

The Week That Was: 2013-03-23 (March 23, 2013)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

Quote of the Week: “*Most human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted. That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons of history.*” - Aldous Huxley

Number of the Week: 42%

On April 1, Fred Singer will talk on “Global Warming” to the Science Group luncheon at the Cosmos Club in Washington. For additional information and reservations please contact Ken Haapala by March 28 at Ken@SEPP.org.

Urgent: Reviewers Needed for Climate Change Reconsidered-2

The Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC) is seeking credentialed individuals who are willing to serve as reviewers of the forthcoming NIPCC report Climate Change Reconsidered-2. Reviewers will be needed between April and August 2013 for various chapters and sub-chapters of the report. A list of topics addressed in the report, and for which reviews will be needed, can be found under the links and sub-links listed on the NIPCC Web site’s Topical Archive page. To volunteer as a reviewer, or for more information, please send an email to NIPCC_contact@nippcreport.org.

Thank you, your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

THIS WEEK:

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

The New Hockey-stick: As anticipated, statistical expert Steve McIntyre is shredding the new hockey-stick reported (in Science on March 8) by Marcott, Shakun, Clark, and Mix (Marcott-Shakun). McIntyre has found major errors and unexplained peculiarities in the methodology and treatment of data. These include truncation of data that are inconsistent with the conclusions of the study and which show a recent decline in temperatures. McIntyre reports that it is unknown if it was intentional or if the mathematical algorithm they used went awry.

Marcott-Shakun assigned different dates of the top of the cores (most recent data) from those assigned in the original studies – for example the latest year was 510 years before present in the original study becomes present (1950). Another core was dated in the original publication as 10th century but was re-dated to Marcott-Shakun to present day. There may be a rational for doing this, but it should be stated in big red letters. One commentator wrote that the Marcott’s original thesis justified some re-dating. But McIntyre reported that re-dating he is concerned with occurred after the original thesis, and Marcott-Shakun does not provide a justification for wholesale re-dating.

Due to the the re-dating, the data bases of the thesis and the Marcott-Shakun study now appear to be incompatible. Perhaps even worse, a particular class of proxies, alkenones, which account for 31 of the 73 proxy data sets, (according to McIntyre’s reconstruction) show a decline in 20th century temperatures under the dates established in the original studies. The re-dated Marcott-Shakun series show a sharp increase in temperatures for the same period.

Do doubt, more will be revealed in due time as McIntyre doggedly pursues his goal. However, editors and journalists who broadcasted the new hockey-stick, which was highly promoted by Michael Mann, should take the quote of the week seriously. Please see links under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

When Evidence and Models Conflict: Martin Livermore wrote a thought provoking essay on what may happen if current trends continue, and nature departs significantly from climate model predictions / projections. The scientific positions of both sides may harden, until the political support for climate science can no longer be justified.

One may add that this course may be unfortunate for science in general as the public may begin to reject all scientific inquiry. However, the alarmists have added greatly to the burden, by expressing great certainty in their work, which politicians have used to pursue costly and, probably unneeded, alternatives to fossil fuels.

NSPS: Some commentators are wondering why the EPA is letting the schedule slip for issuing final rules on New Source Performance Standards (NSPS). These new standards will include carbon dioxide emissions and effectively prevent all new coal-fired power plants without carbon capture and storage (CCS), a technology that has yet to be proven on a commercial scale. It is clear that EPA also wishes to impose similar standards on existing plants as well, but cannot do so until it issues the final rules on new plants.

Some commentators are suggesting that the EPA will relax the rules to permit high efficiency coal-fired plants; other commentators suggest that the EPA is waiting for the confirmation of Gina McCarthy to become the new administrator.

Former EPA General Counsel Roger Martella suggests there may be more at play than these two reasons. No one can request legal review of EPA's proposed standards; the final standards must be issued before litigation can begin. The stalemate favors the EPA because no utility will start construction with the threat of impending, crippling rules. Martella thinks that the rules are legally vulnerable and the EPA is trying to make them less vulnerable. He also states that the proposed rules may be too severe for natural gas power plants, as well.

A further complication for EPA to regulate existing utilities is that the courts have ruled that EPA must rely on existing, commercially available technology. It cannot justify regulations by claiming it will drive technology.

An additional issue may be the upcoming 2014 election with the administration unwilling to totally outrage states dependent on coal-fired power plants and those with coal mining. Please see Article # 3 and links under EPA and other Regulators on the March.

Energy Policy: According to the *Investor's Business Daily*, the stimulus bill contained about \$90 Billion for various alternative energy schemes. After four years, there is very little economic benefit to be shown for this expenditure of money. Expensive electricity from unreliable wind and solar is not economically beneficial. Although demonized by many in Washington, starting before and all through this time US, oil and gas production on private and state lands have soared, one of

the few bright spots in the economy. President Obama recognizes this success, because he takes credit for it whenever it is opportune, although his administration tried to stop it.

In what was billed an energy speech, a week-ago, Friday, President Obama proposed an “Energy Security Trust.” Following the ways of Washington, the proposal is to tax success to give to failure. The president proposed taxing oil and gas to subsidize alternative energy schemes. Making the proposal particularly illogical is claiming it will be done in the name of energy security. The US is secure in natural gas, no imports from other continents, and North America is well on its way to oil security, especially if Washington would drop efforts to block further development, such as the Keystone pipeline expansion. US production of liquids recently surpassed imports. Please see links under Energy Issues-US and Washington’s Control of Energy.

Alternative Energy Bankruptcies: Even recently, American politicians were insisting that America was falling behind China in the energy technology race. Solar and wind will be the success stories of the 21st century. TWTW suggested that China was not in a race to install solar and wind generation on the grid, but to sell solar and wind products to the West. With heavy government backing, Chinese solar panel manufacturers dominated the market. This week Suntech, once the world’s largest producer of solar panels, defaulted on \$541 million in bonds, indicating the Chinese government, which backed it, recognizes that there is a glut of manufacturers and solar panels on the market. There is no reason to continue to fund a failing venture.

