

The Arena

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Jun. 26, 2009

Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [David Mark](#)

The American Clean Energy and Security Act: yea or nay?

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Steve Steckler

Chairman and founder, Infrastructure Management Group (IMG) :

Watching Waxman-Markey at birth makes the manufacture of sausage look positively appetizing by comparison. Every

environmentalist and economist in the country ought to be appalled by its provisions and embarrassed to let it see the light of day. It is a legislative monster of such horrifying contradiction and imminent danger to its cause that it would give Mary Shelley nightmares, just as it ought to do to any senator that dares countenance its survival after it stalks away from the House.

Faced with the option between a much simpler carbon tax and stitching together incompatible body parts of greenhouse gas controls, the House has chosen a Modern Prometheus with brain damage.

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Daniel F. Becker

Director, Safe Climate Campaign :

(With James Gerstenzang) Unfortunately the Energy-Climate bill has more holes than cheese.



Chairmen Waxman and Markey and Speaker Pelosi tried mightily. Despite long odds, they came up with a bill that begins to cut emissions, pushes the states to start shifting to renewable energy sources, and orders new coal plants to capture 50% of their carbon emissions.

But: The standards for the emissions don't come near the 17% claimed by supporters. Even if they did, they would be far less than what scientists say must be achieved to avoid dire consequences. The bill's renewable energy provisions fall far short of technology can provide. The requirement for the cleaner coal plants wouldn't take effect until 2025—and that technology doesn't exist. And the bill revokes EPA's authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from coal plants. That's a step backwards.

The administration already has authority to act and many opportunities to cut emissions under existing law. Congress should write a prescription strong enough to fight the disease.

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Daniel M. Kammen

Professor of Energy, University of California, Berkeley :

Imported fossil fuel energy costs the United States roughly the same amount each year as the TARP program. These purchases constitute

the largest component of our foreign debt. Instead, we could be putting this \$800 billion to work creating jobs and industries, and investing in education and training, instead of literally pouring these funds down oil and gas wells overseas. The American Clean Energy and Security Act is an exceptionally important statement and moment. It essentially encompasses recognition -- long overdue -- of the need to treat the environment with respect by establishing a price for pollution, and a recognition that we can use the market to help spur innovation.

Yes, the Waxman-Markey bill is complex and extensive, but it signals both a critical need to clean our energy economy, and a chance to create in the United States the companies that can lead the next Industrial Revolution. It is not a perfect bill, but absolutely should be passed.

See [this report](#) we released to the European Union last week.

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Georges C. Benjamin

Exec. Dir. American Public Health Association :

Is this a trick question? Of course Congress should vote Yea! Climate change represents one of the greatest threats to human health that exists

today. Increases in extreme weather events, changes in vector borne diseases, problems with adequate drinking water, and poor air quality resulting in more serious respiratory conditions like asthma are a direct result of climate change.

We can however, mitigate these health effects and develop tools to adapt effectively to this

problem but we have to do in now. H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 would help improve the public health response to climate change by requiring the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a national strategic action plan for addressing the impacts of climate change on public health.

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Roger Pilon

Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Nay on cap and trade, and on the whole gamut of proposals that have been offered to address “global warming” – an issue that in

recent years has more clearly divided reason and passion than virtually any other before the public. This is not the place for details. Suffice it to say that study after study of late has shown the “science” of global warming to be all but rubbish – in the tradition of phlogiston theory, phrenology, eugenics, and so much else that enjoyed a wave of popularity, only to be shown later to be nonsense. Yet the “economics” of the zealots, if anything, is even shoddier, illustrating anew the power of the will to believe, and the truth of Dr. Johnson’s observation that the love of reason is among the faintest of men’s passions.

In Europe, we’re seeing how cap and trade works in the real world. **In the latest from Australia**, however, we’re seeing a legislature having serious second thoughts about going down the cap-and-trade road. Perhaps our own Congress will come to its senses too. Hope springs eternal.

