



Drumbeat: July 22, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 22, 2011 - 10:17am

[Peak oil - are we sleepwalking into disaster?](#)

Like climate change, peak oil is often perceived by the more pessimistic analysts as one of those apocalyptic conundrums where we are already past the tipping point – meaning that any solutions human ingenuity can deliver will simply mitigate the worst-case scenario. Certainly, oil-field discoveries have been in sharp decline since the 1970s. And there is a consensus that peak oil has already been reached, at some point between 2004 and 2008. This does not bode well at a time when huge emerging nations like China and India are experiencing energy-hungry industrial revolutions. China's economic growth was 11 per cent last year and in India, it reached 9 per cent. Increased demand could soon outstrip depleted supplies.

But unlike climate change, politicians seem unwilling to encourage public debate about the ramifications of peak oil. There has been no shortage of government-commissioned reports into the problem, but most have been kept from public view – Britain and the US, for example, have maintained the cloak of secrecy by not publishing many findings. This could be because politicians are concerned that doom-laden messages - like the prediction that ordinary families will only be able to use their cars for emergencies within 10 years because of spiralling fuel prices – will cause panic and civil disobedience on the streets. Or, a more cynical view, might suggest that governments and oil companies are so deeply entwined – in some cases like Saudi Arabia and Iran they are, indeed, the very same thing and we all know about the intimate connections between BP and the political world here in the UK – that educating citizens on the need to move towards conservation and away from consumption would damage business and tax revenues and possibly, even, the foundations of capitalism itself.

[Earnings up but output down at many oil companies](#)

HOUSTON (Reuters) - The world's largest oil companies, including Exxon Mobil Corp and Royal Dutch Shell Plc, are expected to report out-sized quarterly profits, but investors are likely to respond with a yawn, focusing instead on the companies' ability to raise output.

Analysts at Barclays Capital expect profits at the oil companies and refiners it follows will increase 42 percent in the second quarter, fueled by a jump in crude prices and global refining margins.

[Oil-Drilling Safety Bill Stalls Amid Fight over Oil Royalties](#)

A group of mostly Republican lawmakers blocked a key vote on legislation to strengthen oil-drilling safety Thursday after efforts to use the bill to steer billions of dollars of oil royalties to coastal states like Alaska and Louisiana appeared likely to fail.

The move postpones an important committee-level vote on offshore safety legislation that has been in the works for more than a year, following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

[Researchers: Gulf Drilling Could Add 230,000 Jobs](#)

An energy research group predicted that an increase in drilling activity in the Gulf of Mexico could create 230,000 jobs and add \$44 billion to the economy next year.

IHS on Thursday said that the U.S. would produce more jobs, more tax revenue and another 411,000 barrels of oil per day if the industry was allowed to operate at full speed in the Gulf. The government essentially shut down offshore drilling for several months last year after BP's massive oil spill while it put new safety regulations in place.

[Why oil autocracy is a complicated thing](#)

Till today, though no full-fledged petro-state has been caught up in the Arab Spring, we remain jittery because of the possibility for more economic havoc should the turbulence strike a big oil producer. Yet Venezuela tells us that the range of possible outcomes includes not only the recurrence of a Yemen or Libya scenario; it is also changes to the market status quo in a simple change of leadership.

[Mexico's largest oil field could boost production](#)

(Reuters) - Mexico's state oil company Pemex is optimistic about the prospects for its largest oil field where it could boost production with new discoveries, an independent board member said on Thursday.

Fluvio Ruiz, one of four independent members of Pemex's board of directors, said the giant Ku Maloob Zaap field could produce 1 million barrels per day by 2015, up from the 850,000 barrels per day it is currently pumping.

[Malawi president calls for calm, 18 dead in protests](#)

(Reuters) - At least 18 people have been killed in clashes between police and demonstrators during violent nationwide protests against President Bingu wa Mutharika, the Malawian health ministry said on Thursday.