Also this week, Western Biomass Energy LLC filed for protection of bankruptcy court. Western Biomass was the first company to qualify for credits under the EPA program, certifying cellulosic ethanol for sales. Thanks to a law passed in 2007, refiners need to mix cellulosic ethanol into gasoline blends, even though commercial scale production does not exist. This further demonstrates that Washington cannot necessarily mandate or subsidize breakthroughs in technology. Someday a breakthrough may come for cellulosic ethanol, but no one knows when. The mandate was voided by the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in January 2013. EPA cannot mandate a technology that is not commercially available. A question remains: will the EPA use its power to lower the volume mandate for ethanol, which is driving up gasoline prices? Please links under Subsidies and Mandates Forever, Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind, and Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy -- Other

Number of the Week: 42%. According to Steve McIntire reconstruction of data from alkenones, which account for 31 of the 73 proxy data sets used in Marcott-Shakun, show a decline in 20th century temperatures in the original publications while Marcott-Shakun shows a sharp increase in 20th century temperatures. This, alone, calls into question their value as proxies for instrument data.

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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. The continuing battle over Marcott et al.

By Gordon Fulks, SEPP Guest Editorial, March 18, 2013

<http://www.sepp.org/science-editorials.cfm#A82>

2. Supreme Liberal Washout

The Justices unite against the trial bar and overzealous greens.

Editorial, WSJ, Mar 21, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324103504578372593347541144.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

3. EPA Emissions Plan Faces Possible Revamp

Administration Considers Rewriting Rules as Trade Groups Say Many Plants Would Have Hard Time Meeting Limits

By Ryan Tracy and Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Mar 19, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323639604578370772219131476.html?mod=WSJ_Energy

4. BP Declines to Bid on New Gulf Drilling Leases

By Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Mar 20, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324557804578372400977454538.html?mod=WSJ_Energy

[SEPP Comment: *Should a lack of integrity sanction apply to the EPA?*]

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

The angry silence

By John Brignell, Number Watch, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.numberwatch.co.uk/2013%20March.htm#silence>

[SEPP Comment: *Not much press coverage of Climategate 3.*]

UEA CRU Lawyers Going After Tallbloke's TalkShop

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Mar 21, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/03/21/cru-lawyers-going-after-tallblokes-talkshop/>

[SEPP Comment: *Lord Monckton's suggested response is a bit provocative, though Mr. FOIA may not be a whistleblower as Monckton suggests.*]

Climategate: the role of the social sciences

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Mar 22, 2013

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2013/3/22/climategate-the-role-of-the-social-sciences.html>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

The Marcott-Shakun Dating Service

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Mar 16, 2013

<http://climateaudit.org/2013/03/16/the-marcott-shakun-dating-service/>

Hiding the Decline: MD01-2421

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Mar 17, 2013

<http://climateaudit.org/2013/03/17/hiding-the-decline-the-md01-2421-splice/>

[SEPP Comment: *Disappearance of contradicting proxy data.*]

Bent Their Core Tops In

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Mar 19, 2013

<http://climateaudit.org/2013/03/19/bent-their-core-tops-in/#more-17592>

The Marcott Hockey-stick: smoothing the past and getting a spike from almost no data?

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Mar 16, 2013

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/03/the-marcott-hockey-stick-blurring-the-past-by-smoothing-proxies-getting-a-spike-from-almost-no-data/#more-27515>

Defending the Orthodoxy

Obama's science advisers press for carbon standards

By Ben Geman. The Hill, Mar 22, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/289927-obamas-science-advisers-press-for-carbon-standards>

[SEPP Comment: *What physical evidence did these scientists offer that carbon dioxide is causing significant climate change?*]

A lengthy weather report again affirms global warming

Editorial, Washington Post, Mar 15, 2013 [H/t David Manuta]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-warming-detailed-in-new-temperature-records/2013/03/15/688d53f4-8846-11e2-999e-5f8e0410cb9d_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

[SEPP Comment: *The Washington Post peddling the new hockey-stick, now being crushed.*]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Von Storch/Spiegel Slam “Climate Science Hijacked By Politicians Who Claim Decisions Are Without Alternatives””

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Mar 18, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/03/18/von-storchspiegel-slam-climate-science-hijacked-by-politicians-who-claim-decisions-are-now-without-alternatives/>

Warming Theory Doused!! World Leading Meteorologist: “Climate Is In Fact Warming Much Slower Than Anticipated”

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Mar 17, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/03/17/warming-theory-doused-world-leading-meteorologist-climate-is-in-fact-warming-much-slower-than-anticipated/>

The Feverish Hunt For Evidence Of A Man-Made Global Warming Crisis

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Mar 19, 2013

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2013/03/19/the-feverish-hunt-for-evidence-of-a-man-made-global-warming-crisis/>

Allegations against climate scientists: the delusion gooders

By Axel Bojanowski, Spiegel, Mar 14, 2013

<http://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/natur/klimafalle-von-storch-und-krauss-ueber-politik-und-klimaforschung-a-885364.html>

Even scientists are cooling on climate change

By Ann Widdecombe, Express, UK, Mar 20, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.express.co.uk/comment/columnists/ann-widdecombe/385446/Even-scientists-are-cooling-on-climate-change>

[SEPP Comment: One of the 5 dissenters to the British 2008 Climate Change Bill paid the penalty for stating the evidence was wanting; now has reason to remind opponents that their certainty was unfounded.]

The Great Green Con no. 1: The hard proof that finally shows global warming forecasts that are costing you billions were WRONG all along

By David Rose, Daily Mail, UK, Mar 16, 2013 [H/t William Readdy]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2294560/The-great-green-1-The-hard-proof-finally-shows-global-warming-forecasts-costing-billions-WRONG-along.html>

[SEPP Comment: Some alarmists claim they were quoted out of context.]

Questioning European Green

Funding Shortfall: Germany Forced to Cancel Climate Programs

As prices for carbon emissions continue to languish, Berlin is planning to cancel some key subsidy programs aimed at increasing reliance on renewable energies. Germany and other European countries seem uninterested in fixing the problem.

By Staff Writers, Spiegel, Mar 18, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/germany-cancels-trio-of-climate-programs-amid-funding-shortfall-a-889483.html>

[SEPP Comment: Great propaganda photo of condensing water vapor darkening the skies.]

New government research adds to biomass emissions controversy

By Mat Hope, The Carbon Brief, Mar 13, 2013

<http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2013/03/new-government-research-adds-to-biomass-emissions-controversy>

[SEPP Comment: Burning trees, rather than byproducts of the lumber industry produces more CO₂ than burning fossil fuels.]

