

Economic bloodletting

Some proposed energy and environmental policies are akin to eighteenth century medicine

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Doctors once prescribed bloodletting to eliminate impurities that they believed caused disease. When George Washington was stricken with malaria and a throat infection in December 1799, his physicians bled a quart of blood from his weakened body, and followed that with laxatives and emetics.

A few hours later, Washington died – from a cure far worse than the disease.

Today, our nation is in a recession. Millions are unemployed. The financial services, housing and stock market meltdown has hammered incomes, consumer spending, savings, profits, tax revenues, charity, remittances and foreign aid in America and across the globe.

Congress and the White House have responded with promises to spend \$1 trillion or more, to bail out banks, homeowners, taxpayers, auto makers and other beleaguered groups; fix roads and bridges; and weatherize buildings, develop renewable energy and create “green jobs.”

The economic situation is so dire, says President-Elect Obama, that we can’t worry about deficits. The “patient” needs a large “blood infusion” stimulus to “get the economy moving.”

But many worry that the proposed infusion is artificial blood: government loans, grants, mandates and debts. Reduced taxes and regulations would stimulate far more private sector initiatives and jobs, argue many economists; but those curatives enjoy limited support among current political leaders.

Worse, there is a real danger that the stimulus actions will be followed by the economic equivalent of medical practices that killed our first president.

Precluding access to oil, gas, coal and uranium would deprive America of fuels that produce 93% of the energy that makes jobs, living standards, food, health and transportation possible. It would force us to continue spending our children’s inheritance on imported energy – and forego trillions of dollars in leasing, royalty and tax revenues that could help pay for stimulus, defense, renewable energy, low-income energy assistance and other programs.

Some want even more extreme bloodletting administered in the name of global warming. Mr. Obama wants a stringent cap-and-trade program, to slash carbon dioxide “impurities” by 80% by 2050. He says any company trying to build a coal-fired generating plant will be “bankrupted” by greenhouse gas fees.

If Congress fails to act expeditiously on cap-and-trade, the Obama Administration could unleash the Environmental Protection Agency’s newly proposed rules – and regulate virtually our entire economy under the Clean Air Act. Those [rules](#) would immediately impose even more draconian restrictions on carbon dioxide and methane released from almost every office and apartment building, power plant, factory, farm, hospital, school, car maker and dealership, train and airline in the nation.

Two dozen mostly Southern and Midwestern states depend on coal for 47-98% of their electricity. Their utility bills are half of what business and residential consumers pay in many less-coal-dependent states. That translates into cheaper manufacturing, more jobs and better living standards. Moreover, modern power plants emit 95% less pollution per unit of energy than 1970s-era plants.

Raise the rates – and manufacturers, businesses, communities and families will be battered. Destroy our wealth-generating capability, and there will be little left to redistribute or invest in renewable energy.

Restrict hydrocarbon energy use, and millions will lose their jobs. Black, Hispanic and Native American families will see their economic opportunities and civil rights rolled back. Many families will be forced to choose between heat, food, medicine, gasoline, and saving for college and retirement. People will die, if they cannot afford proper heating, air-conditioning, nutrition and medical care.

A cap-and-trade bill like Warner-Lieberman would cost 3 million U.S. manufacturing jobs and \$7 trillion in lost GDP, as the bills slap increasingly heavy taxes on hydrocarbon energy, the [Heritage Center](#) for Data Analysis calculates. The EPA regulatory regime would be even more onerous and costly.

Either action would drain the energy lifeblood from our economy, prolonging the recession and killing jobs, for little environmental gain.

Renewable-energy economic superpowers are as rare as body-building vegans. America needs a balanced energy diet, to ensure security and prosperity: raw “green” energy vegetables like wind and solar, proteins and carbohydrates from hydrocarbons and nuclear, and a full allotment of iron-rich energy lifeblood.

Some say we are heading for climate disaster. But thousands of scientists vigorously disagree. A US Senate Minority [Report](#) features 650 climate experts (including many current and former UN-IPCC scientists) who say there is no evidence to support climate cataclysm hypotheses.

Computer models and worst-case scenarios are not evidence, they stress – and not one model has accurately predicted climate conditions even one year into the future, much less fifty. Actual, measured temperature, hurricane, flood, drought and sea level changes are completely within the realm of observed variability over the centuries.

Satellite measurements show that planetary warming stopped in 1998, even as global CO2 levels continue to rise. Even eliminating US greenhouse gases would reduce 2050 global temperatures by only 0.2 degrees F, assuming CO2 controls our Earth’s constantly changing climate.

China and India are building new coal-fired power plants every week – and their expanding greenhouse gas emissions now dwarf even economy-killing reductions under cap-and-trade or EPA. Europe’s emissions are well above 1990 levels and even further above promised reductions under Kyoto. Yet the Poznan agreement delays and dilutes EU pledges even more, to avoid jeopardizing jobs in a hydrocarbon-dependent Europe.

Politicians violate their oath of office, when they impose policies based on climate disaster scenarios, despite real-world evidence to the contrary – and regardless of the grievous harm that their “cures” would exact on poor, elderly, minority and working-class families.

Americans everywhere should demand solid evidence, robust debate, honest congressional hearings, and responsible energy and environmental decisions. We need to prevent further economic bloodletting, preserve freedom and opportunity, and restore our nation’s prosperity.

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