



## Drumbeat: August 31, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 31, 2010 - 9:00am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Lenders Back Off of Environmental Risks](#)

Blasting off mountaintops to reach coal in Appalachia or churning out millions of tons of carbon dioxide to extract oil from sand in Alberta are among environmentalists' biggest industrial irritants. But they are also legal and lucrative.

For a growing number of banks, however, that does not seem to matter.

After years of legal entanglements arising from environmental messes and increased scrutiny of banks that finance the dirtiest industries, several large commercial lenders are taking a stand on industry practices that they regard as risky to their reputations and bottom lines.

and social variables are at work. The fluctuation points to volatility of course which is a signal of tight energy supply. If there is a new surge in economic growth and China and India continue to grow and mop up oil supplies, then it will move back to 2016 very quickly.

### [Pemex Plans to Invest \\$269 Billion in Next 10 Years to Increase Oil Output](#)

Petroleos Mexicanos, the state-owned oil company, plans to invest \$269 billion by 2019 to increase production, the company's chief executive officer said.

Pemex, as the company is known, should not have trouble having its planned investments approved by Congress and will spend about \$27 billion a year over the next decade, CEO Juan Jose Suarez Coppel, said today at a conference in Mexico City.

### [Mexico sees big potential near Tsimin oil find](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico's state oil company Pemex is increasingly optimistic about the potential of what appears to be a new cluster of light crude oil fields around its Tsimin discovery, according to company executives.

The side-by-side Tsimin and Xux discoveries are believed to hold the equivalent of 1.5 billion barrels of proved, probable and possible oil reserves said Manuel Teran, a Pemex

engineer working on the discoveries, at a petroleum engineering conference this weekend.

### [For BP, post-spill advertising comes at an unknown cost](#)

FORTUNE -- The coverage of BP's Deepwater Horizon spill is teaching the typically secretive oil industry something about life in the limelight. Now, the company has to account for every cent it spends.

### [Bahamas Bans Offshore Drilling](#)

The Public is advised that The Ministry of The Environment has suspended consideration of all applications for oil exploration and drilling in the waters of The Bahamas. The Ministry seeks, by this decision, to maintain and safeguard an unpolluted marine environment for The Bahamas, notwithstanding the potential financial benefits of oil explorations.

Additionally all existing licenses will be reviewed to ascertain any legal entitlement for renewal.

### [Coal India May Set Up Power Plants Because of Shortfall in Rolling Stock](#)

Coal India Ltd., the world's largest producer of the fuel, said it may be forced to set up power plants to use coal that's piling up because there aren't enough railway wagons to carry supplies to utilities.

"It's not a business we would naturally like to be in because there are already so many players," Chairman Partha Bhattacharyya said in New Delhi today. "If stocks keep building up, we may not have an option."

### [Russia to protect domestic car makers with higher import duty](#)

Russia will gradually raise the import taxes for the foreign-made cars, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Monday.

Putin noted this would be done to stimulate foreign companies to build their production facilities in Russia.

### [Electricity and climate change](#)

Also as a result of global warming, the countries of this region are witnessing dramatic increases in the demand for electric power, as the use of air-conditioning increases in households, shops, places of worship, offices, hotels and factories. And as a result of the exceptional hot weather, the sale of all types of air-conditioning devices flourished, and their stocks were effectively depleted in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Egypt and other countries, while their retailers achieved exceptional profits, after taking advantage of the circumstances.

### [Why "green wizards" get us nowhere new...](#)

So, first question, what is a 'green wizard'? Greer defines green wizards thus, *"individuals who are willing to take on the responsibility to learn, practice and thoroughly master a set of unpopular but valuable skills – the skills of the old appropriate technology movement – and share them with their neighbours when the day comes that neighbours are willing to learn"*. The idea, as I read it, is that any notion of a co-ordinated response, a la Heinberg's 'Powerdown', a scenario where communities self-organise and work with, or without, their local authorities, to start the rebuilding of that settlement's resilience, reduce its oil dependency and carbon footprint, is now for the bin, condemned as impractical and unrealistic. Greer appears to have given up any notion that such a thing might be possible, stating "a movement is a great thing if you want to hang out with congenial people and do interesting things together. It's just not usually a good way to make change happen".