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Robert N. Stavins

Professor of Business and Government, Harvard :

Like any legislation, the Waxman-Markey bill has its share of flaws, but its medium and long-term targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that lead to climate change are sensible, and the central mechanism it uses to achieve those targets -- an economy-wide, comprehensive cap-and-trade system -- is, for the most part, well designed. With some exceptions, the bill's cap-and-trade system will achieve meaningful reductions in carbon dioxide emissions at minimal cost to the economy (for more on this, see: <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/analysis/stavins>).

If the bill is approved by the full House, and the action moves this summer or fall to the Senate, then the greatest attention and the greatest skepticism should be directed not to the cap-and-trade mechanism, which is well designed in Waxman-Markey (apart from the absence of a safety-valve or price collar, elements which the Senate should seriously consider including), but rather to the other elements of the legislation, which are highly problematic. While Titles 3 and 4 of Waxman-Markey (essentially the cap-and-trade system) are -- on balance -- sensible, and will result in meaningful emissions reductions cost effectively, Titles 1 and 2 are filled with a host of conventional standards, which (under the cap-and-trade umbrella) will have minimal environmental benefits, but will constrain action, limit flexibility, and

thereby have the unintended consequence of driving up compliance costs. That's the soft under-belly of this legislation that needs to be surgically removed.

A broader question is whether the United States should be moving towards the enactment of a domestic climate policy before a sensible, post-Kyoto international agreement has been negotiated and ratified. Such an international agreement should include not only the countries of the industrialized world, but also the key, rapidly-growing economies of the developing world -- China, India, Brazil, Korea, Mexico, South Africa, and Indonesia -- which are and will increasingly be major contributors to emissions. It is natural for such a question to be raised about the very notion of the U.S. adopting a policy to help address what is fundamentally a global problem. The environmental benefits of any single nation's reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are spread worldwide, unlike the costs. This creates the possibility that some countries will want to "free ride" on the efforts of others. It's for this very reason that international cooperation is required.

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Rep. Louise Slaughter

Congresswoman (D-N.Y.) :

The vote by the House Rules Committee gets Congress one step closer toward reversing climate change and making this country

more secure by reducing our debilitating reliance on foreign oil supplies. By eliminating our dependence on oil from the Middle East, we are making Americans safer. I am so glad we are past the Bush Administration's 'drill baby drill' chant, which accomplished nothing. This bill actually makes smart investments in alternative energy, in energy efficiency and changing the equation with a cap-and-trade program that will help clean our air. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this rule today and quickly move this legislation through the House and Senate so that President Obama can sign it into law.

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Joseph Romm

Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress :

“Aye” is the only possible vote for a member of Congress who cares about their children and grandchildren – and their own place in history .

This is arguably the single most important vote a member will ever cast. If we fail to stop catastrophic global warming, future generations will not care what we have done on issues like health care, the deficit, and Iraq.

They will be dealing with the staggering consequences of our myopia and judge harshly all who blocked the necessary action.

The latest science is clear. The recent NOAA-led interagency report on U.S. climate impacts

warns of scorching 9 to 11°F warming over most of inland U.S. by 2090 with Kansas above 90°F some 120 days a year — and that isn't the worst case, it's business as usual.

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Nolan McCarty

Professor Politics and Public Affairs, Wilson School of Public and Intl. Affairs :

Nay. And its not that I oppose the taxing of carbon. I am just not convinced that cap-and-trade in general or the Waxman-Markey scheme in particular is a very good way of doing it. First, a cap-and-trade system is much more prone to political manipulation and interest group politics than a direct tax on carbon. Second, at a time of very large deficits, it seems irresponsible to give away 85% of the credits for free. Ideally, the revenue of a 100% auction should be used to offset the deficit and to reduce other forms of taxation.

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Christine Pelosi

Attorney, author and Democratic activist :

Yea - in the aftermath of a change election, amid the ongoing tension of incrementalists versus transformers, the American Clean Energy and Security Act is a visionary step toward transformation: developing a clean energy economy, promoting energy security, and preserving our planet.