Climate debate cut from national curriculum for children up to 14

By Juliette Jowit, Guardian, UK, Mar 17, 2013

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/mar/17/climate-change-cut-national-curriculum>

[SEPP Comment: It is unfortunate to drop the study of history of climate change, including ice ages.]

Questioning Green Elsewhere

Ten Good Reasons Not to Worry About Polar Bears

By Susan Crockford, GWPF, March 2013

<http://www.thegwpf.org/content/uploads/2013/03/Crockford-Polar-Bears-3.pdf>

[SEPP Comment: Would a better title be: Ten Reasons Not to Trust US Fish and Wildlife Science? Or, fill in the name of a favorite environmental pressure group for US Fish and Wildlife.]

Sir David Attenborough should check his facts on polar bears

Sir David was wrong to join the chorus on global warming
By Christopher Booker, Telegraph, UK, Mar 16, 2013 [H/t GWPF]
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/globalwarming/9934109/Sir-David-Attenborough-should-check-his-facts-on-polar-bears.html>

Adopt a polar bear? Have you seen what they do?

How did the polar bear, a vicious killing machine that is thriving, become the poster boy of climate-change alarmism?

By Rob Lyons, Spiked, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.spiked-online.com/site/article/13462/>

An Hour of Darkness. Or Light!

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Mar 21, 2013

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2013/03/an-hour-of-darkness-or-light.html>

Green jobs haven't lived up to Obama's promise

Commentary: Too often, green jobs end up costing us more

By Diana Furchtgott-Rott, Market Watch, Mar 22, 2013 [H/t ICECAP]

http://www.marketwatch.com/story/green-jobs-havent-lived-up-to-obamas-promise-2013-03-22?link=home_carousel

BLS Releases Another Phony 'Green Jobs' Report

Editorial, IBD, Mar 21, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/032113-648963-bls-releases-another-phony-green-jobs-report.htm>

Garbage Collecting a Green Job? According to Government, Yes!

By David Kreutzer, The Foundry, Mar 22, 2013

<http://blog.heritage.org/2013/03/22/garbage-collecting-a-green-job-according-to-government-yes/>

Seeking a Common Ground

When evidence and models conflict

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Mar 22, 2013

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/when-evidence-and-models-conflict>

My IPCC Review

By Ross McKittrick, His Blog, Submitted Nov 29, 2012

http://www.rossmckittrick.com/uploads/4/8/0/8/4808045/mckittrick_sod_review.pdf

[SEPP Comment: McKittrick hopes that the leak of the Second Order Draft of AR5 will lessen the flexibility of the lead authors to introduce major changes into the final report. One must wait to see if this is so.]

Obesity (?) of the U.S. scientific research enterprise

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Mar 17, 2013

<http://judithcurry.com/2013/03/17/obesity-of-the-u-s-scientific-research-enterprise/#more-11294>

[SEPP Comment: More on the direction of US government funded research and the irony of Bruce Alberts' criticism the decline in funding from sequestering immediately after Science magazine, of which he is editor-in-chief, published the new hockey-stick which has significant problems.]

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

The Washington Post Eilperin emissions trick

By Dave Burton, WUWT, Mar 20, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/03/20/the-washington-post-eilperin-emissions-trick/>

[SEPP Comment: More use of propaganda photos by the Washington Post.]

Hottest summer record in Australia? Not so, says UAH satellite data

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Mar 17, 2013

<http://joannenova.com.au/2013/03/hottest-summer-record-in-australia-not-even-close-says-uah-satellite-data/>

Climate Attribution Alchemy

By Roger Pielke Jr, His Blog, Mar 21, 2013

<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2013/03/climate-attribution-alchemy.html>

Tom Coburn Amendment Limiting National Science Foundation Research Funding Passes Senate

By Mollie Reilly, Huffington Post, Mar 21, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/21/tom-coburn-national-science-foundation_n_2921081.html

[SEPP Comment: For political science research projects.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Report: India's coal power a killer

By Staff Writers, New Delhi (UPI), Mar 14, 2013

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Report_Indias_coal_power_a_killer_999.html

Inglorious -Warmists

Tedious -documentary Greedy Lying Bastards

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Mar 19, 2013

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2013/03/19/peter-foster-inglorious-%C2%ADwarmists/>

[SEPP Comment: Interesting thought. Assuming Exxon, Koch Brothers, etc, spent \$100 million on "climate change deniers" and various governments spent hundreds of billions, does this not demonstrate that private industry knows how to spend money effectively and government does not?]

Climate Change Could Mean 7 Times as Many Hurricane Katrinas

By Tim McDonnell, Wired, Mar 18, 2013

<http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2013/03/climate-change-more-katrinas/>

Link to paper: Projected Atlantic hurricane surge threat from rising temperatures

By Aslak Grinsted, John Moore, and Svetlana Jevrejeva, Edited by Kerry Emanuel, PNAS, Mar 18, 2013

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/03/14/1209980110>

[SEPP Comment: From the abstract: “The most extreme events are especially sensitive to temperature changes, and we estimate a doubling of Katrina magnitude events associated with the warming over the 20th century.” Why is ACE falling? Katrina was only a magnitude 3 hurricane. The damage to the city, much of it built below sea level was due to the failure of the levees.]

Measurement Issues

NOAA decadal scale rainfall trends found to be ‘wildly wrong’

Good News and Bad News

By Craig Loehle, WUWT, Mar 22, 2013

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2013/03/22/noaa-century-scale-rainfall-trends-found-to-be-wildly-wrong/>

Winter Snow Melt in Greenland Grossly Over-Estimated

By Tom Yulsman, Discover, Mar 19, 2013 [GWPF]

<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/imageo/2013/03/19/winter-snow-melt-in-greenland-grossly-over-estimated/>

Changing Weather

“Berlin Freezes In 100-Year Winter”...”Record Snow” Blankets Germany, Bitter Cold Grips Europe

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Mar 22, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/03/22/berlin-freezes-in-100-year-winter-record-snow-blankets-germany-bitter-cold-grips-europe/>

The Mini-Ice Age has Arrived

By Allan Caruba, Warming Signs, Mar 18, 2013

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2013/03/the-mini-ice-age-has-arrived.html>

[SEPP Comment: Some in the Northeast US, who were told that the skiing industry will fail, may think so.]

Construction Of Warming-Obsessed PIK’s New €17-Million Facility Gets Shut Down...By Frost, Cold, And Snow!

