with the usually reliable US Energy Information Agency when it suggests that the production capacity of on-shore wind is 34% of name plate capacity. It should be less. Please see Article # 5, and links under “Questioning European Green.”

Number of the Week: 65% and 46%. Donna Laframboise, who exposed the heavy involvement of environmental groups in the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), exposes the results of the heavy spending of the Province of Ontario, Canada. According a report by the Auditor General “...electricity prices for the average consumer have increased 65% since the restructuring of the electricity sector in 1999, and prices are expected to rise another 46% in the next five years.” Electricity from free wind and solar is not cheap. Please see link under “Questioning Green Elsewhere.”

Conspiracy Theory: The ever imaginative historian of climate science, Naomi Oreskes, has an op-ed in the LA Times once again associating those scientists who are skeptical about the claim that carbon dioxide emissions are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming / climate change with tobacco executives who stated that cigarette smoking did not cause lung cancer.

Establishing the strong link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer required rigorous application of statistics – at the time, some 92% of smokers did not contract cancer. The IPCC and Oreskes’ fellow advocates have failed to produce rigorous science. Statistically, late 20th century climate change is more closely linked to ocean oscillations than to carbon dioxide – no increase in temperatures for over a decade although carbon dioxide emissions continue to increase.

She is not worth addressing except, as illustrated in the article on the SEPP – VA-SEEE forum, journalists continue to report her false claims against two of the founders of SEPP, Fred Singer and Fredrick Seitz. Please see link under “Defenders of the Orthodoxy.”

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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. No Need to Panic About Global Warming

There's no compelling scientific argument for drastic action to 'decarbonize' the world's economy. 16 scientists, WSJ, Jan 27, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204301404577171531838421366.html?mod=djemEditorialPage_t

Signatories follow.

WSJ

OpEd signatories

<http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/3220333/1609561791/name/OpEd%20signatories.txt>

2. U.Va. professor throws cold water on global warming

By Scott Harper, Virginia-Pilot, Jan 25, 2012

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/01/uva-professor-throws-cold-water-global-warming>

An article describing the SEPP / VA-SEEE presentation at Virginia Beach. Comments by Fred Singer on the article follows.

3. Canada's Harper Vows to Speed Up Energy Projects

By Nirmala Menon, WSJ, Jan 26, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203363504577185041293276370.html?grcc=14ea04ff089c4f82e6c6063a4392571bZ11&mod=WSJ_hps_sections_business

4. Oil Fields Gushing in the U.S.

By Tom Fowler, WSJ, Jan 23, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204624204577177092687939480.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1

Federal forecasters are expected to confirm on Monday what the energy industry already knows: Oil production is surging in the U.S.

5. Germany's Solar Crack-Up

Berlin backs down on trying to 'grow pineapples in Alaska.'

Editorial, WSJ, Jan 15, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203806504577180572533142452.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

Global warming's 'dirty laundry'

University of Virginia should disclose climate emails

Editorial, Washington Times, Jan 27, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jan/27/global-warmings-dirty-laundry/>

[SEPP Comment: Apparently Mr. Mann does not appreciate his critics.]

A major FOI victory

By Andrew Montford and Don Keiller, Bishop Hill, Jan 23, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/1/23/a-major-foi-victory.html>

[SEPP Comments: A victory for those demanding the University of East Anglia release CRUTEM, temperature data, as requested under Freedom of Information Acts.]

Another IPCC Demand for Secrecy

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Jan 26, 2012

<http://climateaudit.org/2012/01/26/another-ipcc-demand-for-secrecy/>

[SEPP Comment: Steve McIntyre's exchange with IPCC on its efforts to stop Steve from posting segments of the draft of AR5 – even though the IPCC declares the review process is transparent.]

Challenging the Orthodoxy

UN Abuse of Precautionary Principle Lets Them Ignore Corrupt Climate Science

By Tim Ball, His Blog, Jan 24, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/un-abuse-of-precautionary-principle-lets-them-ignore-corrupt-climate-science/>

“In a free society the individual is presumed to be free to act unless the state can prove harm or the potential to do harm. The precautionary principle says that no individual person is free to act unless that individual can prove to the state that the action can do no harm.”

The Skeptic's Case,

By David Evans, Joannenova, Jan 25, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/01/dr-david-evans-the-skeptics-case/#more-19931>

[SEPP Comment: A solid overview from the position of one skeptic.]

Presentation by global warming skeptics draws big crowd in Portland

By Scott Learn, The Oregonian, Jan 26, 2012 [H/t Charles Battig]

http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2012/01/presentation_by_global_warming.html

[SEPP Comment: The great success of a presentation on global warming sponsored by the Oregon American Meteorological Society was due, in part, by the abrupt cancellation of the presentation by the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry after the objection of an alarmist.]

Defending the Orthodoxy

The verdict is in on climate change

When it comes to climate change, open-mindedness is the wrong approach.

By Naomi Oreskes, LA Times, Jan 22, 2012

<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jan/22/opinion/la-oe-oreskes-judging-climate-change-20120122>

[SEPP Comment: Even before the jury has heard the evidence of the defendant that human emissions of carbon dioxide are not responsible for unprecedented and dangerous global warming, the professor of history at University of California, San Diego announces the verdict.]

"Please Don't Confuse me with the Facts"

By Fred Singer, Letter to Editor of LA Times, Jan 25, 2012

Regarding the above Oreskes op-ed.

It is strange that UCSD Prof Naomi Oreskes (op-ed, Jan 22), who claims to be working professionally on climate change, does not list the main reason why so many scientists are skeptical about any significant human contribution: It is simply lack of evidence. Instead, she imagines a number of political reasons and imputes bad faith to skeptical climate scientists.

