



## Drumbeat: March 24, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 24, 2012 - 11:16am

### [Spread Reckoning: U.S. Suburbs Face Twin Perils of Climate Change and Peak Oil](#)

*An excerpt from Before the Lights Go Out: Conquering the Energy Crisis Before It Conquers Us (John Wiley & Sons, 2012), by Maggie Koerth-Baker.*

The researchers' report doesn't cover all of the questions surrounding the idea of peak oil. For instance, they specifically avoid predicting what economic, political, or social side effects peak oil could produce, and their research covered only supplies of "conventional oil"—no tar sands or fuels made from coal or natural gas. This group was also much smaller than the one that evaluates the evidence for climate change—only eight experts, drawn from the United Kingdom and the United States. Yet the project is an important first for peak oil: a group with no obvious bias had collected all of the available research, evaluated it in a transparent way, and summarized the whole body of evidence for non-experts.

Here's what they found. First, peak oil is a real occurrence. We know enough about how oil fields work and what happens during the life of a given oil deposit to say that production of oil will peak, and then it will decline.

Second, figuring out *when* that decline will happen isn't easy, for reasons I've already mentioned and more. Yet although the data on oil supplies are flawed and patchy and the methods used to forecast future supplies have some serious limitations, the researchers agree that there's still enough information available that we can start to form a clear picture of global oil supplies and make some adequate estimates about how long conventional oil will last. These estimates won't be perfect, but they're necessary, and they'll be accurate enough to help us plan for the future, at least until better data come along.

### [Oil Rises Almost \\$3 a Barrel on Iran Report](#)

Oil climbed after Reuters reported Iranian oil exports will drop by 300,000 barrels a day this month because of tighter sanctions.

Futures gained 1.4 percent on the New York Mercantile Exchange after earlier spiking more than 2 percent in three minutes, following the report, which cited Petrologistics, a Geneva-based consulting company. Stephen Schork, president of the Schork Group in Villanova, Pennsylvania, said the gain may have triggered traders' automatic buy orders.

### [Stuck with high gas prices, drivers just pump less](#)

Americans have pumped less gas every week for the past year.

During those 52 weeks, gasoline consumption dropped by 4.2 billion gallons, or 3 percent, according to MasterCard SpendingPulse. The decline is longer than a 51-week slide during the recession.

The main reason: higher gas prices. The national average for a gallon of gas is \$3.89, the highest ever for this time of year, and experts say it could be \$4.25 by late April. As a result, Americans are taking fewer trips to restaurants and shopping malls. When they take a vacation, they're staying closer to home.

### [Texas Tops Finds From Brazil to Bakken as Best Prospect](#)

Energy companies in search of oil riches rivaling the biggest finds from Brazil to Angola are flocking to Texas shale, where new wells have triggered a 230- fold increase in crude output in three years.

### [Uzbekistan closes the gas valve for Tajikistan](#)

Uzbekistan Tajikistan advised that the 1 April ceases to supply natural gas to the country. About this BakuToday 24 March, it was reported in State-run companies "Tajiktransgas." According to the source, the Uzbek gas in his letter to the Tajik colleagues explain the supply shortage of gas resources. According to reports, two Britons determined to ensure deliveries of Uzbek blue fuel in China and Russia.

### [Bulgarian Watchdog Caps Gas Price Increase at 13%](#)

Bulgaria's natural gas price is to go up by 12.73% as of April 1, 2012, the State Commission for Energy and Water Regulation (DKEVR) has decided at a closed doors meeting late Friday evening.

### [Obama's Speedy Keystone Review Won't Accelerate Cushing Pipe](#)

President Barack Obama's promise to expedite the review of the southern leg of TransCanada Corp. (TRP)'s Keystone XL pipeline won't speed up the project, which already is slated to start construction as soon as June.

### [Wealthy Donors Dump Obama Over Climate Fails, Keystone XL Approval](#)

Green donors claim they're dumping Obama after he announced he'll 'fast track' the

Keystone XL tar sands pipeline (its southern half, anyway). They're especially mad that the president hasn't even so much as acknowledged the threat the pipeline project poses to climate change, and that he's eager to approve drilling projects to appeal to moderates but won't even discuss global warming in public.

### [Obama Officials May Study Safety Risks in Fracking Pipelines](#)

The Obama administration may start collecting data on pipelines energy companies use to transport natural gas and oil extracted from shale by hydraulic fracturing, according to a government report.

### [What goes up...](#)

When Middle East brinkmanship flares, as it is now, mainstream press headlines certainly spike in line with crude prices, but increased demand is a more pervasive, if less sexy, cause of increased oil prices.

And that shouldn't give any credence to the well-known but misguided "Peak Oil" theory, which states, in short, that oil production has peaked and supplies will soon be exhausted. Much more likely is that oil will become too expensive to be practical long before we run out.

### ["A Substantial Failure" Of Energy Education](#)

It is a curious thing when a mindset develops. Thoughts, data interpretation, reactions, and behaviors become solidified into expectations about what is normal and what is to come as that sense of normal changes. It's an important process of human development, and it is a particularly interesting thing to look at on a national scale -- and when it comes to American perspectives on energy, attempting to sort out the present situation requires looking at what 'we', the collective USA, have been telling ourselves.