By P. Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Mar 20, 2013

<http://notrickszone.com/2013/03/20/construction-of-warming-obsessed-piks-new-e17-million-facility-gets-shut-down-by-frost-cold-and-snow/>

[SEPP Comment: Nature showing a bit of humor.]

Changing Climate

Natural Climate Swings Contribute More to Increased Monsoon Rainfall Than Global Warming

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/03/130320155251.htm>

Link to article: Northern Hemisphere summer monsoon intensified by mega-El Niño/southern oscillation and Atlantic multidecadal oscillation

By Ben Wang, et al, PNAS, Mar 18, 2013

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/03/15/1219405110>

Pre-Viking tunic found by glacier as warming aids archaeology

By Alister Doyle, Planet Ark, Mar 22, 2013 [H/t Hugh Sharman]

<http://planetark.org/wen/68226>

New paper shows Greenland was warmer during the 1930's and 1400's than the present

The Hockey Schtick, Mar 19, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://hockeyschtick.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/new-paper-shows-greenland-was-warmer.html>

Link to the paper: On the origin of multidecadal to centennial Greenland temperature anomalies over the past 800 yr

By T. Kobashi et al, Climate of the Past, Mar 8, 2013

<http://www.clim-past.net/9/583/2013/cp-9-583-2013.pdf>

[SEPP Comment: *Perhaps more important than the headline, is that solar forcing, and other natural forcings are discussed in the paper.*]

Study Predicts Lag in Summer Rains Over Parts of US and Mexico

By Staff Writers, New York NY (SPX), Mar 19, 2013

http://www.terrillardaily.com/reports/Study_Predicts_Lag_in_Summer_Rains_Over_Parts_of_US_and_Mexico_999.html

Link to study: The Future of the North American Monsoon

By Ben Cook & Richard Seager, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, No Date

<http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/res/div/ocp/glodech/research10futureANM.html>

[SEPP Comment: *Changing . rainfall patterns and amounts have been a problem for ranchers and farmers without irrigation since the area was first settled by native Americans over 1,000 years ago.*]

UI study of Midwest finds increase in heavy rainfalls over 60 years

by Gary Galluzzo

Ames IA (SPX) Mar 20, 2013

http://www.terrillardaily.com/reports/UI_study_of_Midwest_finds_increase_in_heavy_rainfalls_over_60_years_999.html

Link to the paper: Changing Frequency of Heavy Rainfall over the Central United States

By Gabriele Villarini et al, Journal of Climate, Jan 2013

<http://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/abs/10.1175/JCLI-D-12-00043.1>

Changing Seas

The tide ebbs on another climate myth

By John Happs, Quadrant, Mar 19, 2013

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2013/03/the-tide-ebbs-on-another-climate-myth>

Changing Earth

Amplified Greenhouse Effect Shifts North's Growing Seasons

By Kathryn Hansen for NASA Earth Science News

Greenbelt MD (SPX) Mar 14, 2013

http://www.seddaily.com/reports/Amplified_Greenhouse_Effect_Shifts_Norths_Growing_Seasons_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Probably as much to do with carbon dioxide enhancement promoting photosynthesis at the latitudes where the sun is at a low angle as with temperatures. Increased carbon dioxide also enhances the ability of plants to cope with stress such as temperatures and drought, all of which is ignored in the article in favor of alarmism.]

Unable to locate link to paper.

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

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

Microevolution in Alaskan Pink Salmon in Response to Warming (19 Mar 2013)

Reference: Kovach, R.P., Gharrett, A.J. and Tallmon, D.A. 2012. Genetic change for earlier migration timing in a pink salmon population. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 279: 3870-3878.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/mar/19mar2013a1.html>

Simulating the North Atlantic European Regional Climate (19 Mar 2013)

Reference: Keeley, S.P.E., Sutton, R.T. and Shaffrey, L.C. 2012. The impact of North Atlantic sea surface temperature errors on the simulation of North Atlantic European region climate.

Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society 138: 1774-1783.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/mar/19mar2013a2.html>

Problems of CMIP5 Climate Models with Tropical Low Clouds (19 Mar 2013)

Reference: Nam, C., Bony, S., Dufresne, J.-L. and Chepfer, H. 2012. The 'too few, too bright' tropical low-cloud problem in CMIP5 models. *Geophysical Research Letters* 39: 10.1029/2012GL053421.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/mar/19mar2013a3.html>

Given such findings, it seems more than odd that leaders of numerous nations are forging ahead with energy policy prescriptions for halting global warming - which has been non-existent for close to two decades now - based on climate change projections derived from mathematical models harboring acknowledged problems that are supposedly overcome by compensating errors.

Land-Falling Tropical Cyclones of Southern China's Guangdong Province (20 Mar 2013)

Reference: Zhang, Q., Zhang, W., Lu, X. and Chen, Y.D. 2011. Landfalling tropical cyclones activities in the south China: intensifying or weakening? *International Journal of Climatology* 32: 1815-1924.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2013/mar/20mar2013a2.html>

Once again we have another study that provides no evidence for the climate-alarmist claim that rising global temperatures are leading to more frequent and more intense tropical cyclones in yet another part of the world. In fact, Zhang et al.'s findings provide evidence for the fallacy of that baseless claim.

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Eco taxes are nonsense if the earth isn't warming

GREEN taxes have already added at least £100 a year to household energy bills and successive governments have viewed the threat of global warming and rising CO₂ levels as a means of brow-beating the public while making them pay for the privilege.

Editorial, Express, UK, Mar 18, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/384989/Eco-taxes-are-nonsense-if-the-earth-isn-t-warming>

Beware the Carbon Tax

By Marita Noon, Townhall, Mar 17, 2013

http://finance.townhall.com/columnists/maritanoon/2013/03/17/beware-the-carbon-tax-n1536514?utm_source=thdaily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=n1

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Valero Says Ethanol Blending Costs To Double or Triple This Year

By Alison Sider, WSJ, Mar 20, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324103504578372580441485310.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_LeftSummaries

Think ethanol is environmentally friendly? Think again

By William Shughart, Miami Herald, Mar 12, 2013

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/03/12/3281243/think-ethanol-is-environmentally.html>

Congressional oversight needed on Wind PTC rulemaking

By Staff Writer, Industrial Wind Action Group, Mar 19, 2013

<http://www.windaction.org/faqs/37779>

Unplug the electric subsidies

Billions more still won't make customers buy toy cars

Editorial, Washington Times, Mar 18, 2013

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/mar/18/unplug-the-electric-subsidies/>

[SEPP Comment: Electric cars are a fad for the upper middle class. Subsidizing them with tax credits makes no economic sense.