The fact that natural agents have been producing climate changes in the past is uncontested; there is no reason to think that such natural forcings would suddenly cease to be important. It should be clear therefore that the burden of proof must lie with those who argue in favor of Anthropogenic Global Warming and propose Draconian regulations to control emissions of CO₂ – costly and wholly unnecessary measures that are destroying the economy and killing jobs. But we cannot discern AGW in the climate record: Hence the ongoing lively scientific debate about such evidence – which Oreskes conveniently ignores. Her advice: When it comes to climate science, open-mindedness is the wrong approach.

Thawing tundra a new climate threat

By Jared Sagoff, Argonne National Laboratory, Jan 19, 2012 [H/t Paul Redfern]
http://www.anl.gov/Media_Center/News/2012/news120119.html?utm_source=Argonne+Today+Internal+and+External+List&utm_campaign=0bf36ff320-12%2F1%2F24&utm_medium=email
[SEPP Comment: Perhaps the respected Argonne National Laboratory should ask: if a vast body of physical evidence indicates the Arctic was warmer 5 to 8 thousand years ago, why is area beginning to thaw now?]

News from Brussels: Danish EU presidency lowers expectations on climate policy

By Sonja van Renssen, European Energy Review, Jan 25, 2012
http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?id_mailing=243&toegang=cb70ab375662576bd1ac5aaf16b3fca4&id=3316
“Behind the Danish EU presidency's climate and energy plans lies a more fundamental objective: it wants Europe to move away from the notion of austerity measures to investment in green growth.”
[SEPP Comment: But investment in green growth produces negative returns: stagnation and bankruptcy.]

Regional Cap-and-Trade Effort Seeks Greater Impact by Cutting Carbon Allowances

By Mireya Navarro, NYT, Jan 26, 2012
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/27/nyregion/in-greenhouse-gas-initiative-many-unsold-allowances.html?_r=1&ref=science
[SEPP Comment: As refineries that serve the northeast are cutting down, the politicians make it more difficult to re-open them.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Watts Up? Who Killed Climate Change?

Patrick Michaels, Forbes, Jan 27, 2012
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickmichaels/2012/01/27/watts-up-who-killed-climate-change/>
[SEPP Comment: The contribution of Anthony Watts was significant, but so were the contributions of many others.]

Questioning European Green

Spain Suspends Subsidies for New Renewable Energy Power Plants

By Ben Sills, Bloomberg, Jan 27, 2012 [H/t Mark Duchamp]
<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-01-27/spain-suspends-subsidies-for-new-renewable-energy-plants.html>
[SEPP Comment: Recognizing that the jobs provided by the free energy industries are too expensive.]

The hidden fuel costs of wind generated electricity.

K. de Groot & C. le Pair, His Blog, No date – Jan 25, 2012 [H/t Cornwall Alliance]
<http://www.clepair.net/windsecret.html>
[SEPP Comment: Summary of the inefficiencies of wind power based on data from Germany.]

The future of fossil fuels

By Martin Livermore, Scientific-Alliance, Jan 26, 2012
<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/future-fossil-fuels>
[SEPP Comment: Current policies of Western Europe will create unnecessary economic hardship.]

Why we're no longer so keen on being green: Number of people willing to change the way they live falls by 10%

By Steve Doughty, Daily Mail, Jan 27, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2092375/Climate-change-No-people-willing-green-change-way-live-falls-10.html>

[SEPP Comment: *The man in the pub is not an affluent environmentalist.*]

Questioning Green Elsewhere

Green Energy: the Auditor Isn't Impressed

By Donna Laframboise, NFC, Jan 26, 2012

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/01/26/green-energy-the-auditor-isnt-impressed/>

[SEPP Comment: *Drawing from the report of the Office of Auditor General of Ontario, Canada.*]

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Davos grapples with surging demand for fuel, food

By Staff Writers, Davos, Switzerland (AFP) Jan 25, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Davos_grapples_with_surging_demand_for_fuel_food_999.html

[SEPP Comment: *Another demand to expand the powers of an unelected international group over US taxpayers.*]

Problems within the Orthodoxy

No chance for climate deal unless firms join push: UN

By Staff Writers, Davos, Switzerland (AFP) Jan 26, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/No_chance_for_climate_deal_unless_firms_join_push_UN_999.html

[SEPP Comment: *A UN call for green companies to lobby their government for more green energy.*]

Seeking a Common Ground

Open-mindedness is the wrong (?) approach

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Jan 23, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/01/23/open-mindedness-is-the-wrong-approach/#more-6823>

[SEPP Comment: *Judith Curry opens comments on Naomi Oreskes' op-ed that we all must trust the IPCC experts. See op-ed under "Defending the Orthodoxy."*]

US Emissions Projections Compared to Reduction Targets

By Roger Pielke, Jr, His Blog, Jan 26, 2012

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2012/01/us-emissions-projections-compared-to.html>

"It should be fairly obvious that under the assumptions of the EIA (such as positive economic growth) that the emissions reduction targets are not going to be met. Given President Obama's renewed commitment to an "all of the above" strategy for energy production in the United States, is it finally time to dismiss the charade of emissions reductions targets and adopt a different approach?"

New Emissions Data Dampen Global Warming Fears

By James Taylor, Forbes, Jan 25, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2012/01/25/new-emissions-data-dampen-global-warming-fears/>

Nature Physics Insight – Complexity

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Jan 25, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/01/25/nature-physics-insight-complexity/#more-6828>

[SEPP Comment: *The need to develop new tools to understand complex systems such as climate.*]

"Ever increasing degrees of freedom in climate models has surpassed our ability to understand how to reason about and draw inferences from climate model output. New insights are needed, and network theory may be one such source of new insights."

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Hansen Predicts Rapid Sea Level Rise – When He Is 140 Years Old

By Steven Goddard, Real Science, Jan 27, 2012

<http://www.real-science.com/hansen-predicts-rapid-sea-level-rise-140>

[SEPP Comment: Most agree that the influence of carbon dioxide on temperatures is logarithmic. Hansen apparently believes that the influence of warming projected by unverified models on sea levels is exponential.]