### [Are People Smarter Than Chipmunks?](#)

After witnessing this eccentric behavior, I began wondering why the chipmunk would behave so illogically. It didn't take too long to realize that it simply doesn't possess the right equipment to understand the threat posed by a car. A chipmunk's brain and the behavior produced by it are the result of ages of natural selection – a process that took place in the absence of roads and cars. The mind of a chipmunk, therefore, is incapable of properly interpreting the data coming its way, especially when it's coming at 60 miles per hour.

The chipmunk's maladaptive behavior has some prominent parallels with our own predicament. The data are approaching us at a fast and furious clip. We have ample and disturbing evidence about climate destabilization, dwindling energy resources, social breakdowns, and a host of environmental maladies. We know that the economy is a subsystem of the finite planet, and that increasing the scale of the economy impinges on the earth's ecosystems. In an age of biodiversity die-offs and political buy-offs, however, we don't seem to possess the wherewithal to interpret the data correctly.

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### [New Study Links Toxic Pollutants to Canadian Oil Sands Mining](#)

Native Canadians living downstream from the oil sands mines in Alberta have long contended that their high cancer rates were related to the expanding excavation of bitumen for the production of synthetic crude. Their assertions have been disputed by the reports of a joint oil industry-government research panel that concluded that natural causes — and not mining — were responsible for the high levels of various metals in the sub-Arctic Athabasca River.

But now a new study in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences is backing the position of the Native Canadians. Led by several University of Alberta researchers, the study found that unusual levels of lead, mercury, zinc, cadmium and other toxic pollutants were found near oil sands mining sites or downstream from them. The levels exceeded federal and provincial government guidelines.

### [Crude Oil Heads for First Monthly Slide Since May on Slowing Global Growth](#)

Oil fell, headed for its first monthly decline since May, before a report forecast to show U.S. crude inventories increased to the most in a month.

Futures dropped as much as 1.7 percent, extending their decline from the highest level in a week reached on Aug. 27, after the Commerce Department said incomes rose 0.2 percent, less than the 0.3 percent estimate by economists surveyed by Bloomberg News. An Energy Department report tomorrow may show crude stockpiles gained 1.55 million barrels last week.

### [Oil Supply Climbing to One-Month High in Bloomberg Survey](#)

U.S. crude oil inventories probably increased to a one-month high last week amid signs that U.S. economic growth is slowing, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Supplies rose 1.55 million barrels, or 0.4 percent, in the seven days ended Aug. 27 from 358.3 million a week earlier, according to the median of 12 analyst estimates before an Energy Department report tomorrow. The gain would leave stockpiles at the highest level since July 23.

## [OPEC Oil Output Declined on Iraqi Pipeline Bombing, Bloomberg Survey Shows](#)

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' crude-oil output fell in August to a seven-month low, led by Iraq, where production was hobbled by a pipeline bombing, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Production slipped 75,000 barrels, or 0.3 percent, to an average 29.15 million barrels a day, the lowest level since January, according to the survey. Output by members with quotas, all except Iraq, dropped 5,000 barrels to 26.805 million, 1.96 million above their target.

## [Japan Issues Storm Warnings, Cancels Okinawa Flights as Typhoon Approaches](#)

Typhoon Kompasu slammed Japan's southern island of Okinawa, causing the country's two biggest airlines to cancel flights, disrupting some shipping and closing an oil refinery owned by Brazil's Petroleo Brasileiro SA.

## [Ras al Khaimah seeking electricity for growth](#)

Ras al Khaimah's Government is in talks with the Federal Electricity and Water Authority (FEWA) to boost power supplies to the emirate as it attracts more businesses to its industrial zones and completes development projects.

## [Russia eyes Rosneft sale](#)

Russia may consider selling a stake in state-controlled oil producer Rosneft in 2011 to 2013, Economy Minister Elvira Nabiullina said today.

## [LUKOIL to get tax breaks for Caspian oil fields](#)

(Reuters) - Russia's No.2 oil firm LUKOIL's CEO said on Tuesday that the government is ready to introduce tax breaks for oil extracted from the company's Korchagin fields on the Caspian Sea.

## ['Fracking' fractures N.Y. county](#)

A controversial method of natural gas drilling — known as "fracking" — has begun to tap the energy-rich Marcellus Shale, a huge geological formation that underlies much of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. In New York, fracking has been stalled by

opposition from environmental groups, legislators and people such as the Diehls.

### [Bad weather delays BP bid to recover blowout preventer](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – A bid to recover a key valve that failed to prevent the blowout of the BP well in the Gulf of Mexico has been delayed because of bad weather, the pointman for the US response to the oil spill said Monday.