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James Carafano

Heritage Foundation, Defense and Homeland Security :

Waxman-Markey Could Kill Us All

One of the perverse effects of combating climate change legislation is that it could cause wars. If people want to get serious about how global warming affects national security, they ought to start studying the impact of all the proposed rules and regulations, like Waxman-Markey, that nations are adopting to combat green house gases. These rules may well stifle economic growth, create energy scarcity, and make fragile states even more fragile...accelerate resource competition, spur conflict, make free states less capable of defending their own interests and protecting freedom. Do I sound a little chicken-little? No, I am just chicken of the long-term dramatic detrimental impact on US competitiveness that will likely cause a lot more problems than adopting to the environment in which we live—and allowing free people and free markets to find the best answers to improve the human condition, protect sustainable growth, and save the planet.



Patrick Dorinson

Commentator and Publisher of The Cowboy Libertarian :

An emphatic "Nay!" I have seen this movie before and it has a very bad ending. My colleagues here in the Arena are all a hell of a lot smarter than I am when it comes to shaping and analyzing public policy implications on major issues. But what I don't see expressed in the opinions here is anyone who has ever worked in the energy industry or has any idea about the enormous practical challenges that this legislation will entail if it passes.

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Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce :

Nay

In order to be successful a solution for addressing global greenhouse gas emissions has to accomplish many things both here at home and abroad. Domestic legislation must balance environmental objectives with the need for economic growth and job creation; promote technology development and deployment; reduce barriers to the development of climate-friendly energy sources; promote energy efficiency; and implement appropriate steps to address the international nature of global emissions. Internationally we need consensus on a treaty which sets binding commitments for all major emitters—developed and developing—while ensuring that every nation retains the flexibility to attain those commitments however it chooses.

Simply put H.R. 2454 would not achieve these goals. It has major flaws which must be addressed before being passed into law. The bill fails to ensure that an adequate amount of replacement energy is available to compensate for the bill's declining cap on fossil fuel emissions. Moreover, H.R. 2454 is not conditional on an international treaty which removes any leverage U.S. negotiators have in international climate change negotiations, and would put domestic industries at a competitive disadvantage.

The U.S. Chamber strongly supports comprehensive legislation to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases while providing for a strong American economy. This should be the goal, and it is an achievable one. H.R. 2454 should be rejected and Congress should continue to work on legislation that ensures that cost-effective and reliable renewable and alternative energy sources are developed and deployed to smooth a transition to a low-carbon energy future, including sources like nuclear, clean coal, and other emerging energy technologies. Legislation which also addresses the significant regulatory, legal, economic, technical, scientific, and environmental barriers to a successful implementation.

For all of the rhetoric, climate change is not a bomb in a suitcase which needs to be addressed quickly, by any means possible, damn the consequences. It is a long-term problem

which deserves a serious, sustainable solution which doesn't cripple our economy – we need to take the time to do this right.

Expensive and ineffective legislation built on the ideological beliefs of narrow special-interests to the detriment of the public good is not change. This bill is just more of the Washington status quo.

See "[Charting Waxman-Markey](#)"

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David Biespiel

Poet and writer, Attic Writers Workshop :

Yea. Let's not pretend this is a great leap for climate change prevention.

It's not. It's a small step. Too small. But it is a great leap for American capitalism and energy independence and for initializing a renewable energy revolution in the U.S. that will make America the world leader in 21st century energy creation and innovation. So while it's not the best legislation in the history of the United States House of Representatives, members should pass it, followed by the Senate's likely more watered-down version, reconcile them, get it signed into law, and then strengthen the whole thing piece by piece later.

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Grover Norquist

President of Americans for Tax Reform :

The Waxman-Markey legislation raises taxes on energy production and use in the United States--cap and trade--with the stated goal of

making energy so much more expensive that Americans will not be able to afford to heat their homes in the winter or cool them in the summer as well as they did last year.