Models v. Observations

New Paper “Improved Constraints On 21st-Century Warming Derived Using 160 Years Of Temperature Observations” By Gillet Et Al 2012

By Roger Pielke, Sr, Pielke Climate Science, Jan 27, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/01/27/new-paper-improved-constraints-on-21st-century-warming-derived-using-160-years-of-temperature-observations-by-gillet-et-al-2012/>

“When they write:

‘.....we detect the influence of greenhouse gases, aerosols and natural forcings in the observed temperature record’

they more accurately should state:

.....we detect IN THE MODEL the influence of greenhouse gases, aerosols and natural forcings WHEN COMPARED WITH the observed temperature record.”

Changing Weather

2011 was 51st warmest year in Australia!

By Steve Woodman, Joannenova, Jan 25, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/01/2011-was-51st-warmest-year-in-australia/#more-19953>

[SEPP Comment: Clever play on the usual screaming headline.]

Changing Climate

NASA Sees Repeating La Nina Hitting its Peak

By Staff Writers, Pasadena CA (JPL), Jan 19, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/NASA_Sees_Repeating_La_Nina_Hitting_its_Peak_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Jason 2 satellites observing variations in sea surface height as a means of estimating the strength of the La Nina. According to the IPCC the El Nino – Southern Oscillation does not cause global warming / climate change.]

Changing Sea Ice

Ice in Bering Sea threatens crab fishery

Sea ice is encroaching unusually early on the central Bering Sea, threatening to grind Alaska's economically important snow crab fishery to a halt at the peak of the season, leaving crabbers facing major losses.

By Michelle Theriault Boots, Anchorage Daily News, Jan 26, 2012 [H/t Weatherbell Analytics]

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/2012/01/25/1999204/ice-in-central-bering-sea-is-threatening.html>

[SEPP Comment: A weather change not usually included in TWTW, but this report offers contrast to the alarmist claims of global warming and disappearing sea ice.]

Changing Earth

Waiting for Death Valley's Big Bang

By Staff Writers, New York NY (SPX), Jan 25, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Waiting_for_Death_Valley_Big_Bang_999.html

“Yet, as the researchers point out, Lamont-Doherty tree-ring researchers have already shown that the region was even hotter and drier during Medieval times, when the blowup took place.”

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Plant-zone Map a Boon to Growers,

By Bart Ziegler, WSJ, Jan 26, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203718504577182932658968386.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1

[SEPP Comment: The new US Department of Agriculture map shows that winters in urban areas, particularly in the Northeast, are getting warmer – the Urban Heat Island effect? The article may be behind a pay wall but the map is available at: <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>]

The Political Games Continue

State Of The Union: Apparently, Hugh Hefner is Responsible for Abstinence

By Warren Meyer, Forbes, Jan 25, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/warrenmeyer/2012/01/25/state-of-the-union-apparently-hugh-hefner-is-responsible-for-abstinence/>

[SEPP Comment: President taking credit for the boon in oil and gas production in the US.]

Rep. Markey’s Keystone ‘Fix’: Would It Increase Oil Imports from Saudi Arabia?

By Marlo Lewis, Global Warming.org, January 20, 2012

<http://www.globalwarming.org/2012/01/20/rep-markeys-keystone-fix-would-it-increase-oil-imports-from-saudi-arabia/>

Litigation Issues

Where will Obama side on mud puddles?

By David Freddoso,, Washington Examiner, Jan 26, 2012

<http://campaign2012.washingtonexaminer.com/article/where-will-obama-side-mud-puddles/334836>

[SEPP Comment: Mud puddle management -- court ordered regulation of ditches of logging roads. Did the administration fight it?]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Obama vows no backing down on clean energy

By Staff Writers, Washington (AFP), Jan 24, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Obama_vows_no_backing_down_on_clean_energy_999.html

[SEPP Comment: As the evidence compounds that so-called clean energy is unreliable, expensive and may not reduce carbon dioxide emissions, the president remains resolute: We must not be left behind by China and Germany!]

Energy Tax Breaks Proposed, Despite Waning Support for Subsidies

By Diane Cardwell, NYT, Jan 26, 2012

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/27/business/energy-environment/clean-energy-projects-face-waning-subsidies.html?ref=science>

[SEPP Comment: In spite of bragging of falling costs, to “stay competitive” wind and solar need more subsidies. What a twisted definition of competitive.]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

EPA’s Sustainability Gambit

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Jan 27, 2012

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2012/01/27/epas-sustainability-gambit/>

Dodo of the Year

A court throws out a fowl case of selective prosecution against oil and gas companies.

Editorial, WSJ, Jan 25, 2012 [H/t Deke Forbes]

http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052970204616504577170853989728824-

[SEPP Comment: Justice Department prosecutes oil companies for the death of 7 non-endangered birds, but does nothing about the death of endangered eagles and hundreds of thousands of other birds from wind turbines. May be behind a pay-wall.]

\$1.6 million fine for cutting down trees

By Staff Writers, Jupiter, Fla. (UPI) Jan 26, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/16_million_fine_for_cutting_down_trees_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Government control of trees on private property.]

Energy Issues – Non-US

Energy regulatory upgrade ‘priority issue’: Joe Oliver

By Yadullah Hussain, Financial Post, Jan 27, 2012

http://business.financialpost.com/2012/01/27/energy-regulatory-upgrade-priority-issue-joe-oliver/?_lsa=f6dc3d5b

[SEPP Comment: The Canadian Minister of Natural Resources realizes the environmental industry abuses the principle of open comment.]

Tucker’s Terrestrialism and the Technology of Modernity

By Jon Boone, Master Resource, Jan 24, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/01/tuckers-terrestrialism-modernity/#more-18363>

[SEPP Comment: Prosperous societies have been converting to more clean burning fuels without government exaggeration of possible health risks.]

