New Report Documents Beneficial Impacts of Global Warming

By James M. Taylor

Online in late March and at Washington, DC events in early April, the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change released a 1,063-page report documenting global warming’s beneficial impact on the biosphere.

The report, *Climate Change Reconsidered II: Biological Impacts*, offers a comprehensive analysis of the impact

In Washington, DC, Heartland Institute President Joseph L. Bast describes *Climate Change Reconsidered II: Biological Impacts* in April as two of the report’s co-authors—S. Fred Singer (left) and Craig Idso—listen.

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ANALYSIS

Electricity Prices Skyrocketing in Wind Power States

By James M. Taylor

A new report from the American Wind Energy Association shows electricity prices are rising more than four times as fast as the national average in nine of the 11 states with the most wind power consumption.

In Texas, the only one of the 11 states with significantly declining electricity prices, deregulation, not wind power, is causing the decline in electricity prices.

The findings are a huge blow to advocates of renewable power mandates and wind power subsidies ... although they don’t appear to realize it.

Susan Williams Sloan, director of state relations, said.

WIND, P. 8
Come to fabulous Las Vegas to meet leading scientists from around the world who question whether “man-made global warming” will be harmful to plants, animals, or human welfare. Learn from top economists and policy experts about the real costs and futility of trying to stop global warming.

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If you are interested in participating as a speaker or panel moderator, please contact James M. Taylor at jtaylor@heartland.org.

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Several prizes will be awarded to scholars, elected officials, and activists for outstanding contributions to the debate over global warming. To nominate someone or to suggest a prize, contact Jim Lakely at jlakely@heartland.org.

ICCC-9 is hosted by The Heartland Institute, “the world’s most prominent think tank promoting skepticism about man-made climate change” (The Economist). Our mission is to discover, develop, and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. For more information, visit our Web site at heartland.org or call 312/377-4000.
Former Navy Officers Say Stop Saddling the Military with Renewables

By James M. Taylor

The United States is blessed with abundant conventional energy resources that can power the private-sector economy and maximize national security, but the Obama administration is pursuing renewable energy policies that weaken our economy and national security, naval veterans Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, Vice Admiral Edward S. Briggs, and Captain Donald K. Forbes write in a newly published report by The Heartland Institute.

The report, “Climate Change, Energy Policy, and National Power,” documents how the Obama administration’s fixation on reducing carbon dioxide emissions weakens the nation’s economy and national defense by prioritizing expensive renewable energy sources that siphon vital economic resources from both.

A copy of the new report is enclosed with this issue of Environment & Climate News.

Wrong Solution for OPEC Imports

The former military officers document the faulty logic of the Obama administration’s 2010 National Security Strategy document. The Obama administration claims U.S. dependence on OPEC oil compromises our energy independence and self-sufficiency during potential international crises. Less than 20 percent of U.S. oil comes from OPEC. Nevertheless, if the United States desires to close out that OPEC oil, a simple way of doing so would be to produce more domestic oil.

Seeking to address OPEC oil imports by committing the U.S. military and domestic economy to more expensive energy sources would be counterproductive economically and militarily, the former military officers explain.

“To be sure, credible military readiness depends on the nation’s economic strength and is strongly benefited by the unfettered exploitation of our energy resources, from extraction through production and delivery,” the veterans write.

“Faulty Environmental Reasoning

Environmental protection—a key reason cited by the Obama administration for emphasizing renewable fuels—is minimally advanced by renewable energy sources, assuming environmental protection is advanced at all.

“Hayward and his colleagues write, “The reluctance to exploit the nation’s natural resources in pursuit of strategic energy independence results from a misinformation tsunami that deceives people into believing such economic activity involving fossil fuels adversely affects our environment. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the principal purveyor of the theory assigning most of the responsibility for global warming to the trace greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. … Under the long-established scientific method, proving a hypothesis requires proof by empirical evidence and replication by other independent scientists. Neither the IPCC nor any individual scientist has yet provided the empirical evidence,” states the report.

Importance of a Strong Economy

The Obama administration’s determination to saddle the U.S. military with expensive energy sources necessarily drains money and resources from defense personnel and equipment. The potential consequences are severe, the authors report.

“In short, if energy independence is truly a military priority, the best way to achieve such independence is to produce more of our abundant domestic conventional energy sources rather than devoting scarce resources to costly and unreliable renewable sources.


James M. Taylor (jtaylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
New Report Details Beneficial Impacts of Warming

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Counters IPCC Claims

More than 30 scientists from 13 countries served as authors and reviewers for the new volume. It cites more than 3,000 peer-reviewed studies supporting the conclusion that global warming is not causing substantial harm to the biosphere. The work directly counters alarmist assertions by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

“Biological Impacts” broadly tracks and critiques the work of IPCC’s Working Group II. ... It appears IPCC is continuing its pattern of selectively reporting data to present an alarmist view of the impacts of climate change,” the report explains.

Increasing Biosphere Productivity

Biological Impacts documents the increasing productivity of forests and grasslands as atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) levels have increased both in recent decades and in centuries past, countering IPCC assertions to the contrary. The new volume also presents the scientific evidence that a more productive biosphere effectively sequesters much of the carbon dioxide IPCC claims will cause additional warming.

“The ongoing rise in the air’s CO2 content is causing a great greening of the Earth,” the report’s authors write. “All across the planet, the historical increase in the atmosphere’s CO2 concentration has stimulated vegetative productivity. This observed stimulation, or greening of the Earth, has occurred in spite of many real and imagined assaults on Earth’s vegetation, including fires, disease, pest outbreaks, deforestation, and climatic change.”

Agriculture Benefits from Warming

The report counters frequent assertions that global warming imperils agricultural production and will cause widespread hunger. To the contrary, the best scientific evidence indicates global warming benefits agricultural production.

“There is little or no risk of increasing food insecurity due to global warming or rising atmospheric CO2 levels,” the report explains. “Farmers and others who depend on rural livelihoods for income are benefitting from rising agricultural productivity throughout the world, including in parts of Asia and Africa where the need for increased food supplies is most critical. Rising temperatures and atmospheric CO2 levels play a key role in the realization of such benefits.”

Reducing Human Deaths

Biological Impacts also documents global warming’s direct impact on human mortality. Cold temperatures kill more people than warm temperatures, the report explains, and a warming world will reduce climate-related deaths.

“A modest warming of the planet will result in a net reduction of human mortality from temperature-related events. More lives are saved by global warming via the amelioration of cold-related deaths than those lost under excessive heat. Global warming will have a negligible influence on human morbidity and the spread of infectious diseases, a phenomenon observed in virtually all parts of the world,” the report explains.

Where IPCC Goes Wrong

The new report explains how and why IPCC reaches unjustifiably alarmist conclusions.

“Whether the subject is the likely effects of warming on crops, trees, weeds, birds, butterflies, or polar bears, it seems IPCC invariably picks the studies and models that paint global warming in the darkest possible hues. IPCC sees ‘death, injury, and disrupted livelihoods’—to borrow a phrase from Working Group II—everywhere it looks,” Biological Impacts reports.

“Oftentimes, IPCC’s pessimistic forecasts fly in the face of scientific observations,” it continues. “The global ecosystem is not suffering from the rising temperatures and atmospheric CO2 levels IPCC has called ‘unprecedented,’ despite all the models and hypotheses IPCC’s authors marshal to make that case. Real-world data show conclusively that most plants flourish when exposed to higher temperatures and higher levels of CO2 and that the planet’s terrestrial biosphere is undergoing a great post-Industrial Revolution greening that is causing deserts to retreat and forests to expand, enlarging habitat for wildlife. Essentially the same story can be told of global warming’s impact on terrestrial animals, aquatic life, and human health.”

