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#### Sprawl is on the skids as Americans gravitate to cities and jobs

Communities within commuting distance larger cities such as Los Lunas, N.M., had been beneficiaries -- or victims -- of urban sprawl. New Census data show this trend is waning.

Almost three years after the official end of a recession that kept people from moving and devastated new suburban subdivisions, people continue to avoid counties on the farthest edge of metropolitan areas, according to Census estimates out today.

The financial and foreclosure crisis forced more people to rent. Soaring gas prices made long commutes less appealing. And high unemployment drew more people to big job centers. As the nation crawls out of the downturn, cities and older suburbs are leading the way.

## Oil Rises for First Time in Three Days on Jobless Claims

Oil gained for the first time in three days as claims for U.S. unemployment benefits dropped to a four-year low and equities pared losses, raising hopes that demand will grow in the world's leading user of crude.

Futures rose 1.8 percent, completing the first weekly gain since March 9, after the Labor Department said jobless claims fell 6,000 to 357,000 in the week ended March 31 and the Standard & Poor's 500 Index rebounded from a 0.4 percent decline. Trading is closed tomorrow for Good Friday.

#### Huntsville drivers frustrated over rising gas prices

"I can't afford to fill it up 'til tomorrow," said Figures, a Huntsville resident and selfemployed electrician. At Fuel City on University Drive, where he got gas, the price for regular-grade was \$3.77 a gallon.

"It's ridiculous," he muttered. "We've got all these oil reserves, there's no shortage."

Okay, okay. Catchy headline aside, \$4 gasoline does matter to many people. Gas prices are extremely regressive. They impact the poor much more than anyone else, especially when their gas need is what economists call "inelastic," which is just a fancy word for something where demand doesn't change based on price. If someone needs to get to work, they need to get to work, and they'll fill up their gas tank to do so largely regardless of price.

That said, for the majority of the country, \$4 gas isn't going to doom us or our economy. Here's why.

#### <u>No more cheap gas?</u>

Drill all you want. The days of \$2-a-gallon gas – hell, \$3-a-gallon gas – are over.

That's just reality. Peak oil or no peak oil, we're finding new sources of oil, which is good news, except that, bad news, it's a lot harder (and thus more expensive) to tap these new finds like the ones off the coast of Brazil and in the plains of North Dakota. The reason oil companies are willing to develop these harder-to-extract sources is clear – it's called moolah, and gobs of it.

## Are we heading for a fuel crisis?

Is this normal volatility that's fuelling violence, panic and frustration worldwide — the usual price jump before the busy summer months in North America, say — or is something larger at play? Are we headed for a fuel crisis?

The short answer, perhaps not surprisingly, is that there's no short answer, according to Daniel Yergin, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and energy expert. His new book, *The Quest: Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World*, explores the global struggle for control of oil.

#### Oil Scare Turns FedEx On To Energy Efficiency

The rising cost of oil isn't just a hit to the family budget. Businesses are hurt, too. Few are more affected than firms like FedEx. It deploys nearly 700 planes and tens of thousands of trucks and vans every day to deliver packages around the world. And few business leaders are more focused on finding alternatives to petroleum-based fuels than FedEx CEO Fred Smith.

Shortly after Smith founded Federal Express, the 1973 Arab oil embargo almost killed it. The experience imprinted Smith with a keen interest in the price and availability of oil.

A Baltic Sea oil terminal opened in March by President-Elect Vladimir Putin to boost Russia's direct access to international markets may weaken the country's crude price in northern Europe compared with the south.

## Explosion shuts down oil pipeline in Turkey

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Official says explosions and fire have shut down one of twin pipelines in southeastern Turkey that carries oil from Iraq to the Mediterranean.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with government rules, says explosions near the southeastern town of Idil sparked fire at the pipeline, forcing authorities to shut it down early Thursday.

Gazprom wants gas price hike despite Putin rebuke

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Gazprom is sticking to its view that an additional rise in domestic gas prices this year is "reasonable", despite a rebuke from President-elect Vladimir Putin, a company official told reporters on Friday.

#### UK's energy production falls by 14 per cent

THE UK's energy production fell by 14 per cent last year as a result of decreased gas and oil output from the continental shelf, according to the latest figures.

