



## Drumbeat: April 8, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 8, 2009 - 9:49am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Bill McKibben: The fierce urgency of now](#)

Watching the backlash against clean energy projects build in Canada has moved me to think about what Americans have learned from facing this same problem. I have been thinking and writing for several years about overcoming conflict-avoidance and the importance of standing up for "Big Truths" even at the price of criticizing fellow environmentalists.

It's not that I've developed a mean streak. It's that the environmental movement has reached an important point of division, between those who truly get global warming, and those who don't.

### [Natural gas prices at 6-year low](#)

The Georgia natural gas prices posted this week are as low as they've been in six years — and an 180-degree-turn from last spring's gas market.

And that means a different message for consumers than last year at this time.

### [Owner of Aurora ethanol plants files Chapter 11 bankruptcy](#)

Ethanol producer Aventine Renewable Energy Holdings Inc. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Wednesday, the latest victim in an industry stung by volatile commodity prices and shrinking profit margins.

### [Toyota banks on tiny, green but pricier 'iQ'](#)

TOYOTA, Japan - Toyota's new tiny car doesn't boast any state of the art hybrid or plug-in technology. But the iQ has plenty else packed into a diminutive frame that blends stylish curves with safety, fuel efficiency and smooth handling.

The iQ at less than 3 meters (9.8 feet) long is smaller than Toyota Motor Corp.'s Yaris

subcompact. It is being shown as a Scion model, which targets younger buyers, at the New York International Auto Show, opening to the public April 10. It went on sale November in Japan, earlier this year in Europe, and is being considered for the U.S. market.

### [Oil tanker companies may be in trouble if OPEC raises cuts](#)

BANGALORE (Reuters) - Any further output cuts by OPEC, coupled with an expected increase in vessels in 2009, may dampen the oil tanker companies' ability to hold on to higher freight rates, denting their earnings potential in the coming quarters.

OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil supply fell in March, for the seventh consecutive month, but remained above its target as some members pumped more than agreed levels, a recent Reuters survey showed.

So far, OPEC has delivered roughly 80 percent of its pledge to decrease output by a record 4.2 million barrels per day from September.

But any further increase in OPEC compliance may hurt freight rates.

### [Getting Fuel Economy Right](#)

The Obama administration has before it a rare opportunity to establish an aggressive — and unified — national standard for automobile fuel economy that could save consumers money at the pump, reduce oil dependency and greenhouse gases and help make America's car companies (or what's left of them after the present restructuring) more competitive.

### [Brazil investigates royalty overpayment](#)

Brazil's federal police is investigating alleged irregularities in the payment of royalties from state-run Petrobras to city halls in Rio de Janeiro state.

Suspicion is focused in the state's north region, which receives royalties from production in the prolific Campos basin, the biggest oil-producing zone in the country.

### [Cash Management Crucial in Deflationary Market](#)

Another interesting opportunity for cash management lies in the fixed-income securities issued by some of the world's largest oil companies. Energy companies have huge cash reserves — many have more net cash than many governments! If you subscribe to the long-term view that Peak Oil will continue to pressure oil prices once this

recession/depression concludes then bonds issued by these goliaths make good investment sense. Just be sure to keep your maturities under five years.

### [Wind power may need government help](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - The credit crunch and a weak pound will stunt Britain's offshore wind power growth and undermine efforts to cut carbon emissions without more help from government, the British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) said on Wednesday.

Major offshore projects could stall and Britain will waste another opportunity to set up its own supply chain unless the government boosts support significantly.

"We need to improve the economics," said Gordon Edge, director of economics and markets at BWEA.

### [Green groups want Shell oil sands permits rescinded](#)

CALGARY, Alberta, April 8 (Reuters) - Canadian environmental groups asked regulators on Wednesday to rescind approvals for part of a \$13.7 billion expansion of Royal Dutch Shell Plc's oil sands project, alleging the company backed off promises to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The Oil Sands Environmental Coalition -- which includes the Pembina Institute, the Toxics Watch Society of Alberta and the Fort McMurray Environmental Association -- say Shell has broken a negotiated agreement to significantly cut the output of greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon dioxide from an expansion of its Muskeg River and Jackpine oil sands mines in northern Alberta.

### [Enbridge team plans CO2 storage pilot project](#)

CALGARY -- A consortium led by Enbridge Inc. said on Wednesday it is ready to start a test project for injecting carbon dioxide from industrial operations into briny underground water reservoirs in Alberta.