Tom Harris, executive director of the International Climate Science Coalition, said, “By ignoring observational evidence that does not support their politically motivated conclusions, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change promotes unjustified fear about climate change.”

He added, “The latest report of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change presents crucially important evidence that the IPCC ignored, information that will help the public, media, and politicians understand more, and so fear less, about the consequences of climate change.”

Evenhanded Science

“Biological Impacts is thorough, complete, and evenhanded,” said Patrick Michaels, science director for the Cato Institute and former Virginia state climatologist. “Thanks to Dr. Idso, the most informed scientist on Earth when it comes to carbon dioxide and the biosphere, the NIPCC Biological Impacts report is a triumph of substance over scaremongering.”

“If you want to hear the party line, go to the IPCC; but if you want the whole truth, go with the NIPCC Biological Impacts report,” said Michaels.

The new volume is available for free online at the Web sites of The Heartland Institute, which publishes Environment & Climate News, and NIPCC. Print copies may also be ordered at those Web sites and at Amazon.com. The NIPCC Web site also provides weekly updates on the latest peer-reviewed studies on climate change issues.

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INTERNET INFO

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Biological Impacts: www.climatechangereconsidered.org

Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change: www.nipccreport.org

The Heartland Institute: www.heartland.org
Western Forests Recovering from Mountain Pine Beetle

By Bonner R. Cohen

The mountain pine beetle infestation that has ravaged forests in the western United States and Canada in recent years appears to be losing its grip. Green saplings are rejuvenating previously declining stands of dying red and grey pines.

History of Epidemic

First observed in 1996, the mountain pine beetle epidemic spread rapidly as the beetles swept through entire mountain ranges. The insects burrowed into large trees, depositing larvae and spreading a deadly fungus. More than 4 million acres of forest lands were affected in Colorado, South Dakota, and Wyoming alone. The fungus killed millions of trees from New Mexico to the Yukon Territory.

In a 2011 report, “Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic,” the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) warned, “The imminent danger of falling trees poses significant health and safety threats. Dead trees are falling at an ever-increasing rate; stands are beginning to fail; winds and soil moisture are influencing tree stability.”

“Fire hazard is high one to two years after trees are attacked, while red needles are still on the trees,” USFS observed.

Forests Emerge More Resilient

As severe as the infestation was, the direst predictions of ecological degradation, including soil nutrient degradation and rising streams, did not come true.

Brent Ewers, a botanist at the University of Wyoming, teamed up with Paul Brooks, a hydrologist at the University of Arizona, to study the ecological effects of the infestation, focusing their research on the Medicine Bow and Roosevelt national forests. The pair presented their findings at a December 2013 meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco.

Their work centered on whether the abundance of dead trees would allow too much melted snow to flow into streams, and whether carbon and nitrogen released from dead trees would pollute streams and rivers.

When snow falls on healthy forests, it collects on needles, where some of it evaporates while the rest falls to the ground. The trees use some of the snow that reaches the ground, and the rest makes its way to groundwater, streams, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Some scientists feared the millions of dead trees, no longer absorbing water, would allow streams to rise to dangerous levels. The scientists also worried excess water would mix with carbon and nitrogen from dead trees, creating a polluting brew in streams that would be expensive to clean up.

The feared environmental harms never occurred. Snow fell in large open areas, evaporating and blowing away the same as if it had fallen on healthy pine needles. New trees and plants flourished without the large, older trees, taking in the excess water, Brooks explained. The remaining trees are absorbing the nitrogen, enabling the forest to grow faster than before, Ewers added.

The two researchers agree the long-term effects of the infestation require further study.

Other Examples of Infestation


“Established plantings of gracefully arching elm trees shaded many small-town neighborhoods until the arrival of the pandemic that killed millions of elms,” Balgord explained. “Seventy years later, isolated American elms can be found in some rural settings. These resilient survivors have developed a resistance to the fungus.

“A second invader, that’s now spread to more than a dozen states, attacks several species of ash,” Balgord added. “This exotic species, the emerald ash borer, is believed to have hitchhiked to North America in wood pallets aboard container ships arriving from Asia. In less than 10 years, the pest has spread from the port at Windsor, Ontario into Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio.

“As serious infestations of the beetle continue to affect forests in the Western States, global warming activists waste no time in blaming global warming as the culprits enabling the damage,” Balgord observed. “Entomologists and forest experts explain, to the contrary, that the beetle is fully capable of initiating attacks in either normal or abnormal weather conditions.”

Bonner R. Cohen, Ph.D. (bcohen@nationalcenter.org) is a senior fellow at the National Center for Public Policy Research.
Colorado Governor Urges BLM Not to Overreach on Sage Grouse Protections

By Kenneth Artz

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper is siding with the state’s ranchers and energy and natural resource producers, urging the U.S. Bureau of Land Management not to impose unnecessary land-use restrictions to protect sage grouse.

Hickenlooper explained his position in a letter sent to BLM Northwestern District Manager Jim Cagney.

Environmental activist groups are urging the federal government to prevent conventional energy and natural resource production on millions of acres of federal lands in the western United States. Large national environmental activist groups largely support wind turbine development on the federal lands, though regional and local environmentalist groups frequently oppose wind turbines.

While scientists disagree on whether the sage grouse needs special protection, BLM is moving forward with land-use restrictions on conventional energy and natural resource production.

Colorado Submits Own Plan

Hickenlooper, a Democrat, urged BLM to allow Colorado state officials to implement their own sage grouse protections on federal land in the state.

“This letter serves as the Colorado state alternative, and we ask for your consideration as you move forward with developing a final plan. It is our hope that a management alternative can be developed that both safeguards the economic engine of northwestern Colorado and protects the [greater sage grouse] sufficiently to preclude a listing under the Endangered Species Act by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” Hickenlooper wrote.

“Since 2000, the State of Colorado has spent over $40 million on conservation efforts for the [greater sage grouse] species. These expenditures include conservation planning and implementation, land protection, population and habitat treatments, restoration, research, and communications,” Hickenlooper explained.

He continued, “Since 2004, [Colorado Parks and Wildlife] state wildlife managers have protected more than 74,000 acres of [greater sage grouse] habitat, primarily through conservation easements. About 24,000 additional acres are managed by other conservation interests such as The Nature Conservancy and Cattleman’s Land Trust.”

Regional Economy in Peril

BLM land-use restrictions would apply to some of the most energy-abundant lands in the United States. At risk are more than 22,000 high-paying oil and natural gas production jobs that annually generate nearly $5 billion in economic activity in Colorado. The state’s agriculture and ranching sectors also would suffer under aggressive sage grouse protections.

“We must keep the local context of this conservation challenge foremost in our minds. The communities of northwestern Colorado rely on access and productivity associated with public lands for their livelihood. ... Ranching and energy development are the two most important economic drivers in the region,” wrote Hickenlooper.

“Grazing has not been identified as a primary threat to the stability of the species,” Hickenlooper observed, “and we must be vigilant that none of the conservation measures have unintended negative consequences for agriculture.”

H. Sterling Burnett, an energy and environment consultant in Dallas, Texas, agrees BLM sage grouse restrictions would devastate the regional economy.

“Unfortunately, the Endangered Species Act does not allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to balance the economic costs of habitat protection against the harm to the sage grouse. Under the ESA, species protection is the only thing that matters—any harm to economic development, property rights, etc., takes a distant second place,” explained Burnett.

Land-Use Hypocrisy

“The hypocritical way the Obama administration enforces the ESA with wind and solar, or other ‘green energy’ projects, already violates the law by granting exemptions to wind farms, which kill eagles and condors; and solar power plants, which kill the desert tortoise,” said Burnett. “Where oil and gas are concerned, however, the administration is concerned about saving sage grouse habitat.”

Michael Sandoval, an energy policy analyst at the Independence Institute in Denver, says the issue is causing growing concern among state legislators.