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Senate Democrats Urge Obama to Amend EPA's GHG Rules for New Coal Plants

By Staff Writer, Power News, Mar 21, 2013

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/5481.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2638998&hq_l=6&hq_v=5e660500d0

Former EPA general counsel Martella discusses legal impacts of new power plant rule delay

Transcript by staff, EETV, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.eenews.net/tv/transcript/1656>

IETA's Forristier discusses future of EPA air regulations for new and existing sources

By Staff, Transcript, EETV, Mar 19, 2013

<http://www.eenews.net/tv/transcript/1655>

Energy Issues – Non-US

Will Methane Hydrates Fuel Another Gas Boom?

Energy-hungry Japan extracts natural gas from deep-sea methane hydrates, but it's not clear whether the "flammable ice" makes economic and environmental sense.

By Martin LaMonica, MIT Technology Review, Mar 15, 2013 [H/t GWPF]
<http://www.technologyreview.com/news/512506/will-methane-hydrates-fuel-another-gas-boom/>

UK promises shale gas tax breaks, public benefits

By Karolin Schaps and Sarah Young, Reuters, Mar 20, 2013 [H/t GWPF]
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/03/20/uk-britain-budget-shale-idUKBRE92J0V520130320>

Energy return on investment - which fuels win?

By Mat Hope and Ros Donald, The Carbon Brief, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2013/03/energy-return-on-investment-which-fuels-win>

Link to the article: How to Measure the True Cost of Fossil Fuels [Preview]

By Mason Inman, Scientific American, Mar 30, 2013

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=how-to-measure-true-cost-fossil-fuels>

[SEPP Comment: *Difficult estimates of the energy efficiency of energy production.*]

Energy Issues -- US

As Gas Prices Spike, Obama Recycles Failed Policies

Editorial, IBD, Mar 19, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/031913-648589-obama-peddles-same-failed-green-policies.htm>

In 2009, Obama used the economic crisis as an excuse to pump \$90 billion into grants, loans and tax credits for solar panel companies, battery makers, electric car startups, wind turbines and the like.

As today, he promised that this "investment" would create new sources of energy, new jobs, and lower energy costs.

An Energy Security Trust That Will Keep the Nation Moving and Growing for Decades

By Marita Noon, Energy Tribune, Mar 19, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/75124/an-energy-security-trust>

[SEPP Comment: *The administration's energy security plan is unneeded and possibly destructive.*]

The Best Energy Policy

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Mar 22, 2013

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2013/03/22/the-best-energy-policy/>

[SEPP Comment: *An authoritarian energy policy dictated by Washington is unlikely to produce the best energy policy.*]

US oil production set to surpass imports

By Ben Geman, The Hill, Mar 20, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/289229-fed-data-us-oil-production-on-track-to-surpass-imports>

Link to the report: U.S. crude oil production on track to surpass imports for first time since 1995
By Staff Writers, EIA, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=10451#>

Transportation Study Reveals Deep Cuts to Petroleum Use and Carbon Emissions

By Staff Writers, Golden CO (SPX), Mar 21, 2013

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Transportation_Study_Reveals_Deep_Cuts_to_Petroleum_Use_and_Carbon_Emissions_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Smaller cars, more public transportation, and Biofuels.]

Market Investment Outpace/Outperform Federal ‘Clean Energy’ Investment (GHG reductions without social cost)

By Tom Tanton, Master Resource, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/03/private-ghg-reducing-investment/#more-24772>

[SEPP Comment: A difference between private and government investment is that if private investment fails, the investors, not the taxpayer, pays costs. This is one reason why private investment groups usually have far greater experience in evaluating the quality of the investment. Yet, often they still make major mistakes.]

Insight Into Smart Meters

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Mar 19, 2013

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/insight-into-smart-meters/>

Washington’s Control of Energy

Why Is White House Stalling Energy Measures?

By Rep. Matt Salmon, IBD, Mar 21, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials-viewpoint/032113-648876-white-house-drags-its-feet-on-energy.htm?p=full>

Obama defends green energy push after budget cuts

By Staff Writers, Argonne, Illinois (AFP), March 15, 2013

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/Obama_defends_green_energy_push_after_budget_cuts_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Ignoring the obvious, the nation does not need expensive, unreliable green energy.]

Did Obama Just Block Keystone?

By Stanley Kurtz, National Review, Mar 16, 2013

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/343182/did-obama-just-block-keystone-stanley-kurtz>

Obama’s Plans for the Suburbs: And How to Stop Them

By Stanley Kurtz, National Review, Mar 18, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/343242/obamas-plans-suburbs-and-how-stop-them-stanley-kurtz>

Return of King Coal?

First U.S. Ultrasupercritical Power Plant in Operation

By Sonal Patel, Power Magazine, Feb 1, 2013

<http://www.powermag.com/coal/5307.html>

[SEPP Comment: Four years of litigation! Thanks to the EPA, it may be the last.]

Oil Spills, Gas Leaks & Consequences

'Dirty blizzard' in Gulf may account for missing Deepwater Horizon oil

By Staff Writers, Tallahassee FL (SPX), Mar 20, 2013

[http://www.energy-](http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Dirty_blizzard_in_Gulf_may_account_for_missing_Deepwater_Horizon_oil_99.html)

[daily.com/reports/Dirty blizzard in Gulf may account for missing Deepwater Horizon oil 99.html](http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Dirty_blizzard_in_Gulf_may_account_for_missing_Deepwater_Horizon_oil_99.html)

[SEPP Comment: The choice of words invokes emotional appeal. If it is naturally occurring, is it dirty?]

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Second new US reactor in a week underway

By Staff Writers, WNN, Mar 15, 2013

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NN_Second_new_US_reactor_under_way_1503131.html

Second round of SMR funding announced

By Staff Writers, WNN, Mar 13, 2013

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NN-Second_round_of_SMR_funding_announced-1303134.html

Is Small Nuclear Reactor R&D Fleecing the Public?