Spokesman Henry Chimbali confirmed 10 deaths in the northern cities of Karonga and Mzuzu, where protesters angry at chronic fuel shortages and Mutharika's perceived autocracy ransacked the offices of his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) on Wednesday.

[Activist documents violence at Syrian demonstrations](#)

Damascus (CNN) -- She asks that we call her "Laila" but it is not her real name, as she has to protect her identity for her own safety.

A human rights activist and lawyer, Laila says she has been to at least two dozen anti-government demonstrations in and around Damascus and wanted to observe firsthand violations by the Syrian regime.

[Could the moon provide clean energy for Earth?](#)

Helium-3 is in scarce supply on Earth, much more abundant on the moon.

[Russia to resume fuel exports to Kyrgyzstan](#)

Russia has agreed to resume fuel exports to Kyrgyzstan following a gasoline shortage in the country, an advisor to Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev said on Thursday.

"Supplies will be continued," the Gazeta.kz news agency quoted advisor Farid Niyazov as saying. "Such an agreement was reached at a meeting of the heads of governments of Russia and Kyrgyzstan on Wednesday in Moscow."

[Ukraine's Tymoshenko says 'not guilty' of gas charges](#)

KIEV (RIA Novosti) - Former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, accused of signing a "disadvantageous" gas deal with Russia in 2009, denied on Friday the charges against her.

[U.S. delays final report on BP oil spill probe](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A U.S. team probing the causes of last year's massive BP oil spill has delayed the release of its final report in order to more fully weigh the evidence, investigators said on Friday.

[Losing Our Energy Security](#)

Energy security.

At one point or another, we've all heard this term...

We have much less of it now than ever before. Even scarier is the fact that going forward, our energy security will be increasingly unstable.

[Con Ed meets heavy NYC demand, but imposes brownouts](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Consolidated Edison (ED.N) said power usage on Thursday was the highest this year and could break the all-time record on Friday as New York homes and businesses crank up their air conditioners to escape a brutal heatwave.

But Con Edison, which delivers electricity to about 3.2 million customers in New York City and Westchester County, did not meet the heavy demand without some problems.

[As heat index soars, so does record-setting power demand](#)

(CNN) -- The sweltering heat wave that has much of the United States in a stranglehold is stressing the nation's power grids to the max, according to energy officials.

Thursday, the Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator (MISO) -- the organization that manages the flow of bulk power in 12 states across the Midwest -- declared an emergency alert due to high temperatures stretching generators to a much higher-than-forecast load.

[Holding back the tar sands: Keystone XL and civil disobedience - a web chat with Bill McKibben, David Hughes and Kate Sheppard](#)

TransCanada, one of the largest companies involved in tar sands exploration, has proposed a 1,661 mile, 36-inch extension of the newly built Keystone Pipeline from Alberta, Canada to Texas in the United States. This would expand the capacity for refining oil produced from the Alberta tar sands by approximately one million barrels per day.

Greenhouse gas emissions from the tar sands are higher than those emitted from conventional oil due to the energy intensive extraction process. The extraction process is also highly costly in terms of natural gas and water usage, resulting in a legacy of huge tailing ponds of contaminated water. In addition the development of the tar sands is resulting in an attack on the lifestyle of indigenous populations in the area.

[Peak Research](#)

Life has been very hard for scientists during the last few years. Already, the life of an active scientist was a rat race in which you had to run in circles, trying to get grants that would allow you to pay students and postdocs and they would help you write more papers that then would be used to support proposal that would provide you grants that would allow you to pay students..... It has always been like that, but in the last few years it has become hell. More and more bureaucracy, tight controls, guidelines to follow, time schedules to keep and less and less money. And, of course, any attempt to do something creative and a little outside the known schemes seems to be becoming impossible to finance.