It will raise the cost of gasoline for all Americans so that Americans can travel less. So much for the Democrat promise they wouldn't screw those earning less than \$250,000 a year. We know that rich folks like Al Gore, whose massive energy consumption in his Tennessee "house" has been exposed on the internet, can afford higher energy prices. Average Americans will pay with a lower standard of living, fewer jobs and slower growth of the American economy.

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David Boaz

Executive VP, Cato Institute :

Nay, nay, a thousand times nay! The ever-growing Waxman-Markey bill -- 646 pages, 932



pages, 1201 pages -- attempts to impose huge cost increases on American families' consumption of energy without openly imposing a tax increase. But Martin Feldstein of Harvard writes, "The tax imposed by the cap and trade system is therefore equivalent to raising the family's income tax by about 50 percent." And as the Washington Post noted, the bill includes a great deal of little-discussed federal regulation from light bulbs to local building codes, even though the economic argument for schemes like "cap and trade" is that market incentives are more efficient than command-and-control regulation.

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Mary Frances Berry

Professor of American Social Thought and History, U. Penn. :

Yes, the Energy bill will pass when voted on in the House. It is so stuffed with compromises needed to get enough votes that it is no more than a start- and in a sense may be counterproductive if the public believes the problem is solved. That's usually the way with legislative half or should I say quarter measures.

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Karen Kerrigan

President, Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council :

Nay. It is wholly inappropriate for the U.S. House to be moving forward with legislation that imposes massive new energy costs on small business owners and the economy. Thousands upon thousands of small firms are barely surviving. The consequences of restricting energy use and driving energy costs higher will be disproportionately more painful for small businesses. The most important job for Congress right now is to minimize damage to the U.S. economy and help our nation's job creators. Instead, Waxman-Markey will pile on more costs and pain.

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Joel Kotkin

Author :

I would vote no. This is an ugly contraption only a rent-seeking businessman, wall street speculator or contribution-hungry politician would want. If you believe in the theology and importance of global warming -oops, i mean climate change - then this is clearly insufficient. If you do not, it's a pointless exercise that damages large parts of the economy. Under any circumstances imposing these costs without doing the same to china, russia and other big emitters is economically flawed, to say the least. There are better ways to get to the goals of cleaner energy and less dependence on foreign fuels, like

positive incentives for business to clean their emissions (as exist in denmark), or even an across the board carbon tax, which at least would be less susceptible to washington-wall street manipulation.

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Charles W. Calomiris

Professor of Financial Institutions, Columbia :

As economists Terry Anderson and Gary Libecap have shown in their **incisive, factual, and balanced analysis**, this bill will do significant harm to the economy and accomplish little that is worthwhile in the process. To quote those authors (): "Our major points are (1) that the administration has not been candid with the American public about the costs of these initiatives or about the likelihood of their ability to improve the environment; (2) that these initiatives are likely to encourage protectionism, reduce international trade, and hence slow the recovery of the U.S. and world economies; and (3) that slower growth will undermine environmental improvements at home and abroad."

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Rory Cooper

Dir., Strategic Communications, Heritage Foundation :

Nay to the largest tax increase in American history. If you support this bill, you support millions of lost jobs, trillions in lost income, 50-90 percent higher energy prices, stunning increases in the national debt all for undetectable changes in global temperature. And you support special interest payoffs which are making this vote even close.

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Julian E. Zelizer

Professor of History and Public Affairs, Princeton :

Clean energy and energy independence is like health care. It is not about yea or nay but about how and when. These are two huge structural problems that must be addressed soon. While some advocates hoped for a cleaner bill, Waxman-Markey offers comprehensive framework for negotiations in the House and the Senate. The key will be to avoid the fate of Carter's energy initiative, which became so watered down by the Senate, following quick House passage, that it was ineffective.

