



DrumBeat: June 20, 2007

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Panel Supports Tax Breaks for Coal and Non-Oil Fuel](#)

The Senate Finance Committee approved \$28 billion in tax breaks on Tuesday to underwrite renewable fuels and “clean coal” technology, all at the expense of the oil industry.

The coal industry would reap substantial benefits from the committee package, which is to be attached to a broader energy bill being debated on the Senate floor.

But the industry suffered an unexpected defeat when the full Senate rejected two measures in the overall energy bill aimed at vastly expanding the production of diesel fuel made from coal.

[Driving small doesn't mean you're less safe](#)

Today, small cars feature an array of impressive technologies and thoughtful design touches aimed at maximizing their safety, including front and side airbags. High-strength steel withstands blows with less intrusion into the cabin, and electronic driver aids such as antilock brakes and electronic stability control help reduce crashes.

These factors produce cars that are dramatically safer than the little cars of yore. Additionally, today's small cars are much bigger and heavier than those of the past. Consider that a 1984 Honda Civic hatchback weighed 1,830 pounds. The lightest version of today's hot-selling version of the Civic tips the scales at 2,628 pounds, and the Si version weighs 2,945 pounds, more than half a ton heavier than the 1984 model.

[Hybrid vs. diesel vs. flex-fuel](#)

Which will do the most for the environment, fuel supplies and your bank account.

[World Clean Energy Awards Highlight Best Energy Projects](#)

The very first World Clean Energy Awards have been presented (via GreenBiz). The

Swiss transatlantic21 association drew up the program for the World Clean Energy Awards. The following individuals were honoured at the 2007 ceremony...

[Red hot energy prices ignite acquisition fever in Canada's oil patch](#)

With world oil prices hovering at near nine-month highs and global energy firms flush with cash, analysts are predicting that control of Canada's booming oil sands sector could soon fall into foreign hands.

[Colombia to Create Oil Price Stabilization Fund](#)

Colombia's government is creating an oil price stabilization fund (FEPC) that will be used to cushion domestic oil prices from unexpected rises on international markets, government news agency SNE reported.

[As glaciers melt and rivers dry up, coal-fired power stations multiply](#)

China is well aware of its impact on climate change. Its Himalayan glaciers are melting at an unprecedented rate, its deserts are encroaching on cities in the north-west, and rivers are drying up as a result of temperature rises and over-exploitation. According to the Worldwatch Institute thinktank in Washington, Chinese air pollution from coal-burning cost its economy more than \$63bn (£31bn) in 2004, or roughly 3% of GDP.

But China argues that even with its surging economy, it is a relatively minor villain. The carbon footprint of the average Chinese last year was only a quarter of an American, or half that of a Briton.

[Research president discusses the economic threat of peak oil](#) (transcript and video)

The price of oil reached a 10 month high yesterday making a debate about the realities of peak oil timely. Peak oil is when the world's oil production literally peaks before going into terminal decline with dramatic ramifications for global economy. Just when that time will come is the subject of intense debate, though the issue receives far less coverage than the related focus on climate change. One man who's urging global action is Dr Roger Bezdek, president of the Washington-based research firm Management Information Systems. He's written two reports for the US Department of Energy on how to mitigate the possible effects of peak oil and he's spending the next two weeks in Australia talking to Government and industry leaders.

[NRDC Report Ranks States Most Vulnerable to Rising Gas Prices](#)

The report, [Addicted to Oil: Ranking States' Oil Vulnerability and Solutions for Change](#)

(pdf) ranks all 50 states based on the hit drivers take to their wallets, showing that while oil dependence affects all states, some are hit harder economically than others. Generally, the most vulnerable states are in the South and the least vulnerable are in the Northeast.

[Once Seen As Elusive, \\$70 Crude Looks Increasingly Likely](#)

Crude oil futures have their eye on the \$70 mark again.

Benchmark futures in New York set a fresh nine and half month high of more than \$69 a barrel Tuesday but fell back after failing to take out the psychologically significant \$70.00 a barrel mark. But a breach, which has proved elusive all year, now looks increasingly within reach, as traders face fresh supply worries, from tight gasoline supplies at the start of the U.S. summer peak driving season to renewed violence in oil-rich Nigeria.

[PEMEX Cries out for Investment](#)

Mexico's PEMEX oil company needs an annual investment of about 15 billion dollars to prospect for new deepwater oilfields.

The company requires such an investment to be able to maintain a daily production of 3.1 million barrels of oil and six billion cubic feet of gas, the director of the prospecting and production branch, Carlos Morales, said.

[What's creating a buzz in oilsands circles](#)

Canada's oil and gas producers told their stories to hundreds of institutional investors from across the globe yesterday during the first day of an investment symposium organized by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers in Calgary. Following are some of the points of interest that were creating a buzz...