[The future of the university](#)

Sooner or later the loss of knowledge will be inevitable. We will no longer have the means to keep all that knowledge alive. Then we shall have to get rid of some parts of it. I shall not at this point risk an assessment of which ones that will be. However, I warn against the idea that the humanities will have to go first. Until now scientists and engineers were the ones who could proudly claim to create the basis of our production and therefore of our economy. However, when raw materials and energy are getting scarce it is precisely the stuff with which they used to enchant us that will no longer be available to them. Neither scientists nor engineers are able to create something out of nothing. To the contrary. Now questions will appear which they have never learned to answer.

[Peak Moment 197: Portable House, Simple Life](#)

Embarrassed by her middle class affluence after a visit to Guatemala, Dee Williams grabbed her hammer, built a tiny house on wheels, downsized to less than 400 possessions, and parked her house in a friend's yard. Her living arrangement then blossomed into a multi-generational family / community. Dee shows us her warm and comfy 7×12 foot house, how she meets city codes, and some unusual ways this life has affected her. *Her advice to wannabe tiny home builders: Take on the experiment. Just do it!* [<http://portlandalternativedwellings.com/>]

[The Peak Oil Crisis: Reality On Hold](#)

As much of America bakes in some of the highest temperatures ever recorded and while Washington argues interminably over taxes, budget cuts and debt caps, one is struck by the unreality of it all. When the House of Representatives votes to preserve the incandescent light bulb for a while as a symbol of personal freedom, it is as if we have entered a wonderland where black is white, up is down and as a nation we have lost touch with reality.

Our media, the cornerstone of our democracy, clearly has failed to communicate something of great import to us. Perhaps it is the information overload of the electronic age. There is so much news that the big picture is lost in mountains of trivia - there are only so many minutes in day. Another possibility is that there is so much bad news out there, that nobody really wants to hear or think about it. Denial is overwhelming us.

[Oil heads for \\$100 as Greece aid deal reached](#)

SINGAPORE – Oil prices rose toward \$100 a barrel Friday in Asia after European leaders reached an aid deal aimed at stanching Greece's financial crisis.

...Crude prices were also given a boost by the International Energy Agency's decision not to release more oil.

The IEA said June 23 that it would release 60 million barrels of oil in a bid to lower prices, and traders speculated this week that the group was planning to send more barrels to the market.

[Gas prices turn up, could put damper on economy](#)

So much for relief at the pump — and some much needed fuel for the sputtering economy.

After falling to \$3.54 a gallon from May's \$3.98 peak, prices have unexpectedly surged the past two weeks to a national average of almost \$3.70 — a dollar higher than levels a year ago.

[Gas Prices Rise Despite Obama-IEA Oil Release](#)

Gas prices, perhaps more than unemployment numbers, housing stats, or stock tickers, have a huge effect on the American psyche. After all, even urbanites who don't have to fill their tank regularly notice how gas prices affect the costs of other products and services. So for politicians who want to get on voters' good side--especially in the face of other dismal economic measures--tinkering with oil and gas prices could be a smart move.

That's just what President Obama did. Less than a month ago, on June 23, the Obama administration and the International Energy Agency sent oil markets in an unexpected frenzy after announcing that 60 million barrels of crude oil would be released from its member countries' reserves--half that amount coming from America's own Strategic Petroleum Reserve. But like that frenzy, the effect of the release on gas prices was short-lived.

[Rising oil prices stand to hit energy-inefficient Kyiv hard](#)

Heavily dependent on one supplier and inefficient, Ukraine will suffer the consequences of an oil price spike more than the rest of Europe.

[Heat to test East Coast power grid](#)

Overall, the electrical grid covering the heat-afflicted East Coast and Midwest has handled power demands. The grid can manage usage as much as 15% higher than the expected "peak" demand, says John Moura of the North American Electric Reliability Corp., a group that monitors the grid.

Because of the economy, Moura adds, peak summer power demand nationwide is down about 35 gigawatts, a 4% drop from industry estimates made in 2008.