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Mary Frances Berry

Professor of American Social Thought and History, U. Penn. :

Yea

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Dean Baker

Co-director, Center for Economic and Policy Research :

This is not a great bill in that it gives away far too much to the oil and coal industry, it wastes money on biofuels that won't reduce emissions, and it relies on trading mechanism that is much less efficient than a simple tax. Nonetheless, if it doesn't get through, it is difficult to see how anything else will pass, so the alternative is between doing nothing on global warming or supporting Waxman-Markey. That means that anyone who gives a damn about the future of the world has no choice but to vote for this bill. It is worth noting that the folks complaining about the economic costs and job loss that could result from this bill have never said anything about items that impose much greater costs on society. For example, the Center for Economic and Policy Research commissioned Global Insight to project the economic impact of an increase in military spending comparable to the cost of the Iraq War (1 percent of GDP). After 20 years, the reduction in GDP was about 0.6 percent of GDP.

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Timothy Stoltzfus Jost

Law Professor at the Washington and Lee University :

Global warming is the most serious crisis facing our country. In terms of its seriousness as a threat to our national security, any danger posed to us by Iran, North Korea, Al Qaeda or any other military power is insignificant by comparison. This legislation, as best I understand it, is a feeble attempt to begin addressing this problem. I would much prefer an across-the-board carbon tax. But it is a start, and its defeat would be strong statement that our Congress is incapable of rising above immediate and parochial self interest to attempt to save this planet for our grandchildren and their children.

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Bradley A. Blakeman

Republican Strategist, CEO, Kent Strategies LLC, Georgetown Professor :

Nay! This bill is a disaster for jobs and the economy. The Brookings Institution says "Cap-And-Trade" will cause job losses. The National Black Chamber of Commerce said that the National Energy Tax will cause job losses and wage reductions. The President said we should be more like Spain with regard to their "Green

Economy". The only problem is that Spain generates almost 30 percent of their power from the wind. Under the Obama bill we will generate less than 1 percent. Spain destroys 2.2 jobs for every "Green Job" it generates. The President admits that "Cap-And-Trade" will mean "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket", because by capping green house gasses, coal plants will have to retrofit thus, the increased costs of operation must be passed along to consumers. We could be the cleanest most energy efficient nation on the face of the planet and it will not mean a thing globally, if other nations like China, India and Russia aren't as "responsible" as we are. The problem is this bill will not make a meaningful global difference and will spend us further into the poor house. Why? To make us feel good? To make us feel responsible? All this at great cost to jobs and our already weak economy. This is nuts.

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Greg Dworkin

Contributing Editor, Daily Kos :

Yea. 75% of the public wants emissions addressed. Congress generally gets one shot at it, and this is it.

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Steve Steckler

Chairman and founder, Infrastructure Management Group (IMG) :

Greg, you may be right about "one shot" at legislation, but your underlying argument (which is the same as almost all of the "yea" votes in today's Arena) that the cause is so righteous that a symbolic train wreck is better than nothing, is beneath your usually incisive commentary. The consequences of greenhouse gas emissions, whatever they really are, are many decades away, and there is time to get it right. Moreover, cap-and-trade is more likely to be an obstacle to future improvements, as it slides on to the regulatory implementation process and the closed doors of future House committees, where it will inevitably become even more of a lobbyists picnic. After all, monster, once born, only grow into bigger monsters.

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David Biespiel

Poet and writer, Attic Writers Workshop :

Steven and Greg, I'm totally in agreement...with both of you. The bill in the House is a pigsty of legislating hand-wringing (not sure where that analogy when awry but you get my point).

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Nancy Kirk (guest)

Writer , NY:

Guy Sorman, the noted French economist, says it didn't work in Western Europe. If it didn't work there, where the elites are more civic minded than they are in the U.S., then it won't work here. Simplicity is the way to go: a carbon tax. To repeat an important theme: the state and federal governments must prepare for jobs that will be lost by retraining.