Energy Issues -- US

Short-Term Energy Outlook

By Staff Writers, EIA, Jan 2012

http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/steo/pdf/steo_full.pdf

Age of environmental fear

We should celebrate our energy bounty, but instead we cower

By Rich Trzupke, Washington Times, Jan 24, 2012 [H/t Deke Forbes]

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jan/24/age-of-environmental-fear/>

Narrow Interest Blocks Big Pipeline

By David Kreutzer, Heritage.org, Jan 20, 2012

<http://blog.heritage.org/2012/01/20/narrow-interest-blocks-big-pipeline/>

Obama loves oil — Not!

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Jan 27, 2012

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/01/27/obama-loves-oil-not/>

US Administration’s Control of Oil and Gas

Obama’s Keystone Rejection May Provide A Buffett Bonanza

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Jan 26, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/01/26/obamas-keystone-rejection-may-provide-a-buffett-bonanza/>

[SEPP Comment: More on the need to ship oil from North Dakota to refineries.]

Time, Newsweek Bury Keystone

By Michael J. Economides & Peter C Glover, Energy Tribune, Jan 26, 2012

<http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/9657/Time-Newsweek-Bury-Keystone>

Has Obama seen the light on oil?

By: Diana Furchtgott-Roth, Washington Examiner, Jan 26, 2012

http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2012/01/has-obama-seen-light-oil/2139296?utm_source=Washington%20Examiner%20Opinion%20Digest%20-%2001/27/2012&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Washington%20Examiner:%20Opinion%20Digest

[SEPP Comment: There a big difference between speeches and actions.]

Charles Manson energy

It's time to end our "helter-skelter" energy policy that lets wind turbines kill without fault but brings criminal charges against competitors

By Paul Driessen, CFACT, Jan 16, 2012

http://www.cfact.org/a/2078/Charles-Manson-energy?utm_source=CFACT+Updates&utm_campaign=faf3e2d35c-Charles_Manson_energy1_27_2012&utm_medium=email

Obama's offshore drilling pledge restates existing plan

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Jan 25, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/206407-obamas-offshore-drilling-pledge-re-states-existing-plan>

[SEPP Comment: The promise of nothing new to expand production.]

U.S. 'Reset' Backfires As Brazil Turns To China

Editorial, IBD, Jan 24, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/Article.aspx?id=598817&p=1&ibdbot=1>

Giberson: "Did the Federal Government Invent the Shale Gas Boom?" (December 20 post becomes part of a national debate)

By Robert Bradley Jr, Master Resource, Jan 26, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/01/giberson-federal-frac-debate/>

Return of King Coal?

EIA: Coal Generation to Plummet Through 2035 on Demand Slump, Environmental Rules

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Jan 25, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4353.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2369447&hq_l=5&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: Coal will remain king in Asia for a long time, but the West is rejecting it to its own detriment.]

Nuclear Energy and Fears

DOE to Fund Design, Licensing of Small Modular Reactors

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Jan 25, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4357.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2369447&hq_l=12&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: An interesting development.]

Alternative "Green" Energy – Wind and Solar

Behind Iberdrola's Portland layoffs: expiring wind-energy tax credits, declining demand, overloaded grid, cheap natural gas

By Richard Read, The Oregonian, Jan 25, 2012 [H/t Mark Duchamp]
http://www.renewablesbiz.com/article/12/01/behind-iberdrolas-portland-layoffs-expiring-wind-energy-tax-credits-declining-demand-overloaded-grid-cheap-natural&utm_medium=eNL&utm_campaign=RB_DAILY2&utm_term=Original-Member
[SEPP Comment: The lay-offs are caused by government no longer subsidizing inefficient sources of electricity.]

Wind Ordinance Debate: The 1,000-foot Set-Back Standard (Are environmentalists underregulating themselves?)

By Tony Fleming, Master Resource, Jan 23, 2012
<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/01/wind-ordinance-offset-debate/#more-18351>

Micro Solar: Eyesore NIMBYism and the Curse of Dilute Energy

By Robert Bradley, Jr, Master Resource, Jan 27, 2012
<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/01/micro-solar-nimbyism/>
[SEPP Comment: Why should anyone be surprised when neighbors object to massive arrays of solar panels in their neighborhood? A small underground nuclear package plant would be more harmonious with the landscape.]

Alternative “Green” Energy – Biofuels, Hydro, etc.

EPA: Palm oil flunks the climate test

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Jan 26, 2012
<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/206781-epa-palm-oil-based-fuels-flunk-the-climate-test>
[SEPP Comment: Using the same standards as for palm oil, the EPA should reject biofuels made from corn ethanol as not meeting renewable fuels mandate.]

Use and Capacity of Global Hydropower Increases

By Staff Writers. Washington DC (SPX), Jan 25, 2012
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Use_and_Capacity_of_Global_Hydropower_Increases_999.html
[SEPP Comment: China is the largest user of hydropower and intends to expand it.]

DOE Reports: Tides, Waves Could Generate 15% of Nation’s Power by 2030

By Staff Writers, POWERnews, Jan 18, 2012
http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/DOE-Reports-Tides-Waves-Could-Generate-15-percent-of-Nations-Power-by-2030_4314.html
[SEPP Comment: If cost is not a factor.]

California Dreaming

California air board to vote on landmark electric-car rules

By Paul Rogers, Mercury News, Jan 25, 2012
http://www.mercurynews.com/science/ci_19821240
[SEPP Comment: According to this report, as a condition for the US bailout, General Motors and Chrysler agreed not to sue to block California auto rules. Ownership has its privileges.]