[America's Most Expensive Electricity](#)

Prices tended to be high in areas with small populations, rural areas, and cities with high operating costs. Hawaii had the highest average residential price of electricity, at 24.2¢ per kilowatt hour in 2009, compared with a U.S. average of 11.51¢, followed by Connecticut and New York, the EIA data show. Average prices were the lowest in North Dakota, Washington, and Idaho.

[China, rich with coal, seeks more next door in Mongolia to meet its energy needs](#)

TAVAN TOLGOI, MONGOLIA — Overlooking a deep black gash in the Gobi Desert, Od Jambaljamts watched Caterpillar trucks rumble across the rim of the world's biggest undeveloped coal deposit — and mused on Mongolia's good fortune to have the world's most voracious consumer of coal just a few scores of miles away.

"China is so big that even if they cut their economy in half they will still need what we have here," said Od, a former Mongolian diplomat in Washington who, along with his younger brother, now controls the Mongolian Mining Corp.

[Billionaire Jindal's JSW Delays Power-Project Expansion on High Coal Costs](#)

JSW Energy Ltd., the Indian power producer controlled by the billionaire Jindal family, delayed expansion of an electricity project because of high coal costs.

The company will shelve a planned 3,200-megawatt expansion at a plant in Ratnagiri in the western state of Maharashtra as it waits for coal-pricing "clarity" from Indonesia and Australia, Chief Executive Officer Lalit Kumar Gupta said in an interview in Mumbai yesterday.

[Iran: 'No decision on India flows yet'](#)

Iran said today it has no plans yet to cut oil exports to India over a payment dispute according to local media reports.

Iran warned India on Monday that it would stop exporting oil to India from 1 August if

the financial dispute over payment was not resolved.

[ANALYSIS-India to fill Iran supply gap with Saudi, Iraqi oil](#)

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India's immediate strategy to deal with the loss of crude from Iran in August is to buy more from Saudi Arabia and Iraq, while inventories and plant maintenance give refiners breathing space as they seek to establish new supply lines.

Iran has cut supply as it tries to put pressure on Indian refiners to settle \$5 billion in debt for oil supplied, and to find a way to pay for future shipments.

[Iran, India oil rumpus has wider implications](#)

(Reuters) - The market appears quite relaxed about the escalating dispute between India and Iran over payment for oil supplies, but it has wider implications and may yet disrupt Asian crude markets.

[Schlumberger Second-Quarter Net Rises as U.S. Onshore-Oil Drilling Booms](#)

Schlumberger Ltd. (SLB), the world's largest oilfield-services provider, said second-quarter profit rose 64 percent as increasing crude prices drove more U.S. onshore drilling.

[Jeff Rubin: Debt ceilings aren't the only way America can default](#)

For the People's Bank of China, which is long a trillion or so dollars of U.S. Treasury bonds, it is impossible not to notice the game of debt brinkmanship currently being played in Washington.

If Congress does the unthinkable by not raising the debt ceiling, the U.S. government will start defaulting on its debt, of which the People's Bank of China is the single largest holder.

[Libya rebels: Brega oil installations boobytrapped](#)

A top Libyan rebel official says Moammar Gadhafi's troops have boobytrapped petroleum installations in the strategic oil port of Brega so they can be blown up if his regime loses the town.

Rebel diplomatic chief Mahmoud Jibril also says Gadhafi's forces have boobytrapped oil fields, but did not state which fields. Brega is a key oil processing and shipment hub. The fields that feed it lie far to the south in the Libyan desert.

[Amnesty: Saudi plans anti-terror law to stop dissent](#)

(Reuters) - Amnesty International accused Saudi Arabia of planning a crackdown on public dissent with new anti-terror legislation that it said was a cover to stop further pro-democracy protests in the absolute monarchy.

[Yemen says senior al-Qaeda member killed](#)

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — A senior leader of Yemen's al-Qaeda branch has been killed in fighting in the nearly lawless south of the country, the Defense Ministry said on Thursday.