### [We the People: Running on Empty](#)

Much of the world already knows that it is possible to live without oil, but that it is impossible to live without water.

That reality is dawning upon people across the US as the country faces unprecedented water shortages.

## [Oil, Gas May 'Slingshot' Up After Credit Freezes Rigs](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The credit crunch will keep U.S. oil and gas producers from ramping up exploration they do through drillers such as Nabors Industries Ltd., setting the stage for shortages and surging prices when demand recovers.

Chesapeake Energy Corp. and Carrizo Oil & Gas Inc. are among producers spending no more than their cash flow after a collapse in credit markets drove up debt costs. That means they won't hire the likes of Nabors and Rowan Cos. to drill more wells in anticipation of higher prices. Producers cut capital budgets 17 percent this year after demand slowed and prices plunged, according to Tristone Capital Inc.

"Quite frankly, they don't have the credit, which exacerbates the problem that their revenue stream is far below the cost structure," said Jud Bailey, an analyst at Jefferies & Co. in Houston. "They're not jumping on lower service costs simply because they can't. They're literally stepping away from anything they're not contractually obligated to."

The result may be a "slingshot" effect as spending cuts leave a supply shortage once demand returns, Bailey said. The number of active drilling rigs worldwide has fallen 35 percent from the 23-year high reached in September, according to Baker Hughes Inc. The U.S. rig count has plunged by almost half.

## [Obama looks at climate engineering](#)

WASHINGTON (AP) - The president's new science adviser said Wednesday that global warming is so dire, the Obama administration is discussing radical technologies to cool Earth's air.

John Holdren told The Associated Press in his first interview since being confirmed last month that the idea of geoengineering the climate is being discussed. One such extreme option includes shooting pollution particles into the upper atmosphere to reflect the sun's rays. Holdren said such an experimental measure would only be used as a last resort.

"It's got to be looked at," he said. "We don't have the luxury of taking any approach off the table."

## [Energy Secretary Backs Clean-Coal Investments](#)

WASHINGTON -- Energy Secretary Steven Chu said the U.S. should invest in technology to reduce the carbon produced by burning coal, but he said it will take at least eight years to be sure such systems work.

### [Chavez says world 'center of gravity' now Beijing](#)

BEIJING — The world's center of gravity has moved to Beijing, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez told his Chinese counterpart Wednesday during a visit focused on boosting Chinese oil purchases.

The frequent U.S. critic also praised China's response to the global financial meltdown that has sent prices of his South American nation's key export, oil, down sharply.

### [Gazprom to Sell Russia's 1st Dollar Bonds Since July](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom, Russia's biggest company, plans to sell about \$2 billion of bonds in the first dollar issue from the country since July.

### [Nigeria: What if the president goes?](#)

IN AN office in Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos, economists scour the morning's newspapers for photographs of President Umaru Yar'Adua, hoping to divine a clue as to his well-being. The global financial crisis and the dive in the price of oil, Nigeria's main export, are forcing the country's businessmen and investors to rethink Nigeria's hitherto unusually hopeful economic outlook. Ministers admit that Nigeria is in for a rough time. The prevailing view, however, is that it should be able to ride out the storm, provided there are no bad political squalls.

But what if the long-ailing president were to die or leave office prematurely? Then, says Bismarck Rewane, a prominent financier, all bets are off. When the departing president, Olusegun Obasanjo, hand-picked Mr Yar'Adua in 2007 to succeed him, the new man's health immediately aroused concern. As governor of a remote northern state, Katsina, he set up a specialist unit in his local hospital to treat a chronic kidney ailment. On the campaign trail, his soft voice and persistent cough contrasted unfavourably with the rumbustious ways of Mr Obasanjo.

### [U.N. climate talks threaten our survival: Saudi Arabia](#)

BONN, Germany (Reuters) - United Nations climate talks threaten Saudi Arabia's economic survival and the kingdom wants support for any shift from fossil fuels to other energy sources such as solar power, its lead climate negotiator said.

Contrasting interests of different countries are challenging faltering climate talks, meant to forge by December a new global deal in Copenhagen to curb man-made climate change.

Small island states say their survival is threatened by rising seas. But Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, says it could suffer from any pact which curbs oil demand

by penalizing carbon emissions.

### [Price of Saudi Arab light oil jumps in March](#)

The average price of Saudi Arabian light crude oil rose to \$46.2 per barrel in March, above the break-even point for the national budget, compared to \$37.2 in February, central bank data showed.

