Congress, EPA, EDF Ignoring Energy Curtailment and Clean-Coal Oxymoron

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
21 April 2009

Critical Comment - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency hopes that new energy/climate legislation "allows coal-fired power generation to play an important role in a carbon-constrained world." Maintaining carbon-based power has not dropped off the priority list of our "greener" government that can't abandon fossil-fueled "security." This seems like part of an energy-gluttony protection policy rather than a climate-protection strategy.

A bill in Congress called the American Clean Energy and Security Act has two monstrous flaws: it omits the simple idea of cutting back on present energy use to slash greenhouse emissions, and it supports the burning of "clean coal." The fantasy is for a "clean-energy economy" that maintains consumerism and assumes no socioeconomic restructuring due to peak oil or financial meltdown (now becoming a Depression).

Today I spoke with staffers with the two sponsors of the bill: the personal secretary for Chairman Henry A. Waxman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and staffers of Chairman Ed Markey of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

I also spoke with the Environmental Defense Fund energy analyst Nat Keohane, responsible for a news release trumpeting the American Clean Energy and Security Act (below).

After informing each of them that I was on the second day of the Climate Emergency Fast, I told them that a bill that fails to cut energy consumption -- in the belief that we can just make all the energy desired for a consumer economy into the future -- is a tragic error. Apart from the unrealistic nature of that notion, greenhouse gases must be slashed now.

I asked them all if they had ever seen a mountain-top removal coal mining site. They had not. I said that I had, and that if they saw one they would understand why coal can never be a clean energy source.

They said they were willing to receive email on my concerns, and to pass them along to those most involved in the legislation. I urge others to contact them with the same message. However, implementing a climate-protecting lifestyle -- that denies the mega-corporations our financial support -- is more promising than legislation.

I also mentioned to the above parties that with my long oil-industry analysis background and with Culture Change I've learned there is no substitute for the cheap oil that is gone.

On April 17, 2009 Ed Markey announced that the EPA's Global Warming Finding means the "Planet is in Danger, It's Now Up to Congress." Markey is one of the better members of Congress by far, in terms of his exemplifying the improvement over the former regime of Republican denialists of climate change. Yet, without the citizenry minding the store, we see that political compromise yields intolerable non-solutions for climate protection -- under the guise that economic growth and energy consumption can and must come first.

Markey's committee has a website, globalwarming.house.gov, which I am assured is the best place to give your input to him. As for Henry Waxman, one of the lone heroes on Capitol Hill over the years (regarding pollution, human rigths,

etc.), his best contact is waxman.staff@mail.house.gov.

For more background on Culture Change's position on energy curtailment and car-free living to fight climate extinction, see our report Bill McKibben and the Technofixers' Tragic Myopia.

The Fast for Our Future, formerly known as the Climate Emergency Fast, is described on our website: Join the Big Fast for the Climate by Ted Glick, Jere Locke, Jan Lundberg.

- Jan Lundberg

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EPA Analysis: Cap Carbon, Cut Oil Addiction for About Dime a Day

(Washington – April 21, 2009) A just-released analysis from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says the cap on carbon pollution proposed by Reps. Henry Waxman and Ed Markey can be achieved for as little as $98 per year per household – or roughly 12 cents per person per day.

“For as little as a dime a day we can solve climate change, invest in a clean energy future, and save billions in imported oil,” said EDF Director of Economic Policy and Analysis Nat Keohane, PhD, who will be testifying before the House Energy and Commerce Committee tomorrow on the economic benefits of the American Clean Energy and Security Act.

“EPA’s analysis confirms what all credible economic models have found, which is that we can easily afford to reduce carbon pollution,” Keohane said. “In fact, the most expensive climate policy is not having one at all. In the real future – not the fantasy land that opponents of action live in -- continuing along the so-called business as usual path will incur huge costs from leaving climate change and oil addiction unaddressed."

EPA’s new analysis shows that the market-based cap on carbon contained in the American Clean Energy and Security Act can be met for $98 to $140 per year for the average American household. Those estimates only consider the costs of reducing global warming pollution, and do not take into account the benefits of action.

"The analysis clearly refutes unfounded suggestions by opponents of an emissions cap that household impacts would be much higher. Those misguided estimates are off by orders of magnitude,” Keohane said. “Opponents of action will always try to cherry-pick the numbers and use models with biased assumptions. The EPA analysis sets the standard for economic analysis, using the most credible, transparent, and peer-reviewed models available."

EPA’s analysis is online at US EPA.

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Environmental Defense Fund, a leading national nonprofit organization, represents more than 500,000 members. Since 1967, Environmental Defense Fund has linked science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships to create breakthrough solutions to the most serious environmental problems. For more information, visit www.edf.org

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The Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming website:

globalwarming.house.gov Phone: (202) 225-4012. They received the email version of the above Critical Comment from Culture Change, with this greeting:

"I am a well known oil-industry analyst who defected to the environmentalist side in 1988, and would be happy to be of help for hearings or consultation. The following [appended] has been widely distributed. Please respond to me as soon as possible.
Thanks, JL"

Inconvenient background:

"Climate Activists Invade DC Offices of Environmental Defense" by Rising Tide - North America, Dec. 1, 2008

(Daughter of ED Founder Accuses Group of Pushing False Solutions to Climate Change)
culturechange.org

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