California adopts nation's most aggressive clean car rules

By Rick Daysog, Sacramento Bee, Jan 27, 2012 [H/t SPPI]
<http://www.sacbee.com/2012/01/27/4220304/california-approves-far-reaching.html>
[SEPP Comment: This road map to the future may it a dead end.]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

A Summary of Climate Change over the Past Millennium in China

Reference: Zhou, XJ. 2011. The characteristics and regularities of the climate change over the past millennium in China. *Chinese Science Bulletin* 56: 2985.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/18jan2012a4.html>

Rising Temperatures and Corn Production in Northeast China

Reference: Chen, C., Lei, C., Deng, A., Qian, C., Hoogmoed, W. and Zhang, W. 2011. Will higher minimum temperatures increase corn production in northeast China? An analysis of historical data over 1965-2008. *Agricultural and Forest Meteorology* 151: 1580-1588.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/10jan2012a3.html>

The Future of Earth's Coral Reefs Debated in Science

Reference: Pandolfi, J.M., Connolly, S.R., Marshall, D.J. and Cohen, A.L. 2011b. Response. *Science* 334: 1495-1496.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/18jan2012a1.html>

Finally, it should also be noted that numerous research studies bear both experimental and observational witness to the ability of a wide range of organisms (both aquatic and terrestrial) to rapidly evolve to meet the challenges of rapid environmental change

Sea Stars - with Missing Arms! - Experiencing Ocean Acidification

Reference: Schram, J.B., McClintock, J.B., Angus, R.A and Lawrence, J.M. 2011. Regenerative capacity and biochemical composition of the sea star *Luidia clathrata* (Say) (Echinodermata: Asteroidea) under conditions of near-future ocean acidification. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* 407: 266-274.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/jan/24jan2012a5.html>

Oh Mann!

Virginians Get First Peek at Secret UVA emails

Press Release, ATI, Jan 25, 2012

<http://www.atinstitute.org/virginians-get-first-peak-at-secret-uva-emails/>

Environmental Industry

Obama administration unveils forest management plan

It is an attempt to balance competing interests of industry and conservation groups, replacing a framework that has long been at the center of legal battles.

By Michael Muskal, LA Times, Jan 26, 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-forest-plan-20120127,0,5390158.story>

Faust in the forests

For 40 years, the environmental movement has been making hysterical claims about the state of the world's forests

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Jan 24, 2012

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/01/24/peter-foster-faust-in-the-forests/>

How Green Became Obama's Albatross

The president is trapped by his own rhetoric amid America's energy boom.

By Holman Jenkins, Jan 25, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203718504577180680098962586.html?mod=ITP_opinion_0

Other Scientific News

Life discovered on dead hydrothermal vents

By Staff Writers, Los Angeles CA (SPX) Jan 26, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Life_discovered_on_dead_hydrothermal_vents_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The tremendous resilience of life from hot to cold.]

A step closer to mapping the Earth in 3D

By Staff Writers, Berlin, Germany (SPX) Jan 17, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/A_step_closer_to_mapping_the_Earth_in_3D_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

National climate change strategy proposed for wildlife

By Dean Kuipers, LA Times, Jan 20, 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/environment/la-me-gs-national-climate-change-strategy-wildlife-20120120,0,36043.story>

[SEPP Comment: The bureaucrats still cannot define climate change or project its effects.]

Rich Asians threaten high-value fish: experts

By Staff Writers, Manila (AFP), Jan 24, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Rich_Asians_threaten_high-value_fish_experts_999.html

[SEPP Comment: If one believes the EPA, the fish eaters will suffer from mercury poisoning. Why the alarm?]

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

The ocean's acid test

Changes society is forcing on the ocean may be larger than any inferred from the geologic record of the past 300 million years. And it's already underway.

By Douglas Fischer, Daily Climate, Jan 26, 2012

<http://www.dailyclimate.org/tdc-newsroom/acid-test/the-oceans-acid-test>

Teenage Chileans exposed to nearly lifetime of sunrays

By Staff Writers, Santiago (AFP), Jan 25, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Teenage_Chileans_exposed_to_nearly_lifetime_of_sunrays_999.html

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ARTICLES:

1. No Need to Panic About Global Warming

There's no compelling scientific argument for drastic action to 'decarbonize' the world's economy.

16 scientists, WSJ, Jan 27, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204301404577171531838421366.html?mod=djemEditorialPage_t

Signatories follow.

A candidate for public office in any contemporary democracy may have to consider what, if anything, to do about "global warming." Candidates should understand that the oft-repeated claim that nearly all scientists demand that something dramatic be done to stop global warming is not true. In fact, a large and growing number of distinguished scientists and engineers do not agree that drastic actions on global warming are needed.

In September, Nobel Prize-winning physicist Ivar Giaever, a supporter of President Obama in the last election, publicly resigned from the American Physical Society (APS) with a letter that begins: "I did not renew [my membership] because I cannot live with the [APS policy] statement: 'The evidence is incontrovertible: Global warming is occurring. If no mitigating actions are taken, significant disruptions

in the Earth's physical and ecological systems, social systems, security and human health are likely to occur. We must reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beginning now.' In the APS it is OK to discuss whether the mass of the proton changes over time and how a multi-universe behaves, but the evidence of global warming is incontrovertible?"

In spite of a multidecade international campaign to enforce the message that increasing amounts of the "pollutant" carbon dioxide will destroy civilization, large numbers of scientists, many very prominent, share the opinions of Dr. Giaever. And the number of scientific "heretics" is growing with each passing year. The reason is a collection of stubborn scientific facts.

Perhaps the most inconvenient fact is the lack of global warming for well over 10 years now. This is known to the warming establishment, as one can see from the 2009 "Climategate" email of climate scientist Kevin Trenberth: "The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can't." But the warming is only missing if one believes computer models where so-called feedbacks involving water vapor and clouds greatly amplify the small effect of CO₂.

The lack of warming for more than a decade—indeed, the smaller-than-predicted warming over the 22 years since the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) began issuing projections—suggests that computer models have greatly exaggerated how much warming additional CO₂ can cause. Faced with this embarrassment, those promoting alarm have shifted their drumbeat from warming to weather extremes, to enable anything unusual that happens in our chaotic climate to be ascribed to CO₂.