### [Saudi-Chinese trade soars above SAR150bn target](#)

A surge in Saudi Arabia's oil supplies to China boosted their two-way trade above the official target of SAR150 billion (Dh147bn) last year and the relationship is poised for further expansion, according to a key Saudi bank.

### [Ecological debt: no way back from bankrupt](#)

While most governments' eyes are on the banking crisis, a much bigger issue - the environmental crisis - is passing them by, says Andrew Simms. In the Green Room this week, he argues that failure to organise a bailout for ecological debt will have dire consequences for humanity.

"Nature Doesn't Do Bailouts!" said the banner strung across Bishopsgate in the City of London.

### [B.C. needs big energy changes](#)

Fossil fuels or green energy: What's British Columbia's vision? The debate over British Columbia's energy future is heating up in the province.

This is a good thing. Global warming urgency and the growing energy crisis require communities around the world to debate and develop visions for a green energy future.

### [High-Profile Conference Zeroes in on Canada's Forestry Crisis](#)

Recent evidence suggesting that the effects of global warming will occur earlier than expected will be presented at SFM 2009 by University of Waterloo professor and best-selling author Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon, who will also challenge attendees to rethink convention when it comes to sustaining Canada's forests. According to Homer-Dixon, many of Canada's ecological systems are simply too complex to be managed precisely and it's time to concentrate on a new approach that focuses on resiliency (designing



ecosystems that can withstand shock and adapt) and triage (identifying which areas of forest will survive and which areas need to be sacrificed).

“We’re in a world that I would categorize as a world of uncertainty as opposed to a world of risk,” says Homer-Dixon. “There’s a lot of warming in the pipeline and much more to come. What we need to do right now is preserve as much ecological and genetic diversity as possible for our children and grandchildren.”

### [The Future of Oil Prices](#)

As Matt Simmons points out: oil is not just another commodity. For industrial societies oil is as basic as food and water. That’s why the price of oil cannot go up very high after the production of oil peaks. Economic logic suggests that if demand is high and supply is low then prices will skyrocket. However, there are goods for which the prices cannot be set by the interplay of demand and supply, because if they were it would undermine the viability of the whole economy. Oil is one of these goods.

### [Treasury launches \\$5B auto supplier bailout](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -- The U.S. Treasury said Wednesday that Chrysler LLC and General Motors Corp. have launched supplier support programs backed by up to \$5 billion in U.S. government funds

### [GM sales in China jump 24.6%](#)

SHANGHAI (Reuters) -- General Motors Corp said on Wednesday its China sales in March rose 24.6% from a year earlier to 137,004 vehicles, setting a company record for monthly sales as China's stimulus policies bolstered the market.

### [The Corn Ethanol Debate Continues](#)

Unquestionably, Corn Ethanol is responsible for the incredible spike in food prices experienced in late 2007 through much of 2008. Farmers were switching their crops to corn, the demand for corn to be used as fuel drove the price per bushel above \$6 (from about \$2 in 2006), and corn is an ingredient in a countless number of foods and food production.

### [Coal deposits provide a record of ancient methane emissions](#)

Changes in the amount of methane present in the Earth's atmosphere over the last 400 million years have had a major impact on the global climate.

### [Shippers Taking It Slow in Bad Times](#)

ABOARD THE EUGEN MAERSK, IN THE NORTH SEA -- On an early afternoon last month, the Eugen Maersk has left Rotterdam, the Netherlands, on the tail end of a journey from Shanghai. But the giant freighter is cruising at 10 knots, well shy of her 26-knot top speed.

At about half speed, fuel consumption drops to 100-150 tons of fuel a day from 350 tons, saving as much as \$5,000 an hour. "The strategy now is to slow steam as much as possible," said Christian Hagart, the Eugen's chief officer.

### [Tankers anchor off Devon waiting for oil prices to rise](#)

Almost a dozen oil tankers carrying millions of litres of oil and gas have anchored off the British coast because the cargo's owners are waiting for prices to rise.

### [Friedman: Show Us the Ball](#)

I am really encouraged by President Barack Obama's commitment to clean energy and combating climate change. I just have three worries: Whether he has the right policies, the right politics and the right official to sell his program to the country. Other than that, things look great!

### [Crude declines as API reports big rise in supplies](#)

NEW YORK (MarketWatch) -- Oil futures fell Wednesday for a fourth straight session, marking their biggest losing streak in two months after the American Petroleum Institute reported a large increase in crude inventories.