By Geoffrey Styles, Energy Tribune, Mar 18, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/75099/is-small-nuclear-reactor-rd-fleecing-the-public>

Britain gives green light to new nuclear plant

By Staff Writers, London (AFP), March 19, 2013

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Britain_gives_green_light_to_new_nuclear_plant_999.html

Chinese HTGR fuel plant under construction

By Staff Writers, WNN, Mar 21, 2013

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/ENF-Chinese_HTGR_fuel_plant_under_construction-2103134.html

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

Some basic facts about wind energy, It doesn't work

By Bill Guderson, Washington Times, Mar 16, 2013 [H/t William Readdy]

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/mar/16/guderson-some-basic-facts-about-wind-energy/#ixzz2NoXBe0Cp>

Hiding the slaughter

Big Wind hides evidence of turbine bird kills – and gets rewarded. Here's how they do it.

By Jim Wiegand, Canada Free Press, Mar 18, 2013

<http://canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/53864>

Suntech Default Signals Chinese Solar Industry Consolidation

By Ehren Goosens & Justin Doom, Bloomberg, Mar 18, 2013

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-18/first-china-bond-default-signals-consolidation-in-solar-industry.html>

[SEPP Comment: Putting a positive spin on an overblown industry.]

Abengoa and BrightSource To Build World's Largest Solar Power Towers

By Staff Writers, Seville, Spain (SPX), Mar 20, 2013

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/Abengoa_and_BrightSource_Energy_Partner_to_Build_the_Worlds_Two_Largest_Solar_Power_Towers_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Does not mention capital costs, thus one cannot determine what is meant by cost-competitive. Predictable is important, but it is not the same as reliable 24 hours a day, seven days a week.]

Storing the Sun for a Rainy Day

By Staff Writers, Dusseldorf, Germany (SPX), Mar 20, 2013

http://www.solardaily.com/reports/Storing_the_Sun_for_a_Rainy_Day_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Who would have thought that the storage of electricity would be a problem?]

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

Corn Ethanol Fuels Riots

By Walter Russell Mead, Via Media, Mar 20, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2013/03/20/corn-ethanol-fuels-riots/>

[SEPP Comment: And the Navy is shifting to Biofuels to assure world stability.]

Senate rejects amendment gutting military biofuels program by 40-59 vote

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Mar 20, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/289361-senate-rejects-amendment-gutting-military-biofuels-program-by-40-59-vote>

[SEPP Comment: There is a difference between investing in R & D for a technology, and spending money trying to force a non-existent technology. A fuel that costs at least 6 time the prevailing rate insulates against changing fuel prices?]

First Commercial Cellulosic Ethanol Plant in US Goes Bankrupt

By Robert Rapier, Energy Tribune, Mar 20, 2013

<http://www.energytribune.com/75180/first-commercial-cellulosic-ethanol-plant-in-us-goes-bankrupt>

[SEPP Comment: So much for government subsidies and regulations forcing creation of new technology.]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Vehicles

Greener cars could slash US pollution by 2050: study

By Staff Writers, Washington, March 18, 2013

http://www.oilgasdaily.com/reports/Greener_carsCould_slash_US_pollution_by_2050_study_999.html

Carbon Schemes

A Real Carbon Solution

By Joe Nocera, NYT, Mar 15, 2013

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/16/opinion/nocera-texas-might-be-on-to-something.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130316&r=0

[SEPP Comment: *Saving the climate?*]

California Dreaming

Los Angeles Moves to Eliminate Reliance on Coal-Powered Energy

Summary by Staff Writers, NCPA, Mar 21 2013

http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=22979&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DPD

Link to article: L.A. moves to eliminate reliance on coal-powered energy

By Kate Linthicum, LA Times, Mar 19, 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-no-more-coal-20130320,0,4523042.story>

[SEPP Comment: *Forget the costs to the public, our motives are environmentally pure, say the politicians.*]

A Green Politician Sees Black Gold In A Blue State

Editorial, IBD, Mar 18, 2013

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/031813-648415-why-californias-brown-is-friendly-to-fracking.htm>

Health, Energy, and Climate

Autism rates said to skyrocket, but based on flawed evidence

By Staff Writers, ACSH, Mar 21, 2013

<http://www.acsh.org/autism-rates-said-to-skyrocket-but-based-on-flawed-evidence/>

Environmental Industry

Anti-Energy Ideology: Where Eco-Imperialism Meets Vulture Environmentalism

By Paul Driessen, Master Resource, Mar 21, 2013

<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/03/eco-imperialism-meets-vulture-environmentalism/>

Sierra Club: Thy Name is Hypocrisy (natural gas for and against)

By Steve Everley, Master Resource, Mar 18, 2013

<http://www.masterresource.org/2013/03/sierra-club-hypocrisy/#more-24751>

Greenpeace Inc.

The \$336 Million-a-Year Multinational Organization Turns its Focus to the U.S. and Global South

By Matthew Nisbet, The Public Square, Mar 15, 2013 [H/t GWPF]

<http://thebreakthrough.org/index.php/voices/the-public-square/greenpeace-inc/>

Other Scientific News

Great white sharks bite off far more than believed: study

By Staff Writers, Sydney (AFP), March 21, 2013

http://www.terrordaily.com/reports/Great_white_sharks_bite_off_far_more_than_believed_study_999.html

[SEPP Comment: *Reliance on one study, no matter how accomplished, can mislead a field for decades. Replication is vital.*]

Life Deep Within Oceanic Crust Sustained by Energy from Interior of Earth

By Staff Writers, Science Daily, Mar 14, 2013 [H/t Jo Nova]

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/03/130314144340.htm>

Highly effective communities of bacteria in the world's deepest oceanic trench

By Staff Writers, Copenhagen, Denmark (SPX), Mar 22, 2013

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Highly_effective_communities_of_bacteria_in_the_worlds_deepest_oceanic_trench_999.html

Link to paper: High rates of microbial carbon turnover in sediments in the deepest oceanic trench on Earth

By Glud, et al, Nature Geoscience, Mar 17, 2013

<http://www.nature.com/ngeo/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/ngeo1773.html>

'Bizarre Bacteria' in Lake Vostok Study Likely a Contaminant

By Aaron L. Gronstal for Astrobiology Magazine, Moffett Field CA (SPX), Mar 15, 2013

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Bizarre_Bacteria_in_Lake_Vostok_Stud_Likely_a_Contaminant_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

Lockheed's Patented Perforene™ Filter: Sea Water to Clean Drinking Water Game-Changer

By 3MT, Third Millennium Times, Mar 19, 2013

<http://thirdmillenniumtimes.com/lockheeds-patented-perforenefilter-sea-water-to-clean-drinking-water-game-changer/>

[SEPP Comment: Could this become the "magic" filter to convert sea water into drinkable water at a low cost?]