Despite the drop, the production of low carbon energy increased, with nuclear power output up by more than a tenth (11 per cent) and wind power from major producers rising 59 per cent due to more turbines and higher wind speeds last year.

## Apache Quits Ultra-Deep Gas Search off Louisiana Coast

Apache Corp. (APA), the second-largest U.S. independent oil producer by market value, is abandoning a project with Energy Partners Ltd. (EPL) to explore for natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico amid a slump in the price of the fuel.

## <u>Abu Dhabi plans boost for domestic gas</u>

Abu Dhabi is on track to develop new sources of natural gas that will ease a looming shortage, says the head of the company in charge of delivering the additional supply.

Sharp increases in the demand for electricity, which is produced in gas-fired power plants, and the growing gas requirements of an expanding petrochemical industry, have

long rendered domestic natural gas production inadequate.

Blackout nation: fault leaves Cyprus without power

Cyprus's electricity resources are already stretched after its main power generating facility at Vassilikos was almost destroyed in an accidental explosion in 2011 that left 12 people dead. The Famagusta Gazette said last year's explosion occurred in containers, full of munitions, that Cyprus had confiscated from a vessel sailing from Iran to Syria.

London's Daily Telegraph said Wednesday's outage forced authorities to put ageing stations back online and to get supplies from the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state which lies north of a ceasefire line splitting the war-divided island.

### Canada's Oil Matters

We import almost twice as much oil from Canada as we do from Saudi Arabia.

We don't even have to go to war halfway around the world to ensure we get this oil. We don't have to twist our beliefs like a pretzel, or pay massive bribes to tribal thugs, either. Nor do we have to spend a trillion dollars we don't have.

#### Energy: Too important to leave to corporations

Some European nations are even now responding to the ills of global warming, peak oil, and nuclear meltdowns by making renewable energy a national priority. Washington doesn't have this option, since we don't own our own energy, and the corporations that do aren't inclined to opt for conservation or safety.

#### Son of Frackenstein

In a few short years the term "fracking" went from obscurity, mostly mistaken for an obscenity, to a household word, now often associated with flammable tap water. The technology is not new, but the market conditions that make such reckless forays deep into the earth's crust profitable, are new. Welcome to the post peak oil energy economy. What's online to follow fracking is even scarier.

The problem is we're addicted to oil, and like most addicts, we can't take that first step and admit our addiction. For over a century, we mostly glided, enjoying the high that cheap oil gave our economy and consumptive lifestyles, while not facing many consequences—at least none that we could yet recognize. But, like the meth-head whose body was rotting from the inside out, our addiction was poisoning our atmosphere, our oceans and in places, our land and fresh water. Now we're seeing the results of that five generation-long binge. We're also coming into a period that energy economists call "peak oil."

## <u>Peak oil denial: How does this help?</u>

There are people who care about facts. And then there are peak oil deniers.

Whether or not peak oil is true cannot possibly be in doubt. Within anything other than a geological frame of time, oil is a finite substance. When it is burned, it is gone. Without stretching our brains very far, it is easy to conclude that anything that is finite and consumed will someday be gone.

Peak Oil, then, is really an observation, not a theory.

#### If everyone used as much energy as Americans, we'd run out of oil in 9 years

"Aha!" say the naysayers. "But haven't I been hearing that America is on the verge of producing all the oil we'll need?" You have — but not from anyone credible.

### <u>Syria steps up offensive in Damascus suburbs</u>

BEIRUT (AP) – Syrian forces broadened an offensive against opposition fighters in three Damascus suburbs Friday in an apparent attempt to crush pockets of rebellion near the capital less than a week before an internationally sponsored cease-fire is to go into effect, activists said.

#### U.S. not backing off as Iran sanctions bite

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Obama administration's man in charge of squeezing Tehran over its nuclear program is unapologetic for the difficulties faced by banks in their dealings with Iran since the U.S. tightened sanctions against the country.