### [Roc Oil's Zhao Dong field on way to meet '09 plan](#)

(Reuters) - Australia's Roc Oil Co Ltd said it started production under its 2009 drilling plans at the Zhao Dong fields offshore China, with a total gross production of 21,500 barrels of oil per day (bopd), or about 35 percent of its 2009 target.

### [Daniel Yergin on \\$40 Oil, Iran Diplomacy](#) (video)

Daniel Yergin of energy research consultancy CERA on the prospects for \$40 oil on continued economic weakness.



### [Official: Iran to produce bio-ethanol](#)

TEHRAN (Xinhua) -- Ali Ameri, head of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company, has revealed that Iran plans to produce bio-ethanol, the local Press TV reported on Wednesday.

"The project to produce bio-ethanol is to start in the next three months" and the Oil Ministry "is to sign an accord in this regard with the Iranian association of ethanol producers," Ameri was quoted as saying.

### [Despite drop, county hit hard by fuel prices](#)

There are some economists who blame the speeding up of the current recession to the dramatic increase in gasoline prices in 2008. Reaching \$4 a gallon last summer, the price of transporting anything - from people to food - rose dramatically.

For Wright County, in the departments that require extensive driving, cutting back wasn't an option. The "Big Four" users of gasoline - the highway, sheriff's, parks and planning and zoning departments - all felt the budget pinch in 2008.

### [Drug dealer who charged gas surcharge sentenced](#)

VALPARAISO, Ind. (AP) — A convicted drug dealer who authorities say charged an extra \$15 to deliver cocaine in northwestern Indiana because of high gasoline prices has been sentenced to four years in prison.

### [Hemp Could Be Key To Zero-carbon Houses](#)

ScienceDaily — Hemp, a plant from the cannabis family, could be used to build carbon-neutral homes of the future to help combat climate change and boost the rural economy, say researchers at the University of Bath.

### [When Oceans Get Warmer Carbon Dioxide Uptake On Marine Plankton Will Be Reduced, Potentially Increasing Climate Change](#)

ScienceDaily — The global ocean plays a central role in Earth's climate system and has considerably slowed down climate change by taking up about one third of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitted through human activities.

### [Oil Giants Loath to Follow Obama's Green Lead](#)

The Obama administration wants to reduce oil consumption, increase renewable energy supplies and cut carbon dioxide emissions in the most ambitious transformation of energy policy in a generation.

But the world's oil giants are not convinced that it will work. Even as Washington goes into a frenzy over energy, many of the oil companies are staying on the sidelines, balking at investing in new technologies favored by the president, or even straying from commitments they had already made.

### [Oil falls below \\$48, following stocks down](#)

VIENNA – Oil prices fell Wednesday, weighed by weaker stock markets and waning optimism that the U.S. economy will soon recover from its severe recession.

Benchmark crude for May delivery fell \$1.32 to \$47.83 a barrel by noon in Europe in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell \$1.90 on Tuesday to settle at \$49.15.

### [Shell Said to Limit U.K. Gasoline Sales After Fault](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc is limiting gasoline sales from the U.K.'s second-largest oil refinery at Stanlow in Cheshire because of a fault, a person familiar with the situation said.

The refinery outage threatens to reduce fuel supplies and drive up prices at a time when Total SA's Lindsey and ConocoPhillips's Humber plants in northern England are also undergoing maintenance.

### [IRAN: There will be oil, and lots of it](#)

Iran is reporting huge new discoveries of oil that contain "billions" of barrels of reserves, state radio quoted the managing director of the country's National Oil Co. as saying today.

Seyfollah Jashnsaz said Iran has discovered seven new oil fields in unspecified locations around the country.

"Billions of barrels of oil will be added to the country's existing oil reserves," he said in comments broadcast on state radio.

### [The turning point and the new commodity bubble](#)

Is oil at a turning point? Get ready bubble buyers as the next big oil bubble is getting inflated once again. There is 1.1 trillion dollars of global economic stimulus and a global interest rate imbalance between the United States and Europe and this is creating the same type of macroeconomic conditions that caused oil to spike up to \$147.00 early in this economic crisis. Forget about supply and demand for the moment because they are just a passing afterthoughts. The commodity markets seek to adjust to what the UK Prime Minister calls a 'New World Order'. A new world order that favors Europe as the money that the G20 pumped into the IMF and the World Bank. And this is money the EU is not going to have to spend to stabilize weaker developing EU Nations.