[Brazil: Petrobras to Expand Oil Production by Nearly 500K bpd](#)

State-owned Petrobras said on Monday that it plans to add 480,000 oil barrels per day (bpd) to its current production by mid-2008.

[Clock Ticking On Global Oil Supply](#)

The debate over how much readily accessible oil remains on Earth has been revived with the release of a new report that suggests there is enough to last about 40 years.

But critics say British Petroleum's 2007 "Statistical Review Of World Energy," released this month, is far too optimistic.

[Power shortage adding to Musharraf's woes](#)

Pakistan's worst electricity shortage in memory has sent rioters onto the streets of several cities and poses a fresh headache for embattled President Pervez Musharraf, officials say.

Regular power cuts lasting from two to 12 hours increased the resentment of a population amid a blistering heatwave that claimed the lives of at least 100 people in the past fortnight.

[Taxpayers face massive R400bn nuclear bill](#)

South African taxpayers will have to fork out a massive R400- billion to pay for Eskom's planned nuclear programme, an independent study has revealed.

And the cost of decommissioning the proposed nuclear power stations at the end of their lives will add on several hundred billion rands.

This massive expenditure is not going to solve South Africa's present energy crisis, as the proposed nuclear power plants will be unlikely to make any significant contributions to the national grid before 2020, the study has found.

[Philippines: No nuclear power plant until 2022, says expert](#)

"Under the 25-year development plan formulated under President Fidel Ramos, nuclear power will be considered for the period after 2022," Danilo Sedilla, vice president of Napocor Geothermal Generations, said during the Seminar-Workshop on Nuclear Power held in Traders Hotel, Manila.

"It will take an estimated 15 years to train experts, study, decide and implement this option," he noted, adding that many technical developments have taken place and a new study practically needs to be made.

[Radical Engines, Quirky Designs Refuel Quest for Car of Future](#)

Where will the car of the future come from? Detroit, which fumbled the electric automobile and let Japan grab the lead in hybrids?

Not likely. Instead, try NASA, MIT's Media Lab or Silicon Valley, where the sizzling, battery-powered Tesla Roadster debuted last summer. New technology that promises to revolutionize the automobile as we know it is emerging from research institutions and startups -- and these innovations won't set you back \$100,000 like a Tesla will.

[Google's future is green](#)

Google announced this week that it will give \$1 million in grants to promote use of plug-in hybrids -- vehicles that run primarily on electricity but also use gas, and which can get as much as 100 miles per gallon.

The company also said it's dedicating an additional \$10 million to developing this technology and, on Monday, activated the largest solar-power installation on a U.S. corporate campus, capable of generating enough juice to meet about a third of the power needed for Google's headquarters.

[Aramco Plans Further Expansion](#)

Saudi Aramco adopts a strategy of expanding its activities such as refining crude oil, manufacturing petrochemicals and value-added products, as the company aims at diversification of Saudi economic sources.

[Pay Attention To the Oil Price Naysayers](#)

The folks over at *The Oil Drum* are a persistent bunch. As the years go by and it continues to look as though Steve Forbes' post-Katrina prediction of \$35 oil will forever fail to materialize, the forecasts by the crew at TOD appear increasingly likely to prove more accurate than predictions from most Wall Street types and nearly every big oil company and energy agency.

The Oil Drum (and other sites like it) in 2007 may turn out to be kind of like the housing bubble blogs back in 2005 when they screamed to the rest of the world that there was a problem but no one wanted to listen. The screaming at TOD is markedly less shrill than what's found on many housing bubble blogs, but not heeding their warnings will likely be even more disastrous than ignoring the housing naysayers a couple years ago.

[Senate OKs plan to sue OPEC for price-fixing](#)

The U.S. Senate on Tuesday approved a plan that would enable the federal government to sue OPEC for price manipulation, but the White House has threatened to veto the measure and opponents warned OPEC members could retaliate by turning off the taps.

[Crunch Time on Energy](#)

The Senate will tell us this week whether it really wants to do something about oil dependency and global warming or if it is just fooling around.

...Here are important points of contention and some thoughts about how they should be resolved in a way that moves this country toward a cleaner, more sustainable energy future...

[Militia leader halts attacks in Nigeria](#)

A top militant leader freed on bail said Tuesday that armed groups in Nigeria's restive south will halt attacks on oil installations to give the new government a chance to deal with the region's problems.

But he warned there would not be an immediate end to the seizure of foreign workers.

[As glaciers melt and rivers dry up, coal-fired power stations multiply](#)

On a bad day - which can be hundreds in a year - the ancient city of Linfen in the northern province of Shanxi is environmental hell. Named by the World Bank last year as having the worst air quality on Earth, its 3.5 million people more often than not choke on coal dust; its soil and its rivers are covered with soot, and its Buddhas are blackened and shrouded in a toxic mist.

The cause is Linfen's 196 iron foundries, its 153 coking plants, its unregulated coalmines, tar factories, steelworks and domestic homes, all of which burn cheap, easily accessible brown coal.



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