Companies that trade with Iran are struggling to get paid and the biggest Asian countries are scrambling to work around U.S. sanctions that aim to deprive Tehran of revenue needed to develop its nuclear program. "I don't feel apologetic about it because that is the consequence of these banks in Iran willingly facilitating transactions for Iran's nuclear programs," said David Cohen, undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the U.S. Treasury Department.

#### Russia's Novatek eyes Cyprus offshore gas

(Reuters) - Russia's top non-state gas producer Novatek is interested in bidding for licences to explore Cypriot offshore gas deposits, a company spokesman said on Friday.

Cyprus reported its first natural gas find in December, when U.S. based Noble Energy

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said it had discovered an estimated 5-8 trillion cubic feet in a block south of the island. The block lies close to where neighbouring Israel has reported significant discoveries in the past two years.

#### IMF warns of economic overheating risks in Russia

(Reuters) - Russian economic growth is running at or ahead of its potential and there is a risk of overheating from a planned increase in the 2012 non-oil budget deficit, an International Monetary Fund spokesman said on Thursday.

#### <u>Shell plans \$10bn gas-to-diesel facility in Louisiana</u>

Royal Dutch Shell is considering at developing a plant in Louisiana, US estimated to cost about \$10bn, to convert natural gas into diesel fuel.

The gas-to-liquids (GTL) plant will be equal in size to the company's Pearl plant in Qatar, the Wall Street Journal said.

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon joined with business leaders to detail plans for a pipeline across the state.

Pipeline project: Nearly \$1 billion, 1,100 jobs

Officials with Enbridge Inc. in Concordia on Thursday outlined a nearly \$1 billion construction project that has the potential to provide approximately 1,100 jobs.

Conoco, partners suspend \$16 billion gas pipeline project

ConocoPhillips and its partners suspended funding for a proposed \$16.3 billion pipeline that would bring natural gas from northern Canada to U.S. markets, citing low prices for the fuel.

The decision will result in a one-time charge of about \$525 million to its first-quarter results, Houston-based ConocoPhillips said in a statement today. The Mackenzie gas project's 743-mile pipeline would link three gas fields in Canada's Northwest Territories with a TransCanada Corp. (TRP) system in Alberta.

## President Scapegoat Can't Stop Picking on Big Oil

Barack Obama isn't the first U.S. president to conjure up scapegoats to serve his political ends. The Roosevelts, both Teddy and Franklin, were masters at the game. TR decided the trusts were an enemy of the people and busted the likes of Standard Oil and

Northern Securities, which controlled the railroads in the northwest. FDR demonized just about anyone who had money.

#### BP Pursues Namibia Crude Amid No Known Discovery of Oil

BP Plc (BP/)'s push into Namibian oil makes it the only major producer expanding in the West African nation, where commercial crude deposits have never been found and the sole gas field has sat idle since its discovery in 1974.

#### Eni investigated on Libyan corruption

MILAN, Italy (UPI) -- Italian energy company Eni said it was being investigated by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for alleged illegal payments to Libyan officials.

Eni in a 20-F annual report said it received a "judicial request" from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to hand over documents related to its work in Libya from 2008 to 2011.

### <u>One row too many? Argentina upsets Brazil in oil dispute</u>

BUENOS AIRES (UPI) -- Did Argentina take a step too far by targeting Brazilian oil giant Petrobras in its campaign to pressure companies to invest more into producing more oil?

Latin American oil industry experts were left wondering this week if Argentina's surprise suspension of Petrobras Argentina licenses, after similar measures against Spanish-controlled YPF, was the straw likely to break the camel's back.

#### Fracking bidders top farmers at water auction

DENVER—Front Range farmers bidding for water to grow crops through the coming hot summer and possible drought face new competition from oil and gas drillers.

At Colorado's premier auction for unallocated water this spring, companies that provide water for hydraulic fracturing at well sites were top bidders on supplies once claimed exclusively by farmers.

#### Exxon Mobil told to allow vote on fracturing disclosure

The Securities and Exchange Commission has turned down a request from Exxon Mobil Corp. to omit a resolution on hydraulic fracturing disclosures from its proxy statement, opening the door for a vote on the proposal at the company's annual shareholder meeting May 30.

"We are unable to concur in your view that Exxon Mobil may exclude the proposal," the SEC wrote in its decision.