"We are in a hold pending calming of the current weather," retired coast guard admiral Thad Allen told reporters, adding that it would be two or three days before the operation could begin.

### [No gas concerns Memphis officials](#) (Michigan)

Two gas stations in the city but no gas to be pumped has prompted Memphis Mayor Dan Weaver to explore strategies for getting a station open to serve residents.

"I've been spinning my wheels talking to people trying to get us a gas station in town," he said at a recent City Council meeting where he asked officials to consider options such as asking the city's attorney to advise on issues such as eminent domain.

### [Stickers would help auto buyers compare fuel economy](#)

DETROIT — In its first major overhaul of fuel-economy ratings in 30 years, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation on Monday released two proposed window stickers designed to make it easier for consumers to compare vehicles.

One version gives cars and trucks a grade from A+ to a D, compares vehicles with three sliding scales and gives an estimated annual fuel cost. The other version omits the grade. At first, only electric vehicles would rate an A+.

### [Toyota Prius May Lead Japan Car Sale Collapse as Subsidies End](#)

The Prius hybrid has spearheaded sales growth for Toyota Motor Corp. in Japan for more than a year, helped by government subsidies. The model will likely bear the brunt of plunging demand as the support ends.

"A collapse in sales is unavoidable," said Hiromi Inoue, the new-car sales chief for Tokyo Toyopet Motor Sales Co. "The daily pace of orders for the Prius is already dropping. We are bracing ourselves for the coming crisis."



### [Russian billionaire Prokhorov to roll out hybrid car models in December](#)

Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov will present three electric vehicle models in December for public approval, he said on Tuesday.

"If they don't like them, they can say 'we don't want these cars.' We will hold a vote on the Internet," said Prokhorov, an active blogger.

Prokhorov said he will decide where to produce the cars after the presentation.

### [The Biking Boom Breeds Discontent](#)

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and other city leaders have praised the increase in cycling for reducing congestion and pollution and making the city streets safer overall. To accommodate the surge in bike commuters, the city has installed hundreds of bike racks and roughly 200 miles of new bike lanes in the past three years, with plans for future expansion.

Yet according to a recent weeklong investigative series by Tony Aiello, a reporter with New York City's WCBS-TV (Channel 2), the cycling boom is breeding discontent. Titled "Bike Bedlam," the segments turned a critical eye on reckless riders who flouted traffic laws, and profiled a young father who was killed by a cyclist riding the wrong way on a one-way street in Midtown Manhattan. A former bike shop owner declared that cyclists were "way out of control."

### [Blowin' in the Wind](#)

Pattern Energy wants to do what T. Boone Pickens couldn't: deliver Texas' overabundance of wind power to less-windy states.

The wind and transmission line developer aims to build a \$1 billion, 400-mile transmission line to carry electricity generated by Texas wind turbines to Mississippi where it could be distributed across existing lines to Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and other states in the South.

### [Red Books And Yellowcake - The Permanent Quest For Uranium](#)

Only taking the world's present 439 civil reactors and ignoring the 200-plus reactors called "research and military", these civil reactors will need about 68 000 tonnes of uranium in 2010, but world mine output will be less than 55 000 tonnes. If the vaunted "Nuclear Renaissance" takes place as planned by the industry and about 200 - 225 new reactors are added in 2010-2020, world uranium fuel needs will grow to about 125 000

tonnes a year by 2020.

### [And You Thought Radiation Was a Problem for Nuclear Plants?](#)

A power plant has overexposed its workers to radiation, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing a fine. The plant, though, is not a reactor; it runs on coal.

### [E.P.A. Turns Down Request to Ban Lead Bullets](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday rejected a request that it ban lead bullets, saying it does not have the legal authority to do so. The American Bird Conservancy and the Center for Biological Diversity had petitioned for the ban.

### [To Win, the Green Movement Needs to Understand Leverage, not Just Footprints](#)

A few years ago I got into a heated debate about Al Gore's Inconvenient Truth with a green-minded friend of mine. My hippy friend couldn't stand the movie—not because of anything it said, but because of the 'hypocrisy' of flying around the world to preach about climate change. "Doesn't he know this sends his carbon footprint through the roof?" exclaimed my irate drinking buddy.

"He probably doesn't care." replied I. "Nor should he."

I've wondered before why so much of the environmental movement is focused on individual virtue instead of collective success. Yet I'm increasingly realizing that that's just one part of a broader issue I have with greens—we spend too much time talking about impact, and not enough talking about leverage.