Justin Door (guest)

Engineer , TX:

The American Clean Energy and Security Act. What a disaster. This bill not only will destroy valuable aspects of the American economy, but is a truly regressive tax. The people that spend the most on energy are America's poorest, and rates have already been increasing. By incorporating this tax, it will be even more difficult for people in the lower strata of society to elevate themselves. Also, the problem cap and trade is trying to address is still not entirely proven. Global Warming models suffered from severe temperature projection flaws, some of which were caused by miscalculations by the Y2K bug. There's nothing wrong with clean coal, wind power, or clean energy investments. But doing so while crippling an already staggering economy is a dead end - hopefully not for the economy as a whole, but certainly a dead end from a political perspective.

Jonathan Wolfman (guest)

Writer/Editor , MD:

I'll never fully understand commentators who say, in effect, that the United States should not start important environmental change because less wealthy nations won't be able to follow suit overnight. Mr. Blakeman has been arguing this line for a long time on this page, particularly in regard to China; it just makes little sense. Of course China (and India and other nations desperately trying to middle-class themselves in a very short time) won't significantly reduce their carbon footprints very soon. When I lived in China twenty-some years ago, and as everyone who has been there knows, Chinese, particularly in the north, wore (and still wear) small, oval white masks as they pedal through their cities every day, particularly in winter. They've made a choice, similar to the choice(s) we made as we industrialised. (Maybe Americans should have resorted to the masks, too. I don't know.) We don't begrudge our own having done what was necessary to build a thriving economy; we tend, sometimes, to begrudge others' attempts. The short-sightedness of Mr. Blakeman's (and many others') position is two-fold. First, if we do enact tough environmental standards we'll force the private economy to come up with methods to make that more and more safe and efficient; that's the way capitalism works. (Republicans know this; they're just too often unwilling to take whatever initial hits change brings despite the fact that they know the long term is likely positive.) Second, whatever technologies we develop that will make the environment safer under new rules will be sold to up-and-coming economies and so the lag time between our having a better environment and, say, when the Chinese do, will be shortened. Finally, the critics are suggesting that there will be no significant environmental benefit to Americans until all

industrial economies are in a place to enact Cap & Trade legislation of their own. This 'Undermine The Possible with Perfection' argument isn't worthy of anyone let alone a major American political party and its knee-jerk defenders.

Karl Knapstein (guest)

Service Tech , CO:

I am all for a "cap", it is the "trade" part that concerns me. The "Traders", the Wall Street typhoons of industry, got us into this mess and now Congress expects them to control our new "Green Revolution"?!! Has anyone actually read this bill? I am also for a Carbon tax that funds wind,solar and electric forms of transportation, NOT Wall Street. Or is this a very dangerous power play for the control of Congress? The job loss rhetoric is a little over blown, fear-mongering, I think. Yea or nay? Let us flip a coin, Heads I win,Tails you lose.....

Phil Gonzalez (guest)

retired , TX:

Cap and trade? More like smoke and mirrors. Other than making a point to the world that this country is going to take the high road in emission reductions. What other countries are going to do the same? Just like the stimulus and the health care crisis, cap and trade is yet another crisis President Obama has pulled out of his hat of crisis which is going to do nothing but raise taxes on the people. How many times are we going to give President Obama the green light because of his one liners. It's the right thing to do. We have to do something. Now is the time to act. Let's get pass the recession before we do anything and see if something President Obama gets his hands on works. President Obama was so sure and the party of "No" was so wrong about the stimulus, after the unemployment rate hit 9%, he was forced to admit along with Biden that they were wrong. Once again, President Obama is giving the same lip service about cap and trade. He's so sure about everything he wants. Why hasn't President Obama talked about how much it's going to cost the average household per year for this bill. People couldn't buy health care because they couldn't afford it and how are they suppose to afford higher light bills. This has a more direct impact on the people's daily lives in what they use in their homes. There has to be amendments to the bill that cancels the law unless China and India adopt similar standards. Amendment that cancels the law if the average price of electricity in a residential sector increases by 10% or more. Amendment that cancels the law if gas prices reach \$5 per gallon. Amendment that cancels the law if the unemployment rate for the prior year reaches 15% as a result of the law like in Spain. Amendment labeling energy bill, food, and manufactured products and fuels with the price this law has on items. All part of President Obama's transparency. When 85 percent or more of polluting permits are to be given away free of cost to the electricity sector, it has to be seen as nothing but smoke and mirrors. If the GAO claims it's virtually impossible to verify whether carbon offsets represents real emissions reductions, then what are we doing other than taking the high road because this country has been accused of being the biggest polluter in the world when we know it's not correct.