“They’re extremely concerned about losing state and local control over development here in the state. Once the sage grouse is listed as either endangered or threatened, it inflicts a death by a 1,000 cuts from a whole host of federal agencies: the EPA, BLM, Department of the Interior, etc.,” said Sandoval.

Kenneth Artz (jalexkenartz@hotmail.com) writes from Dallas, Texas.
Environmentalists Oppose Wyo. Wind Project

By Bonner R. Cohen

Two prominent environmental groups sent a letter to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management opposing approval of a giant wind-energy project on federal and private lands in Wyoming.

The Chokecherry/Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project is the largest ever proposed in the United States and likely would kill dozens of eagles each year, plus hundreds of additional birds and bats, according to the American Bird Conservancy and Biodiversity Conservation Alliance.

In a 15-page letter sent February 3 to the Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the organizations said between 46 and 64 golden eagles likely would be killed every year by the rotating blades of the 1,000 wind turbines planned by the Power Company of Wyoming.

“Our wind report, backed by other similar reports, show[s] the Chokecherry/Sierra Madre Wind Farm to be located in one of the most important wildlife areas in the entire state. Raptors and eagles are cited as the most important segment of wildlife placed at risk by wind energy development in the project area,” the letter explains.

Eagle Recovery Threatened

"[I]t would be irresponsible of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to grant an eagle take permit to a facility that could become the nation’s largest of its kind," the letter stated. “Common sense, business sense and scientific integrity all demand that the Service first establish a pilot eagle take permitting program, specific to wind energy generation facilities. Such a pilot program, involving only small wind energy generation facilities is needed to assess ‘on-the-ground’ (true, as opposed to theorized or speculated) effectiveness of eagle take permitting.”

The letter continued “Bald eagles, in relative terms, have only recently been removed from the list of species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). While technically no longer protected under the ESA the act of permitting the killing of a species that our nation has spent countless dollars and human resources to bring back from the brink of extinction is disconcerting to say the least. Delisted in 2007, it makes no sense to permit the killing of the species only seven years later, especially when the permit allows a rapidly growing wind energy industry to kill the birds. Once a precedent setting permit is issued, mounting pressure will inundate the Service to issue more permits resulting in more eagle ‘take.’”

Bonner R. Cohen, Ph.D. (bcohen@nationalcenter.org) is a senior fellow at the National Center for Public Policy Research.

Difficult to Reduce Eagle Kills

“Short of shutting down the project altogether, there is no practical way to guarantee that eagle deaths will be substantially reduced,” said John Droz, a North Carolina-based wind-energy researcher. “Once the developer is given a permit to operate, the company effectively gets immunity for raptor kills.”

“There are no proven net benefits to industrial wind power,” Droz added. “So why do we allow eagles and other birds as well as bats to be killed by these projects?”

By Bonner R. Cohen

A new three-year, $35 million plan by the U.S. Department of Agriculture will divert agricultural dollars away from farm production and toward environmental activist causes, USDA has announced. The aim of the program is to take rural land out of agricultural production.

In a statement released February 14, USDA says, “Farmers, ranchers and conservation partners will have access to a mix of financial and technical assistance opportunities through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to restore wetlands and grasslands.”

The program targets parts of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota that have seasonal wetlands. Some of the wetlands are temporary, filling up and then drying out, and others are more or less permanent.

A USDA press statement claimed the land target ed for environmental conservation provides critical breeding and nesting habitat for migratory waterfowl.

Global Warming Justification

USDA also cited global warming as a justification for diverting agricultural funds to the conservation program. The seasonal wetlands “have the tremendous potential to store carbon in soils, which reduces the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, one of the leading greenhouse gases contributing to climate change,” the USDA press statement asserted.

USDA has created what it calls a “carbon credit marketing system” for landowners who agree to avoid tilling grasslands. USDA began working on the credit system with officials in North Dakota in 2011 and is now expanding the program to Montana and South Dakota.

Diminished Property Values

Some of the funds will be used to purchase conservation easements that place restrictions on agricultural lands. A conservation easement, also known as a conservation servitude or conservation covenant, is a legally binding agreement between a landowner and a nonprofit organization, typically a land trust, or a government agency that restricts development on the land covered by the easement.

“Landowners in the Upper Midwest should think twice before buying into USDA’s scheme to fight climate change,” said Craig Rucker, executive director of the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow. “Conservation easements come with land-use restrictions that can lower the value of their property. This land devaluation is then passed on to the landowners’ heirs.

“In the name of fighting climate change, the administration wants farmers and ranchers to sign over portions of their land to quasi-government control,” Rucker added.

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Wind Industry Study Shows Electricity Prices Skyrocketing in Major Wind Power States

Continued from page 1

tions for the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), wrote and circulated an article in response to a series of articles I wrote on electricity prices in states with renewable power mandates. Last year, legislators in Colorado, Kansas, and Ohio asked me to testify in legislative hearings about the cost impacts of renewable power mandates in their states. Legislators in North Carolina asked me to prepare a similar analysis for potential hearings. My research found electricity prices in all four states rose much more rapidly than the national average after the states enacted their renewable power mandates.

My articles, published in Environment & Climate News, documented the rapid price increases in each state. Those price increases come as no surprise considering wind power and other forms of renewable power generation are much more costly than conventional power. That is why Big Renewables fight tooth and nail for renewable power mandates: They cannot compete with conventional power sources on a level playing field.

In “Fact Check: New Analysis Rebuts Heartland’s Bogus RPS Claims,” Sloan claimed that in the 11 states in which wind power accounts for more than 7 percent of electricity sales, prices dropped by a little less than 1 percent since 2008. Referencing another recently published AWEA article, “Wind Power’s Consumer Benefits,” Sloan claimed electricity prices in the remaining 39 states rose 7.8 percent. For the nation as a whole, she stated, electricity prices rose 3 percent since 2008.

Sloan claimed this proved my four state-specific electricity studies were “cherry-picked” and “bogus.” Instead, an objective review of Sloan’s self-serving “fact check” provides an informative lesson in how the renewable energy industry plays fast and loose with the facts to deceive federal and state legislators. AWEA’s own analysis actually shows electricity prices are increasing dramatically in almost all states with substantial wind power generation.

Skyrocketing Costs in Wind States

The 11 states AWEA identifies as deriving more than 7 percent of their electricity from wind power are Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

AWEA says these states have had slightly falling electricity prices since 2008, but U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) data show nine of the 11 have seen dramatically rising prices since 2008. The 11 largest wind power states, electricity prices increased more than four times the national average of 3 percent.

In nine of the 11 largest wind power states, electricity prices increased more than four times the national average of 3 percent. Prices in eight of the 11 states are rising more than twice as fast as in the 39 states with less than 7 percent wind power generation.

How, then, does AWEA claim these 11 largest wind power states combined experienced, on average, a roughly 1 percent decline since 2008? The answer is AWEA does not calculate each of the 11 states’ rise or decline in electricity prices and then divide by 11 to get an average. Instead, AWEA assigns different weights to each state’s rise or decline based on how much electricity is consumed in that state. In that way, the dramatic decline in big-state Texas is given more weight than the dramatic increase in Wyoming.

The Two Outliers Explained

Other important factors further rebut AWEA’s claims in the two heavy wind power states where electricity prices are not increasing. In Oklahoma, where electricity prices remained essentially flat, there is no renewable power mandate. To the extent wind power is produced in Oklahoma, market forces, rather than state government, determine its generation. AWEA curiously argues relatively stable electricity prices in a state without renewable power mandates justify its call for renewable power mandates.

In Texas, economists agree electricity prices have been falling in recent years as a result of the state’s deregulation efforts during the past decade. Deregulation has lowered the price of coal, natural gas, nuclear, and wind energy generation. AWEA falsely ascribes the state’s declining electricity prices to wind power.