[China power regulator eyes say on hot power issues](#)

(Reuters) - The new head of China's power industry regulator hopes to make advancements on coal and power shortages, the ultra-high voltage(UHV) power line plan and grid access for wind and solar power, changing the image of a toothless electricity watchdog.

[Analysis: Apple guns for Exxon as king of stocks](#)

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Apple Inc is within sight of catching up with Exxon Mobil as the most valuable company in the world.

Based on Apple's growth trajectory, and a number of catalysts in the pipeline -- from a possible new iPhone this fall to expansions in China -- investors and analysts say Apple could unseat Exxon in the next six months, or latest by the middle of next year.

[5 Things You Didn't Know About Oil](#)

Some industry experts forecast an optimistic trend that predicts the year 2020 to be the year when global production would peak and slowly begin its downward spiral resulting in the research and sourcing of other possible resources to replace crude oil. But there is a section of the industry that holds a more pessimistic view based on the assumption that the extensive industrial and transport use of petrol in the present day, fuelled by its extremely low prices has already pushed us over the peak and what we see now is the descent.

[Preparing for post-peak](#)

South Africans trying to fill their cars with petrol last week will have some idea of what it would be like to live in a world of diminishing oil supply.

Though sector strikes were the reason this time, future oil price shocks, supply disruptions and shrinking economies could be the outcome of a continuing global dependence on oil, says the Association for the Study of Peak Oil SA (Aspo).

“The world is addicted to oil,” says Aspo chairman Jeremy Wakeford. Oil accounts for 34% of total global energy and 95% of transportation fuel.

[The Shale Oil Revolution: Who could win In North America and Argentina?](#)

The oil market is nervous. As we have highlighted over here, Chinese demand remains the main concern. China's oil imports fell to an eight-month low in June, 5.7% lower than the month before and down by 11.5% year on year. The figures add to concerns that the Chinese government will slow growth with a sharp tightening of monetary policy, in response to consumer price inflation running at 6.4 per cent last month despite five interest rate rises since October. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has increased production to a record 9.6mbpd, an increase of 800kbpd from January, and Iraq reached record output of 2.75mbpd, almost back to pre-war levels. As of June, IEA inventories remain above the 2006-2010 average. However, I still receive doomsday messages about supply. And I say, don't worry, supply is adequate.

[Sorry, but Fracking Doesn't End the Peak Oil Debate](#)

It's not clear that 2006 was the official peak year. No one is really sure when the peak will occur. Maybe it already did (some observers are skeptical about the truth of Saudi Arabia's reserves), and maybe it won't occur for another 20 years.

[Is Peak Coal Real?](#)

About a year ago, I wrote an article about peak coal. And I took some heat for it...

“I've had it,” wrote Mark S. “Peak oil, peak natural gas, peak water, peak uranium. What about peak fear mongering, Ian? These peaks don't exist. We have plenty of oil. It's not going anywhere. You're just trying to sell letters.”

You're wrong, Mark... and you forgot peak coal.

[Rep. Roscoe Bartlett Notes Urgency to Reduce Oil Dependency at the first joint United States Air Force and Army Energy Forum](#)

In his presentation, Congressman Bartlett warned of threats to US economic and national security as well as geopolitical stability as a consequence of the inability of oil supplies to meet increases in demand, led by China, coupled with increasing control over oil production and prices by OPEC governments. He said that the correlation between oil price spikes and recessions in the United States after the U.S. peaked in conventional oil

production in 1970 portends worldwide economic distress and the potential for conflict between nations. He noted that the most recent recession in 2008-09 was the first to occur in the absence of a supply disruption or terrorist incident. He asked why major private oil companies are shifting from oil to natural gas production. He added that current U.S. oil prices adjusted for inflation are above levels reached before these previous recessions.