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

U.S. oil production is booming. Here's the catch.

By Brad Plumer, Washington Post, Mar 19, 2013

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/03/19/u-s-oil-production-is-booming-heres-the-catch/>

[SEPP Comment: For years economists have railed against the US trade deficit. Now, . this expert claims that hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas will harm the nation because the subsequent reduction of the trade deficit is bad.]

Man creates car that runs on liquid air

By Staff Writers, London (UPI), Mar 17, 2013

http://www.oilgasdaily.com/reports/ManCreatesCarThatRunsOnLiquidAir_999.html

[SEPP Comment: A new concept in a high compression automobile.]

Immigration reform -- for the climate

Immigrants come to the U.S. determined to make a new life. So often they're more open to the kind of changes we'll need to deal with climate change.

By Bill McKibben, Los Angles Times, Mar 14, 2013 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-mckibben-immigration-environment-20130314,0,1673842.story>

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ARTICLES:

1. The continuing battle over Marcott et al.

By Gordon Fulks, SEPP Guest Editorial, March 18, 2013

<http://www.sepp.org/science-editorials.cfm#A82>

Technical fields, whether they be climate science or physics or meteorology or medicine or engineering or law, require some measure of training and competence. Practitioners are supposed to know more than just some of the technical jargon. That is why many are licensed. The public needs to be protected from charlatans. In many fields, it is illegal to claim expertise if you have none.

Unfortunately, it is impractical to license scientists because our field is so broad. Hence, we use education as the rough equivalent, because that is the first requirement in most licensing processes. It is not a foolproof substitute but then neither is licensing. There are still accomplished physicians and those not so accomplished.

Many complete amateurs post on popular blogs, substituting personal attacks, sarcasm, and 'cut and paste' for knowledge of a subject. With climate science, you can find material to back up just about any position you want to take. A real scientist (on whatever side of Global Warming) will usually be careful to choose those positions that have some validity.

For instance, I have been surprised to find myself in agreement with the famous Global Warming Guru James Hansen on some topics, not to include carbon dioxide. On closer inspection that is not really surprising, because we are both PhD astrophysicists from well-known astrophysics groups at the University of Iowa and University of Chicago. In other words, we evaluate each subtopic in climate science separately, based on our personal knowledge and our ability to critique the logic and evidence. That leads to many agreements on, for instance, the overall cooling trend during this interglacial period we call the Holocene, caused by an advancing Milankovitch cycle.

I have not heard Hansen weigh in on the Marcott et al. paper. He will surely like the conclusions that resurrect Michael Mann's Hockey-Stick graph but may be leery of Marcott's strong temperature upturn in the 20th century, if he looks at the proxies used by Marcott. They show such a confused mess that no one (especially an experienced scientist) would want to risk his reputation by claiming to be able to make something out of the mess. Marcott's re-dating of other researcher's temperature proxies is a huge red flag. If he were to read Steve McIntyre's analysis that demonstrated the upturn to be an artifact of the analysis and heard Marcott's admission that his 20th century results were "not robust," he might avoid getting entangled in such a bad paper.

After all, however much of a partisan Hansen is, he must realize that the peer-review process at both Science and Nature is broken and many incompetent papers are being published.

Hansen does not display good scientific judgement in many instances, as one would expect of a PhD astrophysicist, but he is far from a total loss BECAUSE HE HAS THE REQUISITE EDUCATION.

Those who wish to express an opinion on the theory of Catastrophic Anthropogenic Global Warming not only need to understand the relevant science but also how science works. Although climate science may seem like a purely political exercise, real scientists realize that all science rests on logic and evidence - and nothing else.

Gordon J. Fulks, PhD (Physics)

Corbett, Oregon USA

2. Supreme Liberal Washout

The Justices unite against the trial bar and overzealous greens.

Editorial, WSJ, Mar 21, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324103504578372593347541144.html?mod=IT_P_opinion_2

It's been a good week at the Supreme Court for law and the economy. On Tuesday, the Justices unanimously knocked back trial-lawyer forum shopping, and a day later they voted 7-1 to reverse a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that the Clean Water Act should include federal government regulation of water runoff on forest roads, a position that contradicted 35 years of environmental law.

In Decker v. Northwest Environmental Defense Center, the issue concerned whether forest roads often used by loggers should be covered by rules that govern much larger industrial sites. That was the goal of environmentalists who hoped they could hobble the logging industry by reclassifying rural storm water runoff under the Clean Water Act's "point source" standards, which require costly federal permits.

The Environmental Protection Agency has always expressly exempted forest roads from federal permitting, recognizing that more effective regulation could be done by states and state foresters. In his majority opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that the EPA's consistent position on storm water runoff has been coupled with effective state regulations and expertise.

Meanwhile, in Standard Fire v. Knowles, every Justice united against the trial bar's latest scheme to evade Congress's boundaries for class-action lawsuits. In the 2005 Class Action Fairness Act, Congress required that interstate class actions over \$5 million be handled by federal courts. The law was an effort to minimize forum shopping in state courts friendly to plaintiffs.

In 2011 Arkansas resident Greg Knowles sued the Standard Fire Insurance company over contractor fees he said were covered by his insurance policy when a hailstorm damaged his house. To keep the case in the plaintiff haven of Miller County, Arkansas, Mr. Knowles said he would limit any potential recovery for the class he would represent below the \$5 million threshold.

Nine Justices ruled that Mr. Knowles had no right to bind other potential class members to that \$5 million recovery limit before the class was even certified. And while a plaintiff like Mr. Knowles

might stipulate that the damages wouldn't exceed \$5 million, the number might later be modified by the state court to exceed Congress's limit. While the nine Justices frequently divide on business issues, the tort bar's manipulations are so brazen that they unite right and left.

3. EPA Emissions Plan Faces Possible Revamp

Administration Considers Rewriting Rules as Trade Groups Say Many Plants Would Have Hard Time Meeting Limits

By Ryan Tracy and Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Mar 19, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323639604578370772219131476.html?mod=WSJ_Energy

WASHINGTON—An early step toward President Barack Obama's second-term goal of cutting emissions linked to climate change has hit a snag.