Skepticism of AWEA Warranted

Forcing consumers to purchase electricity from expensive sources raises electricity prices.

AWEA’s attempt to rebut that common-sense, objectively documented fact has backfired, giving state elected officials and the public every reason to be skeptical of claims the trade association might make in the future.

James M. Taylor (jtaylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News. A version of this article first appeared at Forbes.com and is reprinted with permission.
Marijuana Cultivation Strains Calif. Water Supplies

By Karen Dove

An increase in marijuana growing on the West Coast is straining water supplies in drought-stricken California and imperiling the region’s salmon populations, environmental groups claim.

Prodigious Water Needs
Marijuana plants require up to six gallons of water per day, putting tremendous strain on water resources where marijuana plants are grown in large quantities. The Northern California coast is known as the “emerald triangle” for its high concentration of marijuana growers.

The same region includes important breeding territory for salmon. With the Golden State suffering a prolonged drought, environmental groups worry the increase in marijuana growing is pushing salmon populations to the breaking point.

The deforestation that often accompanies marijuana growing also threatens salmon populations, environmentalists note. Marijuana growers favor locations where water is plentiful, typically close to streams and rivers. They often cut down trees and brush to make room for the marijuana plants, removing important streambed buffers. After the buffers are removed, more soil is eroded into the streams. The eroded soil contains fertilizers and pesticides used to encourage marijuana plant growth, compounding the eroded soil’s negative impact on streams and rivers.

“I have nothing against people growing dope,” Dave Bitts, a Humboldt County commercial fisherman and president of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations, told National Public Radio. “But if you do, we want you to grow your crop in a way that doesn’t screw up fish habitat. There is no salmon-bearing watershed at this point that we can afford to sacrifice.”

Water Theft Problem
In Mendocino County, law enforcement officials are cracking down on marijuana growers stealing water from streams, ponds, and open irrigation canals. Police vow they will charge such marijuana growers with grand theft of a natural resource, a far more serious charge than petty theft.

“We know in the fall of the year we’re going to be seeing upwards of 5 million gallons of water per day being used for illegal marijuana. Not medical, illegal,” Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman told San Francisco television station KPIX.

Political irony
“Marijuana plants require large amounts of water, which can put strains on California water resources even during years with normal precipitation. During drought years, the pressure becomes more severe,” said Jay Lehr, science director for The Heartland Institute, which publishes Environment & Climate News.

“The irony of the situation is marijuana consumers tend to culturally identify with environmental activist groups and environmental issues,” said Lehr. “At the same time they rally in support of environmental activist causes, they are personally contributing to one of the primary stress factors on California fish populations, water quality, and drought conditions.

“Marijuana growers’ impact on California water supplies will hopefully encourage people to study sound science before blindly championing environmental activist claims. Market-based water reforms can free up more water so all forms of agriculture and water usage will have less negative impact on water resources,” Lehr explained.

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— HARRISON H. SCHMITT, GEOLOGIST, APOLLO 17 ASTRONAUT, FORMER U.S. SENATOR, AUTHOR OF RETURN TO THE MOON
Science Council Debunks the Top Environment and Health Scares from 2013

By James M. Taylor

The American Council on Science and Health has identified its “Top 13 health scares of 2013,” with a majority of the false health scares catering to environmental activism. In the first of a multi-part series, Environment & Climate News presents excerpts from the Top 13 list:

Chemicals in Mosquito Spray
Despite an increase in mosquito-borne diseases, many people are terrified of Anvil—an effective killer of adult mosquitoes that is completely harmless to humans.

People are also very worried about the effect of the spray on the environment. Taken together, there is often substantial protest when any kind of spraying is proposed.

Origin of the scare:
Nowhere was this more apparent than in Ocean Beach, one of 17 summer communities on Fire Island, a barrier beach off the coast of Long Island, New York.

As an incorporated village, Ocean Beach was allowed to opt out of the mosquito control program managed by the Suffolk County Department of Health. Although virtually every other community on the island (and much of the rest of Long Island as well) was being sprayed every summer, Ocean Beach had not done so in decades, primarily based on advice from the village’s environmental commission. The village was playing Russian roulette with people’s health. In 2011 there was a bullet in the chamber.

Having fought a six-year battle with stage four colon cancer, the last thing long-time Ocean Beach resident Jim Capuano needed was to contract a serious but preventable infectious disease.

Yet that is exactly what happened. During a one-week vacation in Ocean Beach in August 2011, Capuano suffered a grand mal seizure, miraculously waking 10 days later from a medically induced coma.

Doctors determined he had contracted West Nile encephalitis—a potentially fatal condition—from an infected mosquito during his vacation. Given his already-weakened immune system, Capuano was more susceptible to infection, and at times during his hospital stay he was close to death. Although the rest of the island had already sprayed, Ocean Beach’s mistaken decision to opt out became especially glaring.

ACSH’s perspective:
This is simply another case of faulty risk-benefit analysis—in this case driven by an irrational fear of chemicals, as if they are all the same. We have maintained for many years that the irrational fear of chemicals is counterproductive and even harmful. One could not find a better example than this one.

Bottom line:
Sometimes things just work out. After Capuano told his story, and after the entire community heard his doctor’s testimony, the community changed its mind (except for the environmental commission). One week later the board of trustees voted unanimously to join the Suffolk County program. The rest of the summer was delightfully mosquito-free.

Genetically Engineered Foods in Hawaii
Hawaiian papayas are grown extensively on the Big Island of Hawaii (also called ‘Hawaii’). The entire production was threatened in the mid-1990s by the Papaya ringspot virus, which destroyed the fruit and would have eliminated the crop completely. But scientists inserted a gene from the virus into papayas that conferred immunity on the fruits. The industry was saved.

Origin of the scare:
Last May, a bill was introduced in the county council proposing a ban on genetically engineered crops on the Big Island. Opponents trotted out the usual list of false claims of damage and risks supposedly caused by such crops, from causing cancer in rats to instigating the production of so-called superweeds. They also cited false reports of suicides among Indian farmers who were beholden to companies producing GMO cotton seeds.

Celebrities such as Roseanne Barr, Dr. Oz, Oprah Winfrey, and Bill Maher got in on the act, warning people against eating GMO foods. This ban followed an uproar on the island of Oahu, which had been host to seed companies growing and developing GMO crops.

ACSH’s perspective:
The whole sorry story of the anti-GMO bill on the Big Island is a reflection of how small a role science plays in the public’s understanding of genetic engineering. The fear-mongers, emboldened by the large and growing organic foods industry, seem to be holding sway.

Supposedly scientific studies that purport to demonstrate health risks from GMO foods are typically shown to be bogus or inadequately designed to demonstrate their conclusions. GMO crops are no more dangerous than any other, and they often require less application of pesticides than conventional varieties.

Bottom line:
Although the bill did pass in Hawaii, laws requiring labeling of genetically modified ingredients and foods have not been widely adopted. Yet the fight continues, and it remains to be seen whether scientific truth or ideology will win out. ACSH’s Dr. Gilbert Ross recently commented, “These folks would also have burned heretics and hung witches based on the same quality of ‘evidence’ used [in the Hawaii situation]. They seemed to have bent over backwards to ignore and downplay the science, that is the facts or the truth of this technology, not even bothering to give it lip service while rushing to put their own superstitions into effect.”

GM Corn and Stomach Problems in Pigs

Origin of the scare:
A very flawed and intentionally misleading study by Dr. Judy Carman, of the Institute of Health and Environmental Research in Australia, was published in the Journal of
Carman painted a masterpiece here. This is where it gets interesting. A group of 168 pigs was divided into two groups—half ate a “normal” diet, and half ate the identical diet, except the corn and soy in their diet were genetically modified. After 23 weeks, the pigs were sacrificed and examined. This is where it gets interesting.