## Matt Damon to star in 'The Promised Land' anti-fracking movie

Matt Damon will star in "The Promised Land," an anti-fracking movie set to begin filming later this month.

WME Agency, which represents Damon, confirmed that the "Good Will Hunting" star has signed on to the movie and co-wrote the film, and that it is, indeed, about hydraulic fracturing — the controversial practice of pumping a mixture of sand, water and chemicals into a well to break up rock and help extract natural gas.

## In Brazil, Chevron's Lone Gunman Shoots Again

Just like in the movies, it takes just one man, one hero. And in Brazil that hero is one Federal prosecutor named Eduardo Santos de Oliveira.

After an oil spill off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, *one man* takes on Chevron.

## Maori Battle Goldman by Mount Doom in New Zealand Asset Sale

Near the volcano that film director Peter Jackson chose as Mount Doom in his "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, the bankers view a drilling rig shipped from Iceland that has bored 1,100 meters (3,600 feet) of a geothermal-power well for state-owned Mighty River Power Ltd. The company plans to sell shares this year in the first of four initial public offerings Key says will help raise as much as NZ\$7 billion (\$5.7 billion), the nation's biggest asset sale in two decades.

Some Maori say the sales violate the 172-year-old Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's controversial founding document that gave the indigenous people rights to their land and resources. They're mounting a legal challenge to the IPOs that Key says will raise money for schools and roads after the country lost its top credit rating because of mounting debt.

## 615 dead dolphins found on Peru beaches; acoustic tests for oil to blame?

Conservationists counted 615 dead dolphins along a 90-mile stretch of beaches in Peru, a wildlife group said Wednesday, and the leading suspect is acoustic testing offshore by oil companies.

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"If you can count 615 dead dolphins, you can be sure there are a great many more out at sea and the total will reach into the thousands," Hardy Jones, head of the conservation group BlueVoice.org, said in a statement after he and an expert with ORCA Peru walked the beaches.

#### Resident raises questions about Marysville pipeline project

Not all residents appear to be happy with the city of Marysville's decision to allow Bluewater Gas Storage LLC to use a portion of its public bike trail north of Marysville Park to provide access to a pipeline drilling operation under the St. Clair River. If the project proceeds, the bike trail will be closed about three months, from August through October.

#### <u>Cut nuclear reliance to zero - Japan energy minister</u>

(Reuters) - Japan should aspire to phase out nuclear power completely, its energy minister said on Friday, even as the government struggles to persuade a wary public that it is safe to restart reactors after the world's worst nuclear crisis in 25 years.

Yukio Edano, whose trade portfolio makes him responsible for energy, couched his remark as a personal and not necessarily realistic view - though it could still anger utilities and industries eager to see nuclear power bounce back.

#### TEPCO workers quitting due to threats, sense of despair

TOKYO — Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO) said Friday 460 employees sought voluntary retirement in fiscal 2011, which ended on March 31.

The number was 3.5 times higher than the usual number, TBS reported. In March alone, more than 100 employees took voluntary retirement, officials said at a news conference.

## EDF Says Fires at Penly Nuclear Reactor Extinguished

Electricite de France SA, the biggest operator of nuclear reactors, said two fires were put out in their early stages at its Penly plant in Normandy.

It didn't say what caused the blazes and where they started. No casualties or damage to the environment were reported. Unit 2 shut down automatically after smoke was detected in the reactor building, the Paris-based company said today on its website.

#### NRC Pilgrim Plant Hearings Appealed by Massachusetts AG

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's decision to proceed with hearings on a 20-year license extension for Entergy Corp. (ETR)'s Pilgrim nuclear power plant was appealed by Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley.

Coakley's appeal, filed in the U.S. Appeals Court in Boston, challenged the commission's decision to go ahead before considering lessons from the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, according to a statement from her office today.

## Watts Bar reactor delayed again

Tennessee Valley Authority's plans to complete an unfinished nuclear reactor near Scottsboro are again on hold as delays and cost overruns continue to plague work at its Watts Bar nuclear plant in Tennessee.