The Obama administration is weighing changes to a proposed Environmental Protection Agency rule to limit emissions at new power plants, in a preemptive move to protect against possible court challenges, according to people familiar with the matter. The changes may require the EPA to seek more public input, a move that would push the measure months past an April 13 deadline for finalizing it.

The proposed rule would limit emissions of carbon-dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas that many scientists have linked to a warming planet, to 1,000 pounds per megawatt-hour of electricity generated at new power plants, whether fired by coal or natural gas.

The EPA put forth its proposal in March 2012 and immediately drew fire because it would essentially ban new coal-fired power plants that use current technologies. The agency hasn't decided to alter that part of the proposal, but it is weighing concerns that the rule as written may not withstand legal scrutiny, said people who have been briefed on EPA talks.

The agency has received more than 2 million public comments, many of which praised the proposal as a way to fight climate change.

An EPA spokeswoman said Tuesday the agency was reviewing the comments, but declined to comment further.

The rule affecting new power plants is also important because it could serve as a basis for future regulation on the existing fleet of coal-fired plants, which has even more potential to cut emissions. If a federal court nullified the rules for new power plants, curbs on operating plants might also face delays.

"If they are not careful, the opponents could play the clock out" until the next presidential election, said Bill Becker, executive director of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, which represents state air-quality officials.

New coal plants couldn't meet the EPA's proposed standard without storing their carbon emissions underground—something that hasn't yet happened on a commercial scale.

Burning natural gas emits less carbon than burning coal, but the standard is so strict that some natural-gas fired power plants would have trouble meeting it, according to the Edison Electric Institute, the main trade association for investor-owned utilities.

Last week, four Democratic senators, led by Sen. Joe Manchin from coal-producing West Virginia, wrote to Mr. Obama, pushing for separate standards for coal and natural gas. That could allow utilities to build coal plants as long as they use the most efficient technology available. "Our nation can continue to use coal and continue to lower emissions at the same time," the senators wrote.

If the EPA adopted two separate standards, it would likely have to withdraw its original proposal and issue a new rule altogether, which could delay a final rule until late this year or later, according to people familiar with the matter.

"It's an important rule and it needs to be legally defensible. If the EPA is concerned, it would make sense to repropose it," said Carol Browner, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, a think tank, and head of the EPA under President Bill Clinton.

Alternatively, the EPA could release new data or analysis to bolster its economic or technical case for the proposed rule. Giving the public a chance to comment on new information would likely take months. The Washington Post earlier reported the proposed rule could be delayed.

"We have no evidence that there is a plan to weaken the new source standard for coal," said David Doniger, a policy director at environmental advocacy the Natural Resources Defense Council. He said environmental groups were prepared to sue the EPA if it slips past the mid-April deadline.

Coal utilities have urged the EPA to consider the economic impact of relying on natural gas, which has been prone to price spikes in the past. Nick Akins, chief executive of American Electric Power Co., said greenhouse-gas emissions will have to be dealt with, but "today we have a condition where we have an economy that is flat on its back. We have to get this right, and we have to take the time to get it right."

4. BP Declines to Bid on New Gulf Drilling Leases

By Tennille Tracy, WSJ, Mar 20, 2013

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324557804578372400977454538.html?mod=WSJ_Energy

[SEPP Comment: Should a lack of integrity sanction apply to the EPA?]

WASHINGTON—BP declined to bid on new oil-drilling leases made available in the Gulf of Mexico on Wednesday, following the Obama administration's decision to block the oil giant from receiving new government contracts because of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

BP's move suggests it is far from confident it can clear up the contract suspension within 90 days—the time it takes the Interior Department to review bids and formally award new leases to the oil companies.

"It is just something that BP is going to have to resolve before they can acquire additional leases," said Tommy Beaudreau, director of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

BP is one of the largest operators in the Gulf of Mexico and holds more leases in the region than any other company. "We hope we can reach a reasonable resolution with regulators so that America's top energy investor over the past five years can once again enter into new contracts with the U.S. government," BP spokesman Geoff Morrell said in a statement.

The Environmental Protection Agency imposed the contract suspension on BP in November, citing a "lack of business integrity" that resulted in the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill in 2010.

The suspension prevents BP from obtaining new government contracts, including new oil-drilling leases. BP also supplies fuel to the U.S. military.

BP declined to participate in an auction of drilling leases in the western Gulf in November, held just hours after the suspension was announced. However, BP said at the time that its decision had nothing to do with the EPA's move.

Wednesday's auction is the most significant offering of drilling leases in 2013. Involving nearly 40 million acres in the central Gulf, the auction attracted more than 400 bids from about 50 companies. The lease sale drew \$1.2 billion in high bids, ranking it among the most successful in recent years, U.S. officials said. The highest bid, at \$82 million, came from Statoil ASA in a joint bid with Samson Offshore LLC.

BP was active in the last auction of central Gulf leases, held in June. It submitted dozens of bids, including a winning proposal worth more than \$100 million in an area known as Keathley Canyon. BP's bid beat out proposals from Exxon Mobil Corp and several other major companies gunning for drilling rights in the same area.

The short-term impact of BP's decision is minimal. The contract suspension allows BP to continue operating its existing wells. If extended much longer, however, the suspension will start to affect dozens of companies that BP hires to drill its wells and perform other services.

In a civil trial taking place in a federal court in New Orleans, the U.S. Justice Department is seeking to prove BP acted in a way that was "grossly negligent" during the Deepwater Horizon disaster—a legal definition that, if proven, can result in more than \$17 billion in fines under the Clean Water Act.

Last year, BP agreed to pay \$4.5 billion to settle all criminal and some civil charges stemming from the Deepwater Horizon accident, which killed 11 people and caused more than four million barrels of oil to leak into the Gulf.

Gulf Coast lawmakers, sensitive to the potential retreat of a major oil operator in the region, have started to say BP is being treated unfairly. Sen. Mary Landrieu (D., La.) said BP has become the victim of "double jeopardy"—having to prove its ability to operate safely to both the EPA and offshore regulators at the Interior Department.

An EPA spokeswoman said: "BP has to prove that it is presently responsible to do business with the federal government." She added, "At this time, negotiations have not been concluded and there is no formal timeline for resolving this matter."

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