Lee (MMBJack) McCarty (guest)

Research Solar Dome Architecture Electricity Generation , NV:

When in doubt a good policy will prove to be going to Dean Baker for his great commentaries - and in this instance on Clean Alternative Energy about as close to the truth as one can get out of the Congress at this stage. An equally reliable source of analysis (in the form of a direct opposite) you can count on to contradict any and all efforts by the Obama Administration and the Democratic majority Congress - if "Nay" is your answer as typified by Bradley A. Blakeman for the general Republican policy of "Anything But Obama". I participated and asked Marc Muro of Brookings recently at the Arena the question related to his strong advocacy of the concept of building 20 to 30 Research Energy Hubs and his hopes for at least \$30 Billion a year for expediting pure research into many potential Clean Alternative Energy breakthroughs - that will be required to solve the Energy and Climate Change crisis we and the world face now. Then move quickly to commercial production and new jobs by means of American Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the most vital direction that would open up the potential for a true All Electricity Energy System for America - and by exporting these products and concepts around the world. Such a world will be a far better Future World. This new Energy can happen in a much shorter time frame than imagined by the authors of Waxman-Markey. But they do include 8 such Research Energy Hubs in the legislation. Solar Dome Architecture is the key and as I proposed some time ago at the Arena will prove to be the source of limitless Electricity and Hot Water Community Systems of the Future World.

Kristina Bolkeny (guest)

Legal Asst. , FL:

Of all the contributors today, I am more inclined to agree with Dean Baker since I find him to be the most skeptical progressive on the Arena. I also found Steve Steckler's post a few weeks ago on the issue of a carbon tax pretty compelling from a practical standpoint. Admittedly, I know almost nothing on the issue of cap and trade or this new legislation but I do hope that the short term economic impact will be considered with significance with regard to timing of its implementation. Will the process of retrofitting and conversion of industry protocols relative to compliance create jobs and for what sector? Will certain regions suffer higher utility bills than others and can those regions withstand any projected increase, particularly in this economy? The proponents for a carbon tax don't discuss how that would effect gas prices at the pump or commerce relative to transportation and shipping cost increases which ultimately filter down to the price of everyday goods and services? How many average people have a clue what cap and trade means or the key points of the 09 Clean Air Act? While I tend to favor simplicity over convulsion, complex and valid arguments can be framed for easier comprehension while still being specific enough to grasp the legislation's long term forecast. I do agree that procrastination under the pretext that proposed changes are not foolproof is a catatonic approach to progress, paradoxically speaking. .

Lee Olyer (guest)

Engineer , CO:

What's the over/under on how much of this bill is devoted to creating new Nuclear power plants? (My bet is less than 1%). The only thing this bill is going to make the US a 'leader' in is crippling self-inflicted regulation. The Chinese have to be shaking their heads in disbelief at their fortune!

Michael Hussey (guest)

investments , NC:

Nay. Is there any evidence -- any! -- that China is going to cave to western pressure on this? Any member of congress voting for this bill should be required to answer this question. This is not "undermining the possible with perfection" -- it is pointing out the lunacy of a legislative process that boils down to throwing something against the wall to see if it sticks.