The fact is that CO₂ is not a pollutant. CO₂ is a colorless and odorless gas, exhaled at high concentrations by each of us, and a key component of the biosphere's life cycle. Plants do so much better with more CO₂ that greenhouse operators often increase the CO₂ concentrations by factors of three or four to get better growth. This is no surprise since plants and animals evolved when CO₂ concentrations were about 10 times larger than they are today. Better plant varieties, chemical fertilizers and agricultural management contributed to the great increase in agricultural yields of the past century, but part of the increase almost certainly came from additional CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Although the number of publicly dissenting scientists is growing, many young scientists furtively say that while they also have serious doubts about the global-warming message, they are afraid to speak up for fear of not being promoted—or worse. They have good reason to worry. In 2003, Dr. Chris de Freitas, the editor of the journal *Climate Research*, dared to publish a peer-reviewed article with the politically incorrect (but factually correct) conclusion that the recent warming is not unusual in the context of climate changes over the past thousand years. The international warming establishment quickly mounted a determined campaign to have Dr. de Freitas removed from his editorial job and fired from his university position. Fortunately, Dr. de Freitas was able to keep his university job.

This is not the way science is supposed to work, but we have seen it before—for example, in the frightening period when Trofim Lysenko hijacked biology in the Soviet Union. Soviet biologists who revealed that they believed in genes, which Lysenko maintained were a bourgeois fiction, were fired from their jobs. Many were sent to the gulag and some were condemned to death.

Why is there so much passion about global warming, and why has the issue become so vexing that the American Physical Society, from which Dr. Giaever resigned a few months ago, refused the seemingly reasonable request by many of its members to remove the word "incontrovertible" from its description of a scientific issue? There are several reasons, but a good place to start is the old question "cui bono?" Or the modern update, "Follow the money."

Alarmism over climate is of great benefit to many, providing government funding for academic research and a reason for government bureaucracies to grow. Alarmism also offers an excuse for governments to raise taxes, taxpayer-funded subsidies for businesses that understand how to work the political system, and a lure for big donations to charitable foundations promising to save the planet. Lysenko and his team lived very well, and they fiercely defended their dogma and the privileges it brought them.

Speaking for many scientists and engineers who have looked carefully and independently at the science of climate, we have a message to any candidate for public office: There is no compelling scientific argument for drastic action to "decarbonize" the world's economy. Even if one accepts the inflated climate forecasts of the IPCC, aggressive greenhouse-gas control policies are not justified economically.

A recent study of a wide variety of policy options by Yale economist William Nordhaus showed that nearly the highest benefit-to-cost ratio is achieved for a policy that allows 50 more years of economic growth unimpeded by greenhouse gas controls. This would be especially beneficial to the less-developed parts of the world that would like to share some of the same advantages of material well-being, health and life expectancy that the fully developed parts of the world enjoy now. Many other policy responses would have a negative return on investment. And it is likely that more CO₂ and the modest warming that may come with it will be an overall benefit to the planet.

If elected officials feel compelled to "do something" about climate, we recommend supporting the excellent scientists who are increasing our understanding of climate with well-designed instruments on satellites, in the oceans and on land, and in the analysis of observational data. The better we understand climate, the better we can cope with its ever-changing nature, which has complicated human life throughout history. However, much of the huge private and government investment in climate is badly in need of critical review.

Every candidate should support rational measures to protect and improve our environment, but it makes no sense at all to back expensive programs that divert resources from real needs and are based on alarming but untenable claims of "incontrovertible" evidence.

Signatories

Claude Allegre; former Director of the Institute for the Study of the Earth, University of Paris, member, French Academy of Science; former Minister of Education in France, Paris France.

J. Scott Armstrong; Professor of Marketing, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, co-founder of the Journal of Forecasting and the International Journal of Forecasting, Philadelphia, PA

Jan Breslow; Fredrick Henry Leonhardt Professor Rockefeller University; head of the Laboratory of Biochemical Genetics and Metabolism; member, National Institute of Medicine, New York, NY.

Roger Cohen; Fellow of American Physical Society, former Manager of Strategic Planning and Programs, Exxon Mobil Research and Engineering Company, Washington Crossing, PA

Edward David; Engineer; member, National Academy of Engineering, National Academy of Sciences; Life member, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Corporation, Presidential Science Advisor, 1970-1973, Bedminster, NJ

William Happer; Professor of Physics, Princeton University, member, National Academy of Sciences, former Director of Energy Research of US Department of Energy, Princeton, NJ

Michael Kelly; Prince Philip Professor of Technology at the University of Cambridge, Fellow of Royal Society, Fellow Royal Society of Engineering, United Kingdom

William Kininmonth; former head of Climate Research at the Australian Bureau of Meteorology; Australia.

Richard Lindzen: Alfred P. Sloan Professor of Atmospheric Sciences; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; member, National Academy of Sciences; Cambridge, MA, USA

James McGrath; Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Virginia Technical University; member, National Academy of Engineering, Blacksburg, VA

Rodney Nichols; former President and CEO of the New York Academy of Sciences; former Vice President and Executive Vice President, The Rockefeller University, New York, NY

Burt Rutan; Aerospace Innovator and Engineer, designer of Voyager and SpaceShipOne; member, National Academy of Engineering, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Harrison H. Schmitt: Adjunct Professor of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison; PhD Geologist (Caltech and Harvard); Apollo 17 Astronaut; Former U.S. Senator; Aerospace and earth science consultant; Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Nir Shaviv; Professor of Astrophysics, Hebrew University; head of the National Coordinating Council of Faculty Unions in Israel; Jerusalem, Israel

Henk Tennekes, former Professor of Meteorology Penn. State University, former Director Royal Dutch Meteorological Service

Antonio Zichichi; Emeritus Professor of Advanced Physics, University of Bologna, Italy; President of the World Federation of Scientists, Geneva, Switzerland; Author and Founder of the Gran Sasso Underground Laboratory, Italy; President of the Ettore Majorana Foundation and Centre for Scientific Culture, Erice, Italy

2. U.Va. professor throws cold water on global warming

By Scott Harper, Virginia-Pilot, Jan 25, 2012

<http://hamptonroads.com/2012/01/uva-professor-throws-cold-water-global-warming>

An article describing the SEPP / VA-SEEE presentation at Virginia Beach. Comments by Fred Singer on the article follows.