[Where the Future Oil Is At](#)

The wide-ranging Al Fin hit upon a graph that will stun the peak oil believers. You'll want to save this. The flip side is it comes from the International Energy Agency (IEA) – a point that many will use to cast justifiable suspicion. Yet absolute accuracy isn't needed, the blocks paint a picture of a ratio that even if wrong by 50%, there is a huge amount of petroleum supply yet to be used.

[Graphene-coated sensors to strike oil?](#)

Tiny sensors coated with the wonder-material graphene and powered by flowing water could expedite the discovery of oil and natural gas reserves, according to university researchers supported by the energy industry.

The idea is to plop the sensors into the water injected down exploration wells where they can then move sideways through cracks and crevices in the Earth in search of hydrocarbons. The electricity generated by the flow of water would allow the sensors to relay their findings to the surface.

[Exxon spill highlights gaps in pipeline oversight](#)

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Three weeks after a broken Exxon Mobil pipeline spilled 1,000 barrels of oil into the Yellowstone River, federal officials remain unsure how many pipelines carrying hazardous fuels cross the nation's rivers and streams, nor can they say how deeply those pipelines are buried.

The spill into the Montana river amid historic flooding this month drew attention to what had long been an overlooked part of the nation's energy infrastructure: the presence of pipelines underneath rivers coursing throughout the country. The spill raised concern that other underwater pipelines may have been exposed to debris by high and fast-moving waters that swept much of the U.S. in recent months.

[Split Within Nuclear Regulatory Agency](#)

WASHINGTON — A majority of the five-member Nuclear Regulatory Commission is signaling that it wants to move slowly on at least some new recommendations from its staff on how to reduce the chance of a Fukushima-type accident at an American reactor despite calls by its chairman for swift action.

Three commissioners are resisting a proposal by the chairman, Gregory B. Jaczko, that the commission act promptly on all the recommendations, which were issued last week by a team of six senior staff members. Mr. Jaczko said that because this task force had completed its evaluation in 90 days, the commissioners should be able to decide within a similar time frame what changes to make in safety regulations, although the reforms themselves would take longer.

[Chubu Electric to Build \\$1.3 Billion Tsunami Defenses for Hamaoka Plant](#)

Chubu Electric Power Co. plans to spend an estimated 100 billion yen (\$1.3 billion) to construct additional tsunami defenses at its Hamaoka nuclear plant in Shizuoka, southwest of Tokyo.

[Japan reactors ordered to check data for stress tests](#)

(Reuters) - Japan's atomic safety watchdog has ordered all nuclear generators to check or rerun quake-resistance assessments, the basis for newly imposed safety measures, after Kyushu Electric Power Co reported its analysis included improper data.

[Return of evacuees still up in the air](#)

The government may decide when to lift restrictions on local residents in the "emergency evacuation preparation zone"--many of whom have evacuated to other locations both within and outside Fukushima Prefecture--as early as August. The emergency evacuation preparation zone covers parts of Minami-Soma, Tamura, Kawauchimura and Narahamachi, plus all of Hironomachi.

[Vernon plans for possible future without nuclear facility](#)

VERNON -- Now in the early stages of planning for a future without the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, officials in Vernon met with the Windham Regional Commission Thursday afternoon to discuss the municipal's planning grant to design a long-term solution if the facility closes next spring.

[CEO confirms Chevy to sell diesel Cruze in U.S.](#)

Planned for introduction in 2013, it would be the first Detroit passenger-vehicle diesel since the 2006 Jeep Liberty CRD sport-utility, and the first diesel car from Detroit since the 1980s.

[Electric cars about to cost more in California](#)

The state has run out of the \$5,000 rebates it was giving drivers who bought all-electric vehicles such as the Nissan Leaf and Tesla Roadster. Also, prices for the Nissan Leaf are going up.