### [China in a tug of war between two Sudans](#)

JUBA, South Sudan — Soon after South Sudan became independent last year, China opened an embassy here, eager to protect its oil interests. It quickly dispatched its foreign minister and began discussing a huge aid package for this destitute land.

Just a few months later, Beijing finds itself trapped in a bitter wrangle between South Sudan and its former rulers in Sudan, with both countries pressing Beijing to take their side.

### [Chávez Strengthens Cuban Ties With Plan for Ice Cream Factory](#)

For years Venezuela has been propping up the weak Cuban economy by sending oil. In return, Cuba sends Venezuela other goods, services and manpower, including thousands of doctors. It has also sent military advisers, whose presence has at times caused friction and resentment within the Venezuelan military.

### [Gulf Keystone bosses' trip to China hints at takeover deal](#)

The bosses of takeover target Gulf Keystone Petroleum have visited China with an army of advisers, leading to speculation that a Far Eastern oil giant could be interested in the company.

### [Doctors oppose Utah oil refinery expansions](#)

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A group of Utah doctors are leading a campaign against expansion plans at three of Utah's five oil refineries.

Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment says the refineries straddling in Salt Lake and Davis counties will only add to an air pollution problem.

### [Brazil may shift jurisdiction of Chevron case](#)

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters) - A judge in Campos, Brazil, could shift the criminal charges filed against Chevron and drill-rig operator Transocean to Rio de Janeiro, a decision that would remove a crusading prosecutor from the case.

### [Gulf Dolphins Exposed to Oil Are Seriously Ill, Agency Says](#)

Dolphins in Barataria Bay off Louisiana, which was hit hard by the BP oil spill in 2010, are seriously ill, and their ailments are probably related to toxic substances in the petroleum, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration suggested on Friday.

### [Brazil May Invest \\$3 Billion in Energy Efficiency as Loans Rise](#)

Brazilian businesses may invest as much as \$3 billion in energy-efficiency measures through 2020 as banks become more comfortable offering loans that will be repaid mainly through cost savings, according to the International Finance Corp.

### [U.K. Supreme Court Refuses Government Appeal on Solar Cuts](#)

A U.K. government appeal to bring forward solar-power subsidy cuts was refused by the Supreme Court, which upheld two previous rulings that early tariff changes would be unlawful.

### [Eurus Energy Considering 40-Megawatt Solar Project in Japan](#)

The company and land owners have agreed to study the possibility of building the plant in Awaji city, Hyogo prefecture, they said in a joint statement yesterday. If built, the plant will start operating by March 2014 and plans to sell all of its electricity to Kansai Electric Power Co., according to the statement.

### [U.S. Issues Guidelines to Help Wind-Farm Builders Protect Eagles](#)

The U.S. Interior Department released guidelines today aimed at helping wind-farm developers comply with laws that protect eagles, bats and other wildlife from spinning turbine blades.

### [Neighbors Win Court Round Over Wind Farm Noise](#)

A legal petition aimed at reinstating a state rule for limiting noise at a controversial wind farm in Maine can proceed, a judge ruled on Friday, denying a motion from the farm's developer, Fox Islands Wind, for dismissal.

### [Gamesa Picks Scotland for \\$198 Million Offshore Wind Investment](#)

Gamesa Corp. Tecnologica SA, Spain's biggest wind-turbine maker, opted to locate a 150 million-euro (\$198 million) offshore wind energy hub in Leith, the port area of the Scottish capital Edinburgh.

### [Airbus, Boeing, Embraer collaborate on Aviation Biofuel Commercialisation](#)

EADS / Airbus, Boeing and Embraer today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together on the development of drop-in, affordable aviation biofuels. The three leading airframe manufacturers agreed to seek collaborative opportunities to speak in unity to government, biofuel producers and other key stakeholders to support, promote and accelerate the availability of sustainable new jet fuel sources.

### [Apps, Anyone? Managing Your Energy Consumption](#)

The Apps for Energy contest will begin when a registration and developer-resources Web site go live on April 11. In the meantime, you can register to receive updates. Winners will be announced in May, and finalists will share \$100,000 in cash prizes.

### [As Young Lose Interest in Cars, G.M. Turns to MTV for Help](#)

He and his team are trying to help General Motors solve one of the most vexing problems facing the car industry: many young consumers today just do not care that much about cars.

That is a major shift from the days when the car stood at the center of youth culture and wheels served as the ultimate gateway to freedom and independence. Young drivers proudly parked Impalas at a drive-in movie theater, lusted over cherry red Camaros as the ultimate sign of rebellion or saved up for a Volkswagen Beetle on which to splash bumper stickers and peace signs. Today Facebook, Twitter and text messaging allow teenagers and 20-somethings to connect without wheels. High gas prices and environmental concerns don't help matters.

"They think of a car as a giant bumper," said Mr. Martin. "Think about your dashboard. It's filled with nothing but bad news."