Allan Pangallo (guest)

Sales , CT:

NAY

Linda Conley (guest)

Homemaker/Reader , OR:

Ah yes, I am here again visiting the very sunny and very hot mid-section of agricultural California, a state that through the years has been systematically destroyed by liberals and their tax and spend policies. Food prices: off the wall. Where once food and over-the-counter medicine were not taxed here, now they are. Sometimes the tax on food and medicine is as high as 10%! Not to worry: the liberals nation-wide have our health and interests in mind. They know what is best for each and every one of us. What we should be eating (see the FOTUS for more info on that.) What temp to put our air-conditioners on here where the outside temps soar to 108 degrees! Nothing is left off the table for the tax-crazed liberals of this state and their endless ideas on what is best for us and Planet Earth. The environmentalists, too, all part of the liberal tax and spend package, played a decisive role in destroying the economy of this state that was once the third largest economy in the world. The environmentalists and their in-your-face, in-your-home regulations. Businesses can no longer survive here with regulations and taxes. Now the ram-rod lib environmentalists are in the House in D.C. masterminding yet another way to be in our lives to take our money to fund their programs. Now I believe it's called climate change. Another cute euphemism but perfectly absurd. Climate changes my friends. And that infamous cap and trade program. The doomsayers tell us Mother Earth will die without this program but most of us realize this latest covert tax is nothing more than another way to enrich the programs of the liberal left. This will be political suicide for the

liberals who long ago shut down any honest debate about global warming, the folks who you know, believe so mightily in free-speech. So the country at large I hear it said over and over again, follows the sorry path of California sooner or later and I believe it is the 26th-ish of July that California will declare bankruptcy. All those over-taxed -to -death citizens and still, the state politicians cannot manage the state's bank account. Do we honestly think the liberals in Congress and in the President's Chair will do better?

Phil Orisek (guest)

Physician , CA:

NAAAYYYY!!!! This so called "Climate change bill" is a farce and a nation killer. CO2 is a greenhouse gas which plants and trees need to live. It makes up 0.038% of our atmosphere. Yes folks, that is correct, 38 thousandths of a percent. The suspected "human" component is 3% of that. There is no scientific evidence that proves we have had any effect on climate. If there is a slight increase in CO2 levels, why are we getting cooler? The earth has been in a 10 year cooling cycle so the whole global warming talk is a manufactured myth. This whole bill is a giant sham and a trojan horse to tax and enslave the nation. How any sound of mind individual can vote for this nightmare is beyond me.

Anthony Noel (guest)

business columnist :

DISCLAIMER: I HAVE NOT YET READ THIS LEGISLATION. However, I'll say this: If the Chamber of Commerce dislikes it because it goes too far and environmentalists dislike it because it doesn't go far enough, it's probably a good start. No legislation is perfect, but I'm in favor of anything that provides a concrete framework for making us more environmentally responsible. The days of raping the earth for commercial gain have been numbered for a long time. Many industries have accepted that and cleaned up their acts without prompting. If the remaining polluters need a push, so be it. And just a point of fact, Rory Cooper: You and yours have cried, "Biggest tax increase ever!" so many times in the past that nobody of consequence is listening anymore. Last October, Capitalism As We Knew It (and as you continue to defend it) FAILED. F-A-I-L-E-D. Get over it. Getting our economy going again will not happen without a serious infusion of MY and everyone else's money. I've accepted that and moved on, with one caveat: From here on out, companies doing business in MY country will be accountable - to me and my fellow citizens, to the world community, and to our environment. Arguments that other countries are polluting are not germane. Other countries torture people, but not... oh, wait a minute. Other countries lack universal health coverage, but not... oh, right. My point (for those bright lights at the Heritage Foundation who remain in their singular state of darkness) is that all our bluster about moral imperatives is baseless unless follow it ourselves. That's just what the Obama administration is trying to do.



Daniel F. Becker

Director, Safe Climate Campaign :

Unfortunately the Energy-Climate bill has more holes than cheese.

Chairmen Waxman and Markey and Speaker Pelosi tried mightily. Despite long odds, they came up with a bill that begins to cut emissions, pushes the states to start shifting to renewable energy sources, and orders new coal plants to capture 50% of their carbon emissions.

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