## Areva Predicts Uranium Demand Freeze Until 2014

Areva SA (AREVA), the world's largest maker of atomic reactors, predicted the market for uranium will suffer from a glut before nuclear fuel demand rebounds from 2014 as the industry reels from last year's meltdown in Japan.

## Uranium, Grazing Cattle and Risks Unknown

As I reported last weekend in The Times, a cattle rancher stumbled upon an abandoned uranium mine in the summer of 2010 on his grazing land, about 60 miles east of the Grand Canyon on the Navajo reservation, and notified federal officials. They came in with Geiger counters and found levels of radioactivity that were alarmingly high.

A year and a half later, the former mine in Cameron, Ariz., is not fenced off to either humans or animals, and cattle continue to roam through the site and eat grass that might be tainted with uranium and other toxic substances.

"Those cattle go to auction in Sun Valley and are sold on the open market," said Ronald Tohannie, a project manager with the Navajo advocacy group Forgotten People. "Then people eat the meat."

#### Republican Donor Simmons Seeks Rule to Fill Texas Dump

Harold Simmons built a West Texas dump for radioactive waste that is bigger than 1,000 football fields and he can't fill it.

To turn it into a profitable enterprise, the Texas billionaire hired lobbyists to urge the Obama administration to expand the types of nuclear waste, including depleted uranium, the dump can accept and award his company disposal contracts. If the Nuclear Regulatory Commission changes the rule, it could open access to a market worth billions.

The deadline for a decision is in 2014.

#### Bulgaria Energy Minister Mulls Removal of Biofuel Component

Commenting on measures to tackle climbing fuel prices, Economy and Energy Minister Delyan Dobrev said in Parliament that the removal of the bio component from diesel would lead to a BGN 0.05 price cut.

#### <u>Coal mine is key to utility's 'green' goals</u>

A coal mine near Somerset could play an unlikely role in helping an energy cooperative in the Roaring Fork Valley reach its goal of providing 20 percent of its power from renewable sources by 2015.

Holy Cross Energy has signed a contract to buy power from a plant that Vessels Coal Gas Inc. will build to produce power using methane released from the Elk Creek Mine, according to Del Worley, CEO of Holy Cross. If all goes as planned, the plant will be operating by late summer or early fall, he said.

#### Electric-Drive Vehicle Demand Recharged by Gas Prices

Just when it looked like electric cars were running out of juice, the return of \$4 a gallon gasoline is generating new life for battery-powered vehicles.

Electric-drive vehicles, including hybrids, plug-in models and pure battery-powered cars, were the fastest-growing segment in the U.S. auto market in the first quarter, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Sales of those models rose 49 percent to 117,182 vehicles in the first quarter, from 78,527 a year earlier before Japan's earthquake and tsunami pinched output.

#### Soaring battery prices "devastating" U.S. lead producers

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Secondary lead smelters are paying near record prices for junk batteries, their raw material feed, because drivers are not replacing their car batteries due to the unseasonably warmer winter in the Northern Hemisphere.

The price rise has been driven by a scarcity of spent batteries, used to make 90 percent of the United States' lead output. Lead-acid batteries in cars and trucks are lasting longer due to the milder weather.

#### Energy Dept. to Revitalize a Loan Guarantee Program

WASHINGTON — Six months after the expiration of a federal loan guarantee program that backed \$16 billion in loans to solar, wind and geothermal energy projects, the Energy Department has decided to offer a smaller set of similar guarantees by tapping another pot of money appropriated by Congress last year.

<u>Google saves energy by cooling its buildings with ice</u>

Google's new \$700 million data centers in Taiwan will make ice at night, when electricity is significantly cheaper, and use it to cool the buildings during the day, reports Rich Miller at Data Center Knowledge. It's called thermal storage, and it's basically a battery, but for air conditioning.

#### Chilean court approves controversial dam project

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Chile's Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected challenges by environmental groups to a hydroelectric dam project in the wilds of Patagonia.

The ruling upheld an earlier decision by an appeals court in the southern city of Puerto Montt, which decided the project doesn't violate the constitutional rights of those who challenged it, court spokesman Jaime Rodriguez said.