The paper is titled “A long-term toxicology study on pigs fed a mixed GM diet. Adverse effects of GM crops found.” They sure did find some “adverse effects” because the dice were loaded. The study was set up to find them. But are they real? A look at the data on stomach inflammation gives us the answer: No way.

Figure 1 provides a look at the numbers. The purple star indicates statistical significance—a measure of the quality of the data. The figures under the red arrow are the number of pigs that ate the normal diet. The blue arrow indicates the number that ate the GM diet.

The authors selected eight separate categories of stomach damage (all determinations were made by sight) and compared the two groups.

Taken at face value, the data are nonsensical. For example, eight pigs on the GM diet had no stomach inflammation at all, but that was true for only four of the non-GM-fed pigs. One might conclude that GM food actually protects pig stomachs.

Pigs that ate GM food also appeared to be protected from mild inflammation (23 GM vs. 31 non-GM) and moderate inflammation (18 vs. 29).

But when severe inflammation (this made the headlines) was measured, the GM-fed pigs seemed to have much more of it. Yet in the next two categories, erosions and ulcers, the results flip once again.

Bottom line: How to explain these contradictory up-and-down results? Nonsense numbers and selective use of data. If you combined moderate and severe inflammation into one category, there would be little or no effect at all. But by selecting different levels of inflammation, they stumbled across one category that, on its own, appears to be real, but when taken together with the rest of the data, it clearly is not. This is a standard trick for manipulation of results and headlines. Fortunately, they got caught.

Phthalates
Phthalates—chemicals used in many plastic products to make them more flexible, and commonly found in toys, medical devices, and some cosmetics and fragrances—have long been attacked by environmental activist groups who have labeled them “endocrine disruptors.” These activists claim phthalates cause developmental and reproductive defects. It seems there is a new scare about phthalates every year, and 2013 was no different.

Origin of the scare: This time, the phthalate scare came from companies that, in an effort to “give the consumer what they want” (in reality, succumbing to pressure created by activist and environmental groups), have decided to ban these chemicals from their products or plaster products with labels identifying the chemical “offenders” they contain.

The most recent reactions to these claims came from Procter & Gamble and Walmart. In response to the claim that phthalates somehow disrupt the endocrine system, Procter & Gamble chose to ban them from the cosmetics they sell. Walmart has decided to require full disclosure of chemicals used by companies selling cosmetics and cleaning products. Stacy Malkan, cofounder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, says, “Walmart would not have taken this bold step were it not for the aggressive corporate campaigns and grassroots organizing efforts of nonprofit organizations.”

ACSH’s perspective: Decades of widespread use of these “toxic” chemicals indicate they are safe and do not pose any danger to human health. The actions taken by Procter & Gamble and Walmart are simply responses to activist groups posing as scientific experts, repeating baseless allegations that have turned into public hysteria. The studies used to “show” detrimental effects of phthalates are not based on sound science. There is no biological hypothesis put forward for how these harmless chemicals endanger anyone’s health.

Bottom line: As we’ve said before when we’ve covered the scare about phthalates, there is no mention of what is replacing phthalates as they are removed from cosmetic products. Phthalates are completely safe. ACSH’s Dr. Josh Bloom says, “This is the ‘scientific’ equivalent of three-card monte: No one can ever win; remove one chemical just to shut these guys up, and they’ll be coming for another one next year, or more likely next week.”

James M. Taylor (jttaylor@heartland.org) is managing editor of Environment & Climate News.
Md. Renewable Firm in Bankruptcy, Blames Winter

By Bonner R. Cohen

Maryland renewable power provider Clean Currents announced it is going into bankruptcy, adding another example to a long line of renewable energy company failures.

Company officials publicly blamed the cold winter for forcing it out of business.

Spot Markets Led to Doom

Clean Currents attracted customers looking to support renewable power at reasonable prices. Rather than generate its own wind and solar power, which is intermittent and unreliable, Clean Currents purchased power on the spot market—most of it produced from conventional coal, natural gas, and nuclear power producers—and additionally purchased offsets from wind and solar power producers. Essentially, customers purchased power from reliable sources while simultaneously purchasing the ability to feel good about supporting renewable power.

By relying on the spot market for its power purchases, Clean Currents bet on stable or declining conventional and renewable power prices despite federal environmental officials ramping up expensive environmental restrictions. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Maryland electricity prices were 6 percent higher in December 2013 than in December 2012.

When historically cold weather repeatedly hammered the United States in January and February, natural gas prices and spot-market electricity prices rose even higher. Clean Currents could no longer purchase power on the spot market and deliver it to customers at their lower, locked-in prices.

A Rising Star No More

Renewable power supporters had billed Clean Currents as a rising star in the region’s economy. In 2011, the company obtained a $50,000 grant from the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development to expand its operations. The conditions of the grant required the company to employ at least 29 permanent, full-time employees by December 31, 2014. With the company now going into bankruptcy and unable to fulfill its obligations, the county government is hoping the company will pay back the grant.

“[Clean Currents] customers purchased power from reliable sources while simultaneously purchasing the ability to feel good about supporting renewable power.”

Global Warming Irony

Daniel Simmons, director of state policy at the Institute for Energy Research, noted the irony of a renewable energy company promoted as a means of fighting global warming declaring an exceptionally cold winter forced it into bankruptcy.

“The failure of Clean Currents exposes the scam of switching ‘to wind power at your home,’ as the Clean Currents website used to say,” Simmons said. “If Clean Currents really got its electricity from wind, and wind power could be trusted to deliver on-demand electricity, then the company wouldn’t have had a problem.

“In reality, the company was at the mercy of the wholesale electricity market, a necessary risk when relying directly or indirectly on unreliable wind power,” Simmons explained. “So much for switching to wind.”

He continued, “The company’s failure underscores the futility of subsidies to keep uncompetitive businesses afloat. Wind power proponents always promise fantastic job creation and economic growth in return for the subsidies, but wind power consistently fails to deliver on those promises.”

Bonner R. Cohen, Ph.D. (bcohen@nationalcenter.org) is a senior fellow at the National Center for Public Policy Research.
Oregon Issues Key Permits for Coal Export Terminal

By Alyssa Carducci

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality issued three key permits for a proposed coal export facility in Boardman, Oregon, but Ambre Energy still must obtain at least one additional state permit and a separate state lands lease before it can build and operate its Morrow Pacific terminal on Coyote Island.

Expanding Low-Sulfur Coal Markets

The Morrow Pacific terminal is one of three proposed projects in the U.S. Northwest for shipping American coal overseas. The terminal would allow Montana and Wyoming low-sulfur coal to reach overseas markets where the coal is in high demand. The low-sulfur coal will also allow developing nations to reduce power plant pollution at a reasonable cost.

In the United States, sale of the coal will boost the Montana and Wyoming economies, as well as the economies of Oregon and Washington, where the coal terminals would operate.

“The situation in Oregon is one more example of just how much costly uncertainty government has created in the energy market. Multiple rounds of permits with lawsuits are likely to follow.”

TRENT ENGLAND
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
FREEDOM FOUNDATION

Many Hurdles Remain

The Oregon DEQ issued air quality, water quality, and construction stormwater permits needed to move forward with the coal export project. Buried in its approval of the three permits, however, the DEQ announced for the first time that Ambre Energy would have to obtain an additional water quality permit, known as a 401 certification. That presents a tougher environmental and bureaucratic obstacle than the other three permits.

Shortly after the DEQ issued its permits, the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) notified Ambre Energy it would have to obtain a lease from DSL before it can begin operations. DSL pointed to state ownership of submerged lands and noted an export terminal would have to be built above submerged land.