### [GM will give owners of plug-in Volt new electric cord](#)

Volt owners are getting another lesson in what it means to be on the cutting edge of auto mobility -- many will need to bring their cars in for a beefier extension cord.

### [Governor Brown Announces Settlement to Fund Electric Car Charging Stations](#)

Governor Brown joined with the California Public Utilities Commission Friday to announce a \$120 million dollar settlement with NRG Energy Inc. that will fund the construction of a statewide network of charging stations for zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), including at least 200 public fast-charging stations and another 10,000 plug-in units at 1,000 locations across the state. The settlement stems from California's energy crisis.

### [India's Maruti to set up \\$333 mn diesel plant](#)

India's biggest carmaker, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, announced on Saturday it will spend \$333 million to build a new diesel-engine plant to meet burgeoning demand for lower fuel-cost vehicles.

### [Companies Pick Up Used Packaging, and Recycling's Cost](#)

While government requirements for recycling remain limited, pressure from environmentally minded consumers and the cost advantages of reusing materials are bringing change.

### [Governor discusses state's energy sources at ECO:nomics](#)

SANTA BARBARA — Gov. Jerry Brown spoke Friday morning in Santa Barbara to

leading energy thinkers, innovators and heads of business about California's past, present and possible future relationship with power.

### [Court orders FDA action on antibiotic use on farms](#)

WASHINGTON – A federal court judge has ordered the Food and Drug Administration to take action on its own 35-year-old rule that would stop farmers from mixing widely-used antibiotics into animal feed, a practice which has led to a surge in dangerous, drug-resistant bacteria.

### ['Like it or not, unless we have more babies, we need to accept migrants' – Part II of III](#)

In such gloomy outlook of global economies for at least a decade, the opportunities for our own economic growth are necessarily and somewhat constrained. Adding to our population in this economic climate will not advantage us significantly. Singapore so dependent on food, materials and energy crunch is particularly vulnerable. The era of abundance of resources, energy and water and a much favorable global economic environment is gone. We must not aggravate our risks and negative impact of these deficits by adding recklessly to our population base.

### ['Greed is the Beginning of Everything'](#)

SPIEGEL: Sure, but what's the right measure? Economists preach growth as the sole remedy. Is economic activity like riding a bike -- if you don't pedal you'll fall over?

Sedláček: I believe that the economy is more like walking: You can stand still without falling over. This reflects the idea of a Sabbath economy. God rested on the seventh day, after he had created the world, not because he was tired, but because he felt that what he had created was good. According to biblical custom, the fields were to be left fallow once every seven years, and debts were forgiven after 49 years. There's a saying that the good is the enemy of the better. It's correct the other way around: The best -- or chasing it -- is the worst enemy of the good.

### [Apocalyptic anxiety - The last myth](#)

Our sun has several billion years of provident energy left, and the world is not going to end anytime soon. However, the parameters of the world we have known in our lifetimes, fueled by cheap oil, is gradually changing, and it will behoove us to keep our minds open, unfettered by old habits and hyperbolic fears, and prepare to meet new challenges with our uniquely creative spirit.

### [Utah Asks U.S. to Return 20 Million Acres of Land](#)

DENVER — The conservative political movement that has rallied behind the cry of

states' rights in recent years on fronts including immigration and health care is now focusing its energies on a much older question in the American West: public lands.

On Friday, Gov. Gary R. Herbert of Utah, a Republican, signed into law House Bill 148. It asks the federal government, which owns a majority of the land in the state, to give back more than 20 million acres. A similar measure, passed by the Arizona Senate last month, is awaiting further action in the Capitol in Phoenix. Bills patterned after Utah's are being prepared for filing next year in Colorado, Idaho, Montana and New Mexico, lawmakers involved in the effort said.

### [Court Reverses E.P.A. on Big Mining Project](#)

WASHINGTON — In a sharp rebuke, a federal judge on Friday reversed a decision by the Environmental Protection Agency to revoke a critical permit for one of the nation's largest mountaintop removal mining projects.

The United States District Court judge, Amy Berman Jackson, said that the E.P.A.'s unilateral decision in January 2011 to rescind the waste disposal permit for the Spruce No. 1 mine in Logan County, W.Va., exceeded the agency's authority and violated federal law. She declared that the permit was now valid, paving the way for a mining project covering 2,278 acres to go forward.

### [Is global warming to blame for the March heat?](#)

No, it's not your imagination. It's been freakishly hot across much of the United States this spring, with more than 7,000 temperature records broken since March 12. So Andrew Freedman asked a bunch of climate scientists whether global warming was to blame.

### [U.S. heat 'unprecedented,' 7,000 records set or tied](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - An "unprecedented" March heat wave in much of the continental United States has set or tied more than 7,000 high temperature records, and signals a warming climate, health and weather experts said on Friday.

### [Mankind kept 2011 global temperatures near record - WMO](#)

(Reuters) - Human activity kept global temperatures close to a record high in 2011 despite the cooling influence of a powerful La Nina weather pattern, the World Meteorological Organization said on Friday.

On average, global temperatures in 2011 were lower than the record level hit the previous year but were still 0.40 degrees Centigrade above the 1961-1990 average and the 11th highest on record, the report said.





This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).