## What Hong Kong Can Teach New Yorkers About Cramped Urban Living

Hong Kong is one of the most land-hungry cities in the world. This results in skyrocketing housing prices and a constant need for new ideas in urban development and sustainability. One Hong Kong architect, Gary Chang, took these challenges and ran with them. Today, Chang is known for his biggest experiment -- the "Domestic Transformer." Chang transformed the 360-square-foot apartment his family has owned since he was a child into a futuristic shape-shifting space that uses a complex system of sliding walls to create a 24-room living experience.

## <u>How to... buy a green home</u>

From wool insulation to wood-burning boilers, a greener property is possible.

## Sharp rise in prices of agricultural necessities

China's skyrocketing prices of agricultural necessities will cut agribusiness margins and increase inflationary pressures, analysts warned Thursday as prices of seeds, fertilizer and diesel oil all saw double-digit jumps in the first quarter.

#### Right to food should be enshrined in constitution: UN expert

The right to food should be enshrined in the constitution if African nations are to fight food insecurity in an efficient manner, a senior UN official said on Thursday.

"Food insecurity, very often, has its sources not only in bad harvests ... or climate related events, such as those the region increasingly frequently goes through," Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, told journalists at the end of a two-day summit in Nairobi.

But other factors are the lack of government accountability, the inability of NGOs to monitor governments and the weak role of national parliaments in monitoring what governments are doing to reduce food insecurity, he said.

## How To Feed the World After Climate Change

Genetically modified seeds aren't enough. We have to change the entire agricultural system.

Movie review: 'The Island President' is heartening, unsettling

President Mohamed Nasheed works to save the Maldives from the threat of global warming. But he can't change the country's past and its influence on the present.

## Ezra Levant Attacks Ontario's Future

CFN – It should be no surprise that Ezra Levant would do anything he can to sabotage Ontario's efforts to bring its economy into the twenty-first century. After all, it was Levant who invented the "Ethical Oil" myth, so he has an obligation to the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and its members to look after their financial interests ahead of Ontario's.

Realistic action against climate change and global warming is not in the best interests of CAPP and its members. Their basic business plan is to encourage everyone to ignore the consequences of Peak Oil and burn fossil fuels, especially theirs, without regard to the environment, the economic future of Canada, or the future and well-being of our children and grandchildren.

## UN Cuts Emerging-Nation Carbon Out of EU, Sindicatum Says

United Nations regulators are probably cutting emission projects out of the European market by failing to reform processes fast enough and by changing existing rules, said Sindicatum Sustainable Resources Group Ltd.

# <u>Melting Arctic Ice May Usher in New Era of Geopolitical Conflict</u>

Countries of the Far North are set to be the new players in the emerging Arctic frontier. The polar ice cap is melting at much faster rates than previously predicted, and may be completely ice free by the summer of 2040 or sooner. There are vast untapped resources in the Arctic Ocean such as new shipping lanes, fishing grounds, tourism, and it is believed to contain the largest of the world's remaining energy reserves. This year has brought about a frenzy of oil and gas exploration which will only increase as the ice recedes. The coming summer will bring an even more intense search for resources. Cooperation will be required among the northern nations to avert territorial disputes and conflicts at the top of the world.

### Antarctic ice shelf dwindles as satellite continues to look on

As a European satellite enters its second decade in orbit, it continues to observe the retreat of an Antarctic ice sheet, which has been dwindling due to warming.

Ice age study delivers blow to global-warming skeptics

A new study finds that rising levels of carbon dioxide drove rising temperatures at the end of the last ice age. The findings contrast with previous studies, which skeptics of human-triggered global warming said showed that CO<sub>2</sub> levels weren't an important factor.

#### States' readiness ranked in face of water threats

New Mexico, Arizona and more than two dozen other states could face increased threats to water supplies if they don't do more to plan for rising temperatures and changes in rain and snowfall patterns, according to an analysis released Thursday by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The nonprofit environmental group used the state-by-state analysis to highlight what it sees as a link between greenhouse gas emissions - the pollutants blamed for global warming - and weather changes that could ultimately affect water resources.

Map and PDF here: <u>Ready or Not: How Water-Ready is Your State?</u>

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