The project also requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Government-Induced Uncertainty

John Charles, president and CEO of the Oregon-based Cascade Policy Institute, said DEQ’s approval of the permits is a step in the right direction but the new requirement for a 401 certification could halt the process.

“A 401 certificate is a very big deal. It can be a deal-breaker,” said Charles. “Section 401 became a political tool first employed by environmental activists decades ago. It killed at least one very large project in southern Oregon in the late ‘80s.”

“The situation in Oregon is one more example of just how much costly uncertainty government has created in the energy market,” said Trent England, executive vice president at the Washington-based Freedom Foundation. “Multiple rounds of permits with lawsuits are likely to follow.”

“A segment of the political left is basically against any form of energy that actually works,” England added. “They can’t admit that, so their strategy is to use government to create so many hurdles that it becomes a de facto prohibition on many energy projects.”

Julie Curtis, spokesperson for the Oregon Department of State Lands, told Environment & Climate News the DEQ’s environmental permitting decisions and DSL’s leasing decisions will operate independently of each other.

“DSL’s permit decision will not be influenced by DEQ’s actions,” said Curtis.

Alyssa Carducci (ad.carducci@gmail.com) writes from Tampa, Florida.

Crichton was RIGHT!

Michael Crichton’s State of Fear (Harper Collins, 2004, $27.95) is a surprising book. Tucked inside a lively and entertaining tale of a philanthropist, a scientist, a lawyer, and two remarkable women who travel around the world trying to foil the plots of evil-doers is a detailed expose of the flawed science and exaggerations at the base of the global warming scare. It is also a devastating critique of mainstream environmentalism today and an eloquent call for change.

Like Crichton’s previous block-busters, The Andromeda Strain and Jurassic Park, this book blends science and fiction in ways that teach as well as entertain readers. Crichton, who earned an M.D. from Harvard University and has written several nonfiction books, backed up his claims with footnotes, an appendix, and an annotated bibliography. Clearly, he wanted the science in his book to be taken seriously.

Which raises the question: How much of the science in State of Fear is accurate, and how much is fiction?

The answer: Michael Crichton was right! His synthesis of the science on climate change is extremely accurate and the experts he cites are real. The Heartland Institute has participated in the debate over climate change for two decades, and we have worked with many of the experts listed in the book’s bibliography. You can find more information at The Heartland Institute’s Web site at heartland.org/policy-documents/michael-crichton-was-right.
The Coming Paradigm Shift on Climate

The just-published reports of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change may lead to a paradigm shift about what or who has been causing climate change. All the evidence suggests nature, not man, rules the climate.—Ed.

By S. Fred Singer

Watch for it: We may be on the threshold of a tipping point in climate history.

No, I’m not talking about a tipping point in the sense that Earth will be covered with ice or become hellishly hot. I’m talking about a tipping point in our views of what controls the climate—whether it’s mainly humans or mainly nature. It makes an enormous difference in climate policy: Do we try to mitigate, at huge cost, or do we merely adapt to natural changes, as our ancestors did for many millennia?

Tipping Points Frequently Occur

Such tipping points occur quite frequently in science. I have personally witnessed two paradigm shifts where world scientific opinion changed rapidly, almost overnight.

The other major shift occurred regarding continental drift. After being denounced by the scientific establishment, the hypothesis of Alfred Wegener, initially based on approximate relations between South America and Africa, was dramatically confirmed by the discovery of sea-floor spreading.

Climate Tipping Point Is Near

These shifts were possible because there were no commercial or financial interests in these matters, and thus they did not involve the public and politicians. But climate is a different animal. The financial stakes are huge—in the trillions of dollars—and affect energy policy and the economic wellbeing of every inhabitant of the developed and developing world. For example, the government-imposed conversion into ethanol fuel of a substantial portion of the U.S. corn crop raised the price of tortillas in Mexico and caused food riots.

Nevertheless, I believe the time is right for a paradigm shift on climate. For one, there has been no warming now for more than 15 years despite rising levels of greenhouse gases. Climate models have not come up with any accepted explanation. This disparity, of course, casts great doubt on claims of any future warming derived from these same models. This disparity similarly casts doubt on the wisdom of policies that are being advocated to mitigate the dubious future warming—principally, the control of carbon dioxide (CO2) from the burning of fossil fuels.

Next year, in Paris, the United Nations will try to reconstitute the basic features of the (1997–2012) Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty of participating nations to limit their emissions of CO2. They may succeed unless the current paradigm changes.

We can already see the pressure building for such a treaty. The big guns of international science are actively promoting climate scares. The Royal Society and U.S. National Academy of Sciences have published a joint major report, Climate Change: Evidence & Causes, containing no new science but advocating a “need for action.” The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the largest scientific organization in the United States, is promoting the same policy, but without a shred of science in its slick pamphlet. Even the once-respected Scientific American magazine has gotten into the act and openly advocates such dubious policies.

Government vs. Science

All of these establishment groups, it seems, have a keen eye open for government funding, not only for research but also for actions that go with such policies. They all accept the climate science propagated by the three volumes of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report. Volume 1, dealing with physical science, was published in September 2013. Volumes 2 and 3, dealing with impacts and mitigation, were published in March and April 2014.

But we also have the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC) as a counter to IPCC. NIPCC serves as an independent voice and a second opinion, fulfilling a recommendation by the prestigious InterAcademy Council on Science. NIPCC documents thousands of studies that IPCC chose to ignore in reaching its dubious conclusions about anthropogenic global warming (AGW). NIPCC reports were published in September 2013 (Physical Science) and in March 2014 (Biological Impacts). In May, it will publish Human Welfare, Energy, and Policies.

Previous Climate Claims Disproven

NIPCC’s Physical Science volume and its accompanying Summary for Policymakers look critically at the evidence IPCC uses to support its claims regarding AGW. NIPCC notes the evidence keeps changing over time. The first IPCC report, published in 1990, used an improbable statistical method to suggest the warming of the early part of the twentieth century was caused by human-produced greenhouse gases. Sound science clearly disproves this.

IPCC’s Second Assessment Report, which was published in 1996 and led to the infamous 1997 Kyoto Protocol, manufactured the so-called “hot spot,” a region of increased atmospheric warming in the equatorial troposphere that allegedly demonstrated a human fingerprint on recent warming. That evidence also disappeared after a detailed analysis (published in Nature in 1996) showed the hot spot doesn’t exist. In addition, the assumption any such hot spot would constitute a fingerprint for AGW is in error.

As a result of these two failed attempts to establish some kind of evidence for AGW, the third IPCC report, published in 2001, latched onto the so-called “hockey stick” graph, which erroneously claimed the warming of the twentieth century was unique during the past 1,000 years. Further scrutiny demonstrated the hockey stick was artificially manufactured and based on false data, erroneous statistical methods, and an inappropriate calibration method. This was strikingly illustrated when the climate model algorithm that produced the hockey stick produced a similar hockey stick when fed purely random data.

In its most recent report, IPCC has dropped all previous pieces of evidence and has instead concentrated on trying to prove the reported surface warming between 1978 and 2000 agrees with the warming predicted by climate models. This so-called proof
NIPCC vs. IPCC

NIPCC conclusions are backed by thousands of peer-reviewed studies, in striking contrast to the IPCC’s alarmist predictions:

- Climate data tell us the human impact on Earth’s climate is very small and any warming due to greenhouse gases will be so small as to be indiscernible from natural variability.
- The net impacts of modestly rising temperatures and higher carbon dioxide levels on plants, animals, wildlife, and human welfare have been positive so far and are likely to continue to be positive.
- The costs of trying to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions vastly exceed the benefits. These mitigation efforts would cost the average U.S. household $3,900 per year and destroy millions of American jobs. Mitigation of actual effects of any climate change would cost a tiny fraction of that.
- In light of the new science and economics of climate change, thousands of laws passed at the height of the global warming scare need to be reevaluated and modified or repealed.