#### [Shanghai Exchange May Trade Crude Oil in April, Herald Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Shanghai Petroleum Exchange may start trading crude oil, diesel and gasoline contracts as early as this month, the 21st Century Business Herald said, citing a member unit of the exchange it didn't identify.

#### [Petrobras to Cut Natural-Gas Price to Distributors, Folha Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA, Brazil's state-run oil producer, will reduce the price of natural gas it charges distributors, Folha de S. Paulo reported, citing Maria das Gracas Foster, head of the company's gas and energy business.

#### [Forecasters See Lower Average for 2009 Atlantic Hurricane Season](#)

According to forecasters at Colorado State University, the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season is expected to show average storm activity from June 1 to Nov. 30.

The forecasters cite an average of 12 storms for the active season, six of which will transform into hurricanes with two set to become intense hurricanes, which are defined by sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or more.

#### [Pemex May Squeeze Extra 3 Billion Barrels From Cantarell Field](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleos Mexicanos, the state oil company, may recover an extra 3 billion barrels from its Cantarell field, or 20 percent more than planned, by using a technology that extracts hard-to-reach crude.

#### [StatoilHydro Extends Statfjord Field's Productive Life beyond 2020](#)

The Statfjord late life project has prolonged this North Sea field's productive life beyond expectations.

"We are highly satisfied with every single year we can add to the Statfjord field's productive life," said Stale Tungesvik, senior vice president for the operations west cluster in the Exploration & Production Norway business area.

"During the late life project we have extended the production period at the Statfjord field beyond 2020. The planned field production period has been prolonged by 12 years, which is two years more than we expected when we submitted the plans for the Statfjord late life project."

### [A Cheaper Way to Draw Oil from Shale](#)

A new ceramic-composite material that can withstand high temperatures and constant exposure to moisture could provide an economical way to unlock America's vast oil-shale deposits.

### [South African Road Freight Strike Over Pay Enters Second Day](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A strike by South African road freight workers, which may disrupt fuel supplies across Africa's largest economy, entered a second day as talks to break a deadlock over minimum wages and working conditions continued.

### [UAE to Slash Food Costs](#)

DUBAI - The United Arab Emirates said on Tuesday it would move to bring down the cost of basic food items charged by retailers because they were no longer appropriate following a slump in world commodity prices.

The second-largest Arab economy last year signed a series of agreements with supermarket chains to fix the cost of basic food items such as sugar, cooking oil, rice and flour at 2007 levels in an effort to curb inflation at a 20-year peak.

### [China's Grand Plans for Eco-Cities Now Lie Abandoned](#)

Mostly conceived by international architects, China's eco-cities were intended to be models of green urban design. But the planning was done with little awareness of how local people lived, and the much-touted projects have largely been scrapped.

### [Time to Deliver: No Turning Back, Part I](#)

Terrance's last post heroically set out and engaged the two dominant scenarios about the American future that progressives seem to be wrestling with right now. These two

scenarios might be described as:

1) Permanent Decline -- Due to Americans' native hyperindividualism, political apathy, and overweening willingness to accept personal blame for their country's failures, the corporatists finally succeed in turning the US into Indonesia. This time, we will not find the will to fight back (or, if we do, it will be too late). As a result, in a few years there will be no more middle class, no upward mobility, few remaining public institutions devoted to the common good, no health care, no education, and no hope of ever restoring American ideals or getting back to some semblance of the America we knew.

2) Reinvented Greatness -- Americans get over their deeply individualistic nature, come together, challenge and restrain the global corporatist order, and finally establish the social democracy that the Powers That Be -- corporate, military, media, conservative -- have denied to us since the 1950s. This happens in synergy with a move to energy and food self-sufficiency, the growth of a sustainable economy, a revival of participatory democracy, and a general renewal of American values that pulses new life into our institutions and assures us a much more stable future.

<http://newsblaze.com/story/20090407142158zzzz.nb/topstory.html>

The nonpartisan Reform Institute today released a new report that lays a clear pathway for comprehensive energy reform. The report - Reforming American Energy: Overcoming Reliance and Ensuring Reliability - outlines the benefits and limitations of each U.S. energy sector and provides specific reform recommendations. With energy and climate legislation taking shape in Congress the timely new report outlines the energy challenges facing the nation and proposes a new direction for U.S. energy policy.