Earth might be slightly warmer, and sea levels might be slightly higher, but the changes are natural and should not be blamed on fossil-fuel emissions, a panel of scientists and skeptics said at a public forum Tuesday.

"Human influence on the climate is very, very small - barely detectable," S. Fred Singer, a critic of global warming and professor emeritus at the University of Virginia, told an audience at the Meyera Oberndorf Central Library.

Such views run contrary to what a consensus of international scientists concluded years ago - that with 90 percent certainty, global warming is being fed by increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from man-made sources such as power plants, factories and cars.

In Europe and elsewhere, debate over climate change is not about whether human activity is the root cause, it's about what to do next to soften the blow. But not so in the United States.

The event Tuesday was organized by a newly formed advocacy group, the Tidewater chapter of Virginia Scientists and Engineers for Energy and Environment. It was one of two such forums this week in the region. The other was held Monday in Mathews County and drew more than 175 people, organizers said.

The speakers railed against environmentalists, government officials, government-funded scientists and the media for spouting "propaganda" that global warming is a looming disaster. The debate over climate change, they said, is symbolic of a larger effort led by the United Nations to redistribute wealth and collar personal liberty and property rights.

The biggest applause from the audience of about 35 people came when Singer suggested the Environmental Protection Agency be disbanded.

"We already have clean air and water. So thank you very much, EPA, you can all go home now," Singer said.

"Yeah," shouted one audience member, "make them get a real job!"

Both events this week attempted to portray the science behind climate change as spotty, flawed and far from decisive. Spending hundreds of billions of dollars to try to somehow fix the problem is wasteful and, in some cases, counterproductive, Singer and two other panelists said.

"We are being driven by false fears of global warming into very expensive sources of electricity," including wind and solar power, said Ken Haapala, executive director of the Science and Environmental Policy Project, a group started by Singer in 1990. The group has been funded by conservative foundations and oil companies, and Singer has been a paid consultant for ExxonMobil, Shell and other petroleum corporations, according to published reports. Singer has said his funding sources do not affect his research.

Two environmentalists at the event Tuesday came away shaking their heads, saying the presentations were often misleading, glossed over or plain wrong.

Skip Stiles, executive director of Wetlands Watch, a Norfolk-based environmental group, writes and lectures about sea-level rise in coastal Virginia. He said predictions from Singer about rising waters still prove his core point - that Hampton Roads faces serious problems from more frequent flooding and storm surge.

Singer said he expects seas to rise another 8 inches over the next century, far less than what most other scientists forecast. But because land in coastal Virginia is slowly sinking at the same time, Stiles said the net effect is a relative sea level increase of 1.5 feet.

Kris Allen, an engineer and partner with BPG, a Virginia Beach company, said he started the local group that sponsored Tuesday's event. He and others were concerned how City Hall was using language similar to what a United Nations paper, called Agenda 21, used in discussing broad plans for sustainability and land-use planning.

"It's a self-fulfilling philosophy that encourages more and more government intervention in our lives," Allen said. "That concerns me."

Group members come from the Libertarian Party of Virginia Beach as well as the tea party.

Comments by Fred Singer to the reporter on the above article

But just for the record:

1. SEPP is NOT funded by oil companies or by any industry or by govt. It survives nicely through voluntary donations from private individuals and occasional grants from charitable foundations.
2. VA-SEEE is unfunded, has no budget, and is run entirely by unpaid, dedicated Virginians
3. I WAS a consultant to many companies about 30 years ago (as stated in my official CV) on the subject of energy pricing -- after publication of my monograph "The World Price of Oil." It has nothing to do with climate issues

A brief comment on Mr Stiles. If we accept his numbers (18 inches per century) on sea level rise, then more than half (10 inches) comes from the subsidence of the land. How does he propose to stop that?

BTW, of greatest relevance to the group is the presentation by Dr Battig on the pernicious effects of UN Agenda 21.

It deserves a full story, separate from climate change and sea level rise.

3. Canada's Harper Vows to Speed Up Energy Projects

By Nirmala Menon, WSJ, Jan 26, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203363504577185041293276370.html?grcc=14ea04ff089c4f82e6c6063a4392571bZ11&mod=WSJ_hps_sections_business

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper on Thursday said the country's capacity to export energy is a national priority and pledged to speed regulatory approval of energy projects—a move that comes as Ottawa struggles with delays over an oil pipeline.

Mr. Harper's government has recently championed alternative routes to export Canada's oil after the Obama administration rejected for now TransCanada Corp.'s Keystone XL, a line that would have shipped oil-sands crude from Alberta to the U.S. Gulf Coast. Almost all of Canada's oil exports now go to the U.S.

TransCanada is reapplying and Canadian officials say they still think the line will get approval. But in the wake of the White House rejection, Ottawa has pushed for opening up new markets, in particular Asia.

Enbridge Inc. is proposing another pipeline that will take oil from Alberta westward to the Canadian Pacific coast, where it can be loaded onto tankers bound for Asia. Many environmental and native groups oppose that line, called Northern Gateway.

While the government has stopped short of specifically supporting the project, it has recently accused environmental groups of trying to slow down its regulatory review. A flood of requests for public comment over the line means the review will likely extend through early next year.

Speaking in Davos on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Harper said his government will soon take action to ensure energy and mining projects aren't subjected to "unnecessary regulatory delays."

He didn't specify what the measures would be. But with a majority in Parliament, his Conservative Party has the power to push through wide-ranging regulatory overhauls.