The reported warming applies only to surface (land-based) weather stations and is not seen in any other dataset. The weather satellite data that measure atmospheric temperature show no significant trend. Neither do proxy data from analysis of tree rings, ocean/lake sediments, stalagmites, corals, ice cores, etc.

It can therefore be strongly argued there has been no appreciable human-caused warming in the twentieth century at all. This demonstrates the warming effects of rising atmospheric greenhouse-gas content have been quite insignificant.

Future Climate Uncertain

Opinions differ sharply: from predictions of another Little Ice Age (which was a calamity for human health and welfare) to a resumption of warming aided by the “missing heat” that some alarmists are sure is hiding somewhere in Earth’s climate system.

Personally, I don’t do forecasts, because I know too little about the sun’s interior. I simply try to understand and explain the past climate. If pressed, however, I would go with historic cycles, such as the observed 1,000–1,500-year cycle. These cycles suggest a modest warming over the next few centuries, perhaps in fits and starts rather than the steady increase forecast by IPCC computer models.

Political Considerations

Will nations accept any treaties emanating from the 2015 Paris Conference? So far, only Western Europe seems to be keen on ratifying such a treaty, and even there, doubts are developing. Eastern Europe is definitely against any new treaty, as are Japan, Australia, and Canada.

What about the Chinese, the world’s largest emitters of CO2? They gain a competitive advantage under the likely restrictions on Western democracies under such a treaty. The United States may be in a transition mode in its opinion about climate change, and that’s where a paradigm shift could really make a global difference.

According to the latest Gallup poll, the U.S. public ranks global warming concern almost at the bottom of 20 proposed issues, mostly concerned with economics. The Obama White House, however, seems to be gung-ho for climate alarmism. President Barack Obama is planning new climate initiatives based on advice from his chief science advisor, John Holdren, who previously warned about global cooling and global overpopulation. Political activist John Podesta has come aboard as a counselor and special assistant to the president to push climate initiatives. The rest of the administration is in tune with the White House.

Secretary of State John Kerry considers AGW the greatest challenge to U.S. security even though his plate is full of urgent foreign-policy problems such as the Iran nuclear negotiations, the Syrian civil war, a developing Sunni insurgency in Iraq, the Arab-Israel “peace” negotiations, and the Russian annexation of Crimea. This, of course, is the same John Kerry who as a U.S. Senator in 1997 voted for the Byrd-Hagel Resolution opposing treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol.

In mid-2014, the U.S. Supreme Court will issue its opinion on EPA’s misguided and unscientific efforts to limit or even abolish the use of coal for electric generation. If the Court can become aware of the NIPCC conclusions, it will surely decide against EPA and therefore the White House. Such an event may become the trigger for a cataclysmic paradigm shift in U.S. policy on energy and climate. Similarly, the November 2014 elections could tip the balance and finally kill the myth of global warming catastrophes in the United States and throughout the world.

S. Fred Singer (singer@sepp.org) is professor emeritus at the University of Virginia and director of the Science & Environmental Policy Project. He served as the founding director of the U.S. Weather Satellite Service and, more recently, as vice chair of the U.S. National Advisory Committee on Oceans & Atmosphere. In 2007 he founded, and has since chaired, the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change, which has released several scientific reports. This article originally appeared at AmericanThinker.com and is reprinted with permission.

“[T]he hockey stick was artificially manufactured and based on false data, erroneous statistical methods, and an inappropriate calibration method.”

“The United States may be in a transition mode in its opinion about climate change, and that’s where a paradigm shift could really make a global difference.”
By Alyssa Carducci

A coalition representing 70,000 New York landowners filed suit against New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, claiming the governor and his administration are intentionally obstructing a decision to end the state’s hydraulic fracturing moratorium.

The Joint Landowners Coalition of New York filed suit on February 14 in state court. It seeks to force a decision on whether the state will allow hydraulic fracturing for natural gas.

Nearly Six Years of Delays

Then-Gov. David Paterson (D) initiated the moratorium in July 2008. Simultaneously, he directed the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to produce a Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on hydraulic fracturing. Paterson said he would consider lifting the moratorium once DEC completed the impact statement and he had an opportunity to consider its findings. The state legislature later imposed its own moratorium while awaiting the results of the impact statement.

Nearly six years later, the DEC has not issued the environmental impact statement. In 2011, DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said the department might complete it by spring 2012. In September 2012, more than four years after being directed to conduct the environmental impact analysis, Martens asked the New York Department of Health to study the issue. He said his department would not produce its impact statement until the Department of Health issued its findings.

In February 2013, Department of Health Commissioner Nirav Shah sent a letter to Martens requesting a few more weeks to study the issue and publish its findings. As this issue of Environment & Climate News goes to press and more than a year after Shah requested a little more time, the Department of Health has not published its findings. Shah refuses to give a timeframe for when the department might finish its assessment.

Further delaying the process, Cuomo, a Democrat, released a budget proposal in January 2014 that provides no funds to regulate natural gas production. Even if the Department of Health and DEC complete their assessments and state officials decide to allow hydraulic fracturing, state officials will not allow it to occur until regulations are imposed. Cuomo’s budget proposal extends to March 2015, delaying any regulatory activity until then at the very least.

Economic Revival

The Marcellus and Utica shale formations underlie approximately half of the state, promising newfound wealth and an end to economic stagnation in upstate New York. Frustrated upstate citizens say state officials have had more than enough time to study hydraulic fracturing, which has been conducted in other states for more than half a century.

The Mountain States Legal Foundation, which has supported hydraulic fracturing in western states, is lending a hand to hydraulic fracturing proponents in New York.

“MSLF has been involved in litigation underlie approximately half of the state, promising newfound wealth and an end to economic stagnation in upstate New York. Frustrated upstate citizens say state officials have had more than enough time to study hydraulic fracturing, which has been conducted in other states for more than half a century.

The Joint Landowners Coalition President Dan Fitzsimmons said in a press release.

“Hydraulic fracturing has been used for more than six decades and is a safe, effective, proven technique for developing oil and gas resources. Some 95 percent of American gas wells use hydraulic fracturing,” said Pendley.

“The development of energy resources, including the use of hydraulic fracturing, is regulated by state governments, including New York,” he explained. “Just as significantly, MSLF believes that landowners should be able to use their private property, including by developing the energy resources that they own.”

Alyssa Carducci (ad.carducci@gmail.com) writes from Tampa, Florida.
Why Does Minnesota Law Require $500-Per-Megawatt Hour Solar Electricity?

By Rep. Pat Garofalo

In May 2013, Democrats in the Minnesota legislature doubled down on their silly love affair with expensive solar energy technology. They imposed a mandate on Minnesota that singles out the customers of large electric utilities and forces the utilities to produce 1.5 percent of their electricity output through solar technology by 2020. This is on top of the 25 percent renewable power mandate passed by the legislature several years ago.

In addition, in a bill supported only by Democrats, the legislature passed a new “Made in Minnesota” subsidy that mandates producers of electricity from certain solar installations be paid $500 per megawatt hour!

Members of the political left coupled this mandate with solar subsidies that will cost Minnesota ratepayers more than $175 million over the next 10 years.

Not since President Barack Obama’s Solyndra boondoggle have we seen such a squandering of taxpayer dollars on solar energy.

Special-Interest Groups Trump Science

For all the self-descriptions of being the “party of science,” Democrats in Minnesota and across the country have a very unscientific obsession with certain technologies based more on loyalty to influential environmental groups than concrete facts and economic realities.

They choose to ignore or disregard the fact that most solar energy is too expensive—10 times more expensive per kilowatt hour than wind energy. Solar energy is also significantly more expensive than hydroelectric, biomass, geothermal, and natural gas, all of which are cleaner than the coal energy demonized by the scientifically illiterate left.