Highlighting the threats to U.S. national security, the economy, and energy and environmental sustainability posed by current energy policy, the report challenges the effectiveness of a piece-meal approach and calls for a cohesive national energy strategy.

### [An End to Dependence on Middle East Oil](#)

Over the last 40 years, the United States has become increasingly dependent on foreign oil and reluctant to develop domestic, fossil fuel resources. Today, America imports two-thirds of its oil at a cost of \$300 billion per year, much of it from politically unstable, Middle East countries which control 45% of the world's oil, overall.

This is occurring despite the existence of bountiful, untapped oil resources within the United States. Developing these resources could free America from imports, create badly needed, oil-production jobs and meet U.S. energy demand for the next 200 years. With nearly three-fourths of Americans favoring increased energy exploration, the only obstacle standing in the way of our energy independence is a lack of political vision and will.

### [Santa Barbara County reverses oil drilling stand](#)

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – Months after making national headlines for supporting offshore oil drilling, the county famous for spawning the modern environmental movement reversed course Tuesday and voted to oppose the drilling.

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, citing a need to preserve its coastline, voted 3-2 for a resolution to oppose oil exploration and extraction in the county.

### [US Interior Sec. Salazar Gets Earful on Drilling](#)

A contentious public hearing Monday highlighted the Obama administration's challenge to craft an energy policy that emphasizes alternative fuels but also recognizes the dominance of traditional sources.

Opponents of offshore drilling dominated the hearing, convened by the White House to gauge public opinion on whether the government should expand oil and natural-gas production in federal waters. Drilling supporters focused on the industry's improved safety record, as well as billions of dollars in potential government revenue.

### [Breezy Talk: Interior Secretary Salazar's Offshore Wind Dreams](#)

Secretary Salazar, in Atlantic City for the first of four public meetings to discuss America's offshore energy resources, raised eyebrows when he said offshore wind farms could replace 3,000 coal-fired plants. He contends that the offshore wind potential just in the Atlantic—the easiest region to develop—totals about 1,000 gigawatts.

Let's put that in context. The entire electricity-generation capacity of the U.S., including coal, gas, nuclear, hydropower and other renewables, is just over 1,000 gigawatts. There are only about 1,400 coal plants in operation in the U.S., accounting for about 336 gigawatts of power. So that would indeed be a lot of wind.

But of that nominal 1,000 gigawatts of Atlantic wind potential, 770 gigawatts are in deep waters (that is, 200 feet or more). There are currently no deep-water wind farms anywhere in the world.

### [Recession saps energy from ethanol industry](#)

A year ago, the ethanol industry was riding high on spiraling gas prices that made corn-based biofuel a highly attractive home-grown supplement to costly gasoline. Federal mandates were in place to more than triple ethanol production by 2022.

Since then, the bottom has fallen out of the industry. Newly built refineries are shutting



down, and some ethanol companies are facing bankruptcy.

### [Can ethanol help save the U.S. economy?](#)

As the Obama Administration searches for ways stimulate the economy and takes some unpopular positions, such as aiding banks, automakers, and in-over-their-head mortgage-holders, there may be an opportunity in another controversial area – ethanol.

### [UN sounds warning after Antarctica ice shelf rips](#)

PARIS (AFP) – The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said the breakway of a Jamaica-sized ice shelf from the Antarctic peninsula could accelerate global warming in this already vulnerable region.

### [Climate Change To Spur Rapid Shifts In Wildfire Hotspots, Analysis Finds](#)

ScienceDaily — Climate change will bring about major shifts in worldwide fire patterns, and those changes are coming fast, according to a first-of-its-kind analysis led by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, in collaboration with scientists at Texas Tech University.

### [Arctic meltdown is a threat to humanity](#)

I am shocked, truly shocked," says Katey Walter, an ecologist at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. "I was in Siberia a few weeks ago, and I am now just back in from the field in Alaska. The permafrost is melting fast all over the Arctic, lakes are forming everywhere and methane is bubbling up out of them."

### [EU: Earth warming faster](#)

OSLO/BONN (Reuters) – Global warming is likely to overshoot a 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 F) rise seen by the European Union and many developing nations as a trigger for "dangerous" change, a Reuters poll of scientists showed on Tuesday.

Nine of 11 experts, who were among authors of the final summary by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007 (IPCC), also said the evidence that mankind was to blame for climate change had grown stronger in the past two years.



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