### [Greenpeace claims to have shut down Greenland oil well](#)

Greenpeace claims its activists have shut down a "dangerous" oil drilling operation by a British energy company in the Arctic.

### [Author Simon Singh Puts Up a Fight in the War on Science](#)

The British Chiropractic Association sued Singh, hoping to use Britain's draconian libel laws to force him to withdraw his statements and issue an apology. Losing the case would have cost Singh both his reputation and a substantial amount of his personal wealth. Such is the state of science, where sometimes even stating simple truths (like the fact that there's no reliable evidence chiropractic can alleviate asthma in children) can bring the wrath of the antiscience crowd. What the British chiropractors didn't count on, however, was Singh himself. Having earned a PhD from Cambridge for his work at



the Swiss particle physics lab CERN, he wasn't about to back down from a scientific gunfight. Singh spent more than two years and well over \$200,000 of his own money battling the case in court, and this past April he finally prevailed. In the process, he became a hero to those challenging the pseudoscience surrounding everything from global warming to vaccines to evolution.

### [Three degrees is at least one too many](#)

It is fittingly ominous that 2010, year of the next big climate change conference, has been the hottest in recorded history. The heat rises inexorably yet the world dithers and looks away. None of the excitement that surrounded the opening stages of the climate summit at Copenhagen last year looks like materialising this November at Cancú\*in Mexico.

### [Japan Forsees Starting Carbon-Emissions Trading in 2013. Panel Reports](#)

Japan plans to start emissions trading in 2013, as the government revived a climate-protection draft law that was scrapped earlier this year when then Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama resigned.

### [Cap-and-Trade Is Beginning to Raise Some Concerns](#)

Critics have warned for years that this form of offsetting would encourage profiteering, with little or no value in efforts to curb climate change.

More recently, opponents of offsetting have likened the system to the kind of financial engineering on Wall Street that helped precipitate the recent banking crisis.

### [Review Finds Flaws in U.N. Climate Panel Structure](#)

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations needs to revise the way it manages its assessments of climate change, with the scientists involved more open to alternative views, more transparent about possible conflicts of interest and more careful to avoid making policy prescriptions, an independent review panel said Monday.

The review panel also recommended that the senior officials involved in producing the periodic assessments serve in their voluntary positions for only one report — a statement interpreted to suggest that the current chairman of the climate panel, Rajendra K. Pachauri, step down.

### [Virginia Case Against Climate Researcher Is Rejected](#)

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The state attorney general has failed to back up accusations that a former University of Virginia climate change researcher defrauded state taxpayers in obtaining government grants, a judge ruled Monday.

### [Climate Change and the Wealth of Nations](#)

Professor Kahn isn't skeptical about global warming, but he is (quite reasonably) skeptical about our ability individually and collectively to reduce carbon emissions: "attempts to reduce or reverse our carbon output — to mitigate the damage that we've already done — aren't going so well" and "evidence shows that very few individuals have cut back on their carbon-producing activities at all." Consequently, he predicts, "the world is going to get hotter."

But while this would lead many people to doomsday scenarios, Professor Kahn is an optimist who believes "that we will save ourselves by adapting to our ever-changing circumstances." He says this salvation will come from "a multitude of self-interested people armed only with their wits and access to capital markets." In short, the same economic system that led to global warming will rescue us from it.

### [Climate 'sceptic' Bjørn Lomborg now believes global warming is one of world's greatest threats](#)

One of the world's most prominent climate change sceptics has called for a \$100bn fund to fight the effects of global warming, after rethinking his views on the severity of the threat.

### [Atlantic Rising: sea level rise threatens the Orinoco Delta in Venezuela](#)

Rising sea levels are forcing the migration of indigenous peoples and threatening the freshwater ecosystem of catfish and piranha found in the Orinoco Delta near the coast of Venezuela.

### [Arctic ice: Less than meets the eye](#)

Barber, an environmental scientist at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada, went to sleep one night at midnight, just before the ship was due to reach a region of very thick sea ice. The Amundsen is only capable of breaking solid ice about a metre thick, so according to the ice forecasts for ships, the region should have been impassable.

Yet when Barber woke up early the next morning, the ship was still cruising along almost as fast as usual. Either someone had made a mistake and the ship was headed for catastrophe, or there was something very wrong with the ice, he thought, as he rushed to the bridge in his pyjamas.



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