[Celanese to Make Low-Cost Ethanol From Gas if U.S. Policy Changes](#)

Celanese Corp. (CE) would make low-cost ethanol for U.S. motorists using natural gas if policy makers end subsidies for corn-based production and amend the law that allows only renewable sources of the fuel additive.

Celanese can make ethanol from natural gas for about \$60 a barrel, one-third less than the corn-based process encouraged by a 45-cent-a-gallon federal subsidy, Chief Executive Officer David Weidman said today in a telephone interview. Celanese has begun building a demonstration plant and research center in Clear Lake, Texas, where it plans to begin production in mid- 2012.

[Solar power boom shines for consumers](#)

Solar energy is gaining fans in homeowners who aren't just tree huggers — they're penny pinchers.

[Japanese firm perfects fuel cell for homes of the future](#)

A Japanese company has perfected the technology that will store green energy in the homes of the immediate future and control where and when that power is provided to the building.

Other firms are working on similar storage and control systems for individual homes, but Japanese companies have redoubled their efforts in the wake of the massive earthquake and tsunami that devastated the northeast of the country in March and destroyed the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear plant.

[NY mayor's charity boosts anti-coal campaign](#)

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's charity is donating \$50 million to the Sierra Club's campaign to shut down coal-fired power plants and replace them with alternative energy sources, including wind and solar power.

[Analysis: Ontario green energy plan feels the heat](#)

VANCOUVER (Reuters) - An ambitious plan to feed renewable energy into the power grid of Canada's economic heartland is under fire and could flame out altogether in the autumn, just two years after its launch.

Ontario's opposition Progressive Conservative party, who are leading in the polls ahead of an October 6 election, has vowed to scrap a provincial program that pays above-market rates to producers of energy from sources such as the sun and wind.

[WTO to rule on Japan's green energy complaint against Canada](#)

The World Trade Organization said on Wednesday it will rule on a Japanese claim that a Canadian province's renewable energy programme flouts international trade law.

[U.S., Seeking to Reshape Electric Grid, Adopts a Power Line Rule](#)

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators laid down principles on Thursday for planning and paying for new power lines, part of a long-term policy effort to help the nation's electricity grid grow enough to meet the demands of renewable energy and a competitive electricity market.

The rule, which has been in the works for several years, is intended to push the organizations that manage the grid into cooperating with one another, so that developers can build power lines across several states and multiple electrical jurisdictions.

[Where the green jobs are growing in the U.S.](#)

It's no secret the U.S. is struggling with high unemployment and dismal job growth. But at least one industry seems to be bucking the trend. "Sizing the clean economy: A national and regional green jobs assessment," is an unbiased report published by Brookings. It demonstrates that, despite what some might think, solutions to environmental problems are not a drag on federal and state budgets, and can instead create revenue and new jobs.

[EPA Strengthens Protection on Waterways Affected by Mountaintop Mining](#)

This Thursday, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final guidance on protecting the quality of water sources in Appalachian communities where there are currently mountaintop coal mining operations.

[EPA Changes Energy Star Requirements for Dishwashers and Furnaces](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday announced is it updating the requirements for both dishwashers and furnaces under the Energy Star program.

[Somali president issues urgent appeal for aid as famine hits nation](#)

Mogadishu, Somalia (CNN) -- The Somali president issued an urgent appeal for international aid as his drought-stricken country faces a famine that has left half of the population in dire need.

[India explores ways to curb prodigious food waste at extravagant wedding parties](#)

As the ranks of India's wealthy surge with rapid economic growth, many families are staging extravagant displays of food at their children's weddings to show off their newfound affluence.

The prodigious waste that follows has horrified many in a nation where food prices are skyrocketing and tens of millions of young children are malnourished.

[Organic fruit and veg made easy](#)

Probably the most productive piece of agricultural land in Britain lies in the foothills of the Black Mountains in Wales. Here, on a modest 1½ acres, Dr Paul Benham and a handful of students and volunteers produce around £25,000 worth of organic fruit and veg each year. And the best bit is: you could replicate it in your backyard.