Higher Energy Costs

In spite of these realities, Minnesotans will be forced to foot the $175 million bill in an attempt by Democrats to prop up an economically unsustainable industry. In most cases, solar technology simply is not cost-effective enough for large-scale use and remains unaffordable for most families and businesses.

By forcing the companies that produce the vast majority of energy to invest in expensive and unproven solar technology, energy bills are rising. Many energy companies are already anticipating rate increases over the next several years.

Higher energy bills, coupled with the $2.4 billion tax increase passed in 2013 to fund new spending—including the solar subsidy program—will mean more money out of the pockets of Minnesotans across all income levels. This is a far cry from the “tax the rich” rhetoric we heard on the campaign trail in 2012.

Renewables Must Be Affordable

The so-called Green Energy Movement we’re seeing in Minnesota and across the country doesn’t care about the pocketbooks of taxpayers and ratepayers. The movement remains blindly devoted to ineffective and unproven technologies that benefit the left’s friends and special interests, content to let the average citizen pay more in the name of the “green” movement.

Democrats are quick to dismiss Republican opposition to the solar mandate as a partisan issue and try to cast Republicans as radical opponents of “green” renewable energy technologies.

That couldn’t be farther from the truth. Republicans support renewable energy sources that are feasible and economically sound and don’t result in higher energy bills for families. The more we can do to shift our energy portfolio toward economically beneficial renewables, the better. But forcing expensive technology on the general public is a waste of money and unfairly forces people to pay more to light their homes.

Until solar technology can produce energy as reliably and efficiently as other renewable energy sources, this mandate should be repealed. Minnesotans are already paying more as a result of $2.4 billion in new taxes and fees that impact families of every income level. They don’t need another hike on their energy bills.

Rep. Pat Garofalo (Rep.Pat.Garofalo@house.mn) is a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives. He serves as the GOP Lead on the House Energy Policy Committee.

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Polls Show Public Strongly Supports Keystone XL Pipeline Project

By Karen Dove

A strong majority of Americans support the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, several recent polls show.

The Keystone XL pipeline would give U.S. consumers access to abundant Canadian oil produced from western Canada oil sands. Some environmental activists oppose the pipeline, arguing use of the oil will amplify global warming.

USA Today commissioned a poll by Stanford University and Resources for the Future on Americans’ opinions regarding the Keystone XL pipeline. The January 2014 poll found 56 percent favored building the pipeline and only 41 percent opposed it.

The USA Today poll followed other recent polls reflecting similarly strong support for the pipeline. A December 2013 Bloomberg poll found 56 percent of Americans support the pipeline and only 36 percent oppose it. A September 2013 Pew Research poll found 65 percent of Americans support building the pipeline versus only 30 percent opposing it.

Environmental activist groups have targeted the Keystone pipeline as one of their highest priorities, seeking to block the Canadian oil from entering the United States.

Marita Noon, executive director of EnergyMakesAmericaGreat, noted public support is defying activist money on the issue.

“Despite a herculean effort by environmentalists and billionaire activists like Tom Steyer to turn public opinion against the Keystone pipeline, these polls show Americans can still think for themselves,” said Noon.

Noon pointed out support for the Keystone XL pipeline defies national media reporting.

USA Today, for example, headlined its article announcing the 15 point margin of support for the Keystone pipeline, “Slight majority backs Keystone pipeline.”

Karen Dove (karendove@icloud.com) is a freelance writer in Bradenton, Florida.
Good Nutrition Is the Key to a Healthy Life

Review by Jay Lehr

_The Modern Nutritional Diseases: Heart Disease, Stroke, Type-2 Diabetes, Obesity, Cancer and How to Prevent Them_ is not a book for everyone, just those who desire to live a long and healthy life.

We have all likely heard the phrase “you are what you eat” but probably never took it seriously. In fact, the medical evidence pointing to the relationship between common diseases mentioned in the book’s title and each of our choices in dietary intake is no longer in question.

In the late 1950s, despite weak evidence, it became fashionable to blame animal fat and cholesterol as the major risk factors for cardiovascular heart disease, which led to the promotion of a low-fat, high-carbohydrate, supposedly heart-healthy diet. A large fraction of our population has been eating this “heart healthy” diet now for 40 years, and disease rates should be dropping—but they are not.

This book explains why, in admitted-

ly more detail than the average reader will desire. For this reason I strongly recommend that readers read the last two chapters first (11 and 12), where the authors summarize what everyone needs to know regarding disease prevention through diet and exactly how to achieve it.

Then go back to the beginning, where in Chapter 1 they explain how our diets have so dramatically changed from earlier days when the diseases we face today were less common. In Chapter 2 they explain precisely how the food we eat can cause various diseases.

The idea that dietary deficiencies or overabundance could cause disease is not new, but it’s not very old, either. It was unheard of a century ago, when outbreaks of beriberi and pellagra occurred. The experts then believed only pathogens could cause epidemics. Eventually, scientists learned that polished rice (with the germ removed to prevent rancidity) was the cause of beriberi, and that an excessive intake of corn or maize resulted in pellagra.

Later they discovered scurvy resulted from a vitamin C deficiency and rickets was caused by a vitamin D deficiency.

The Ottobonis tell us, “The dietary changes and disease patterns we are witnessing today resemble those that led to the great epidemics of pellagra and beriberi which occurred more than a century ago.”

“Unlike the classic nutritional diseases,” they write, “modern nutritional diseases are primarily the result of excesses or imbalances among dietary macronutrients—proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids (fats)—rather than a deficiency of a single micronutrient.”

Although scientific writings do not make for enjoyable reading, except for other scientists, the authors note they are necessary in establishing the soundness of the claims being made regarding the modern American diet. Readers likely will learn things they should have known already, such as what makes a solution acidic or basic and what pH means in calculating both.

Although much of the explanation of metabolism, enzymes, and substrates may be foreign to you, it should clearly convince you the authors know what they speak of and are not presenting opinion or conjecture. On the simpler side, if you suffer from indigestion this book will quickly convince you why chewing your food into small pieces will probably relieve your problem while slowing your eating, which will result in eating less.

The Ottobonis also will settle for you the controversy over whether every calorie is like every other calorie, or if in fact they can play different roles in the body’s biochemistry. The latter is true.

We all wonder about the benefits, if any, of vitamin and mineral supplements. In Chapter 5 the authors do an outstanding job of clarifying what makes sense for each of us in this area.

“Happy Birthday, Heartland Institute.

Happy Birthday, Heartland.org”
Happy Birthday, Heartland.

In 1984, The Heartland Institute changed the definition of a think tank.

We were the first think tank created to apply free-market ideas to the problems of a specific state, Illinois.

We quickly expanded our reach throughout the Midwest, and in 1993 we became a national organization.

Today we communicate with all 7,300 of the nation’s state elected officials, helping them solve social and economic problems with public policy ideas that empower people.

Many people helped us get to where we are today. We thank you all.

And we look forward to our next 30 years of fighting for your freedom.
How Much Global Warming?

Each month, Environment & Climate News updates the global averaged satellite measurements of the Earth's temperature. These numbers are important because they are real—not projections, forecasts, or guesses. Global satellite measurements are made from a series of orbiting platforms that sense the average temperature in various atmospheric layers. Here, we present the lowest level, which climate models say should be warming. The satellite measurements are considered accurate to within 0.01°C. The data used to create these graphs can be found on the Internet at http://vortex.nsstc.uah.edu/data/msu/t2lt/uahncdc_lt_5.6.txt

March 2014

The global average temperature for March was 0.17°C above average.

The Northern Hemisphere’s temperature was 0.34°C above average.

The Southern Hemisphere's temperature was average.

219,000 Years of Temperature Variation