"We will make it a national priority to ensure we have the capacity to export our energy products beyond the United States, and specifically to Asia," Mr. Harper said, adding: "In this regard, we will soon take action to ensure that major energy and mining projects are not subject to unnecessary regulatory delays—that is, delay merely for the sake of delay."

While Canada has been an attractive destination for foreign energy and mining investment, regulatory reviews of some projects have dragged on for years. Last month, the government approved a \$9 billion oil-sand development project led by Total SA, but only after a six-year approval process.

4. Oil Fields Gushing in the U.S.

By Tom Fowler, WSJ, Jan 23, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204624204577177092687939480.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1

Federal forecasters are expected to confirm on Monday what the energy industry already knows: Oil production is surging in the U.S.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration is likely to raise by a substantial amount its existing estimate that U.S. oil production will grow by 550,000 barrels per day by 2020, to just over six million barrels daily.

The forecast will include new production data from developing oil fields, including the Bakken shale area in North Dakota, which could hold as much of 4.3 billion barrels of recoverable oil. North Dakota's output of oil and related liquids topped 500,000 barrels per day in November, meaning that the state pumped more oil than Ecuador. In fact, U.S. oil production grew faster than in any other country over the last three years and will continue to surge as drillers move away from natural gas due to a growing gas glut, experts say. The glut has sent natural-gas prices to a 10-year low.

The combination of techniques that fueled the recent rise in natural-gas production—horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking"—has been expanded to U.S. oil fields.

This rising tide of oil and related liquids such as condensate that also are used as fuel could reduce U.S. dependence on oil imports and help ease the country's trade deficit. But it may have limited impact on U.S. gasoline prices, which increasingly are set by global supply-and-demand trends.

The increased domestic production also isn't enough to help the U.S. achieve the elusive ideal of energy independence—the country is expected to consume more than 19 million barrels of oil and liquids a day by 2020.

From 2008 through 2011, U.S. production of a broader category of oil and related liquids grew by 1.3 million barrels per day, or more than 17 percent, to 8.9 million barrels, according to the research firm IHS-CERA. That outpaced Russia, which saw production grow about 480,000 barrels per day; China, where it grew about 380,000 barrels per day; and Brazil, where output was up by more than 340,000 barrels daily.

IHS-CERA predicts that U.S. production could grow by another 1.3 million barrels per day by 2020, to 10.2 million barrels.

"I don't think it's widely appreciated how dramatic it's been," Jim Burkhard, managing director of IHS CERA's Global Oil Group, said of U.S. growth. "Deep-water production has contributed to the growth in

recent years, and more biofuels has helped, but the really dramatic improvement has been in onshore oil and liquids—and that is what will continue to drive growth in coming years."

The surge is big reversal from just a few years ago. U.S. production of oil and other liquids peaked at 11.3 million barrels a day in 1970 and began to decline. The decline bottomed out at 7.6 million barrels a day in 2008 as the new drilling techniques emerged.

5. Germany's Solar Crack-Up

Berlin backs down on trying to 'grow pineapples in Alaska.'

Editorial, WSJ, Jan 15, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203806504577180572533142452.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

Germany enjoys, if that's the right word, a thriving solar-energy industry. But the cost of this success, to taxpayers and electricity users alike, has risen to astronomical levels. Some 56% of green-energy subsidies in Germany goes to solar even though solar plants produce only 21% of all subsidized energy. The cost to German consumers of all solar subsidy commitments already tops €100 billion. And you thought Solyndra was expensive.

Last week, the German government reached an agreement with the solar industry to begin monthly reductions in the above-market prices that Berlin forces power companies to pay for solar energy. But the crack-up has been more than two decades in the making. Since 1990, Berlin has imposed "feed-in tariffs"—mandates that require utility companies to buy up renewable energy producers' electricity output at cost and on long-term contracts. That has translated into a boom in solar installations—subsidized, of course, by higher electricity bills for consumers. The average green surcharge is soon expected to amount to an extra €200 each year, according to one estimate.

Berlin is selling the decision to reduce subsidies as a mere adjustment to market reality. Parliamentarian Michael Fuchs told Der Spiegel that "prices of solar cells are dropping much faster than we have been able to reduce subsidies so far. That's a huge mistake." Chinese competitors have indeed driven down the cost of solar production, so much so that German producers were finding it difficult to stay afloat even before Berlin considered slashing giveaways. Solar stocks collapsed after last week's announcement.

But the real story is what the decision means for Germany's ambitions to abandon nuclear power and switch en masse to green sources. Angela Merkel agreed to the nuclear drawdown after last year's earthquake and tsunami in Japan, in a highly political move aimed at shoring up support for her government among left-leaning constituencies.

The transition is proving more easily dreamed up than done. The solar farms and rooftop-panel homeowners who profit from feed-in tariffs generate electricity in unpredictable amounts and at unpredictable times. Der Spiegel reports that Germany's 1.1 million solar power systems have generated almost no electricity this winter owing to overcast weather and scarce daylight. Jürgen Grossmann, the CEO of electricity giant RWE, compared subsidizing solar power in Germany to "growing pineapples in Alaska."

The analogy would be even more apt if pineapples were economic lifeblood. In a recent survey by the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, a majority of the 1520 companies polled said that rising energy prices, not the euro crisis, are their biggest worry. One-fifth of companies said they had moved business abroad or were planning to do so because of concerns about the electricity supply.

So while dialing back on subsidies is a clear victory for economic rationality, Germany's entire push toward renewables deserves a rethink. In an interview with Reuters last week, Siemens board member

Michael Süß estimated that exiting nuclear power could cost German energy consumers and taxpayers as much as €1.7 trillion by 2030, or two-thirds of German GDP. That cost may end up higher still; companies whose products no one would buy without government fiat are not exactly known for being cost-conscious.

Under last week's agreement, feed-in tariffs could be cut by as much as 24% per year and phased out entirely by 2017. If Berlin is expecting those Alaskan pineapples to be any more viable by then, it may be in for a shock.

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