[To Nullify Lead, Add a Bunch of Fish Bones](#)

Today, there is more lead contamination in America's cities than any federal or state agency could ever afford to clean up and haul away. So scientists and regulators are trying a new strategy, transforming the dangerous metal into a form the human body cannot absorb, thus vastly reducing the risk of lead poisoning.

The principle is straightforward, said Victor R. Johnson, an engineer with Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc. "The fish bones are full of calcium phosphate," he said. "As they degrade, the phosphates migrate into the soil." The lead in the soil, deposited by car exhaust from the decades when gasoline contained lead or from lead-based paint residue, binds with the phosphate and transforms into pyromorphite, a crystalline mineral that will not harm anyone even if consumed.

[Gates Foundation: 'We need to reinvent the toilet'](#)

"No innovation in the past 200 years has done more to save lives and improve health than the sanitation revolution triggered by invention of the toilet," Sylvia Mathews Burwell, president of the foundation's global development program, said in a statement. "But it did not go far enough. It only reached one-third of the world. What we need are new approaches. New ideas. In short, we need to reinvent the toilet."

The problem with “resilience,” though, is that it also has a perfectly clear meaning. Once people figure out what that is, it’s a safe bet that they’ll be hunting for another buzzword in short order, because resilience can be defined very precisely: it’s the opposite of efficiency.

[Coal-Themed Sculpture Annoys Lawmakers](#)

Another dispatch from the coal-fired emissions front:

Some people in Wyoming, one of the country’s top energy-producing states, are not happy with a sculpture that has just been installed at the University of Wyoming that depicts a link between human-caused climate change and dead forests.

[Africa a frontier carbon market](#)

Africa is seen as the next frontier for investment in carbon offset projects while China and India prepare to roll out their own cap-and-trade schemes.

[What’s Killing Carbon Capture?](#)

CCS technology promised the best of all worlds: Abundant power from coal while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Now pilot programs are pulling the plug.

[Seeing Trends, Coalition Works to Help a River Adapt](#)

Based on current warming trends, climate scientists anticipate that in the next 100 years the Nisqually River will become shallower and much warmer. Annual snowpack will decline on average by half. The glacier that feeds the river, already shrunken considerably, will continue to recede.

...To prepare for these and other potentially devastating changes, an unusual coalition of tribal government leaders, private partners and federal and local agencies is working to help the watershed and its inhabitants adapt. The coalition is reserving land farther in from wetlands so that when the sea rises, the marsh will have room to move as well; it is promoting hundreds of rain gardens to absorb artificially warmed runoff from paved spaces and keep it away from the river; and it is installing logjams intended to cause the river to hollow out its own bottom and create cooler pools for fish.

[US lawmakers wade in to aviation emissions row](#)

Members of the House of Representatives are seeking to ban US airlines from taking part in the EU's emissions trading scheme in a move likely to ratchet up tensions

between Brussels and Washington over climate policy.

[US panel votes to bar climate funding](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – A panel of the US Congress on Thursday moved to bar foreign assistance related to climate change, defying President Barack Obama's calls to contribute as part of an international accord.

On a party line vote, the Republican-led House Foreign Affairs Committee voted to ban funding in next year's budget for Obama's initiative to support poor nations in adapting to climate change or pursuing clean energy.

[The troubling convergence of poverty, violence and climate change](#)

Some 200 years ago Benjamin Franklin noted that nothing is certain except for death and taxes. Today Franklin could readily have been additionally certain of the inevitability of two further events of sad note, namely armed conflicts and global warming.

In his latest book, impassioned investigative journalist and courageous war correspondent Christian Parenti attempts to connect those two additional certainties of armed conflict and global warming by describing and interpreting events he has witnessed which suggest that the anthropogenic climate change now in progress is already leading to ever greater amounts of social unrest, totalitarianism, violence and armed conflict.



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