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“Fighting” Global Warming at the State Level=You Pay!

As we noted in previous Hot Air Reports, Governor Doyle did not ask his Global Warming Task Force (Task Force) to debate the science of climate change. Instead, he directed the Task Force to accept the “consensus” that human activity is a major contributor to climate change. Additionally, as the Task Force’s final report points out,

“The Task Force was not asked to evaluate whether the costs of addressing climate change will be greater or less than the benefits achieved.”

In other words, don’t be concerned about how much the fight will cost or whether it will do any good, just do it. So it is no surprise that the Task Force’s 232 page report on how Wisconsin should unilaterally fight global warming is filled with many high-cost recommendations. Here are some of the proposals:

- Overall goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Wisconsin:
 - By 2014, reduce Wisconsin’s emissions of greenhouse gases back to 2005 levels
 - By 2022, reduce Wisconsin’s emissions to 22% below 2005 levels
 - By 2050, reduce Wisconsin’s emissions to 75% below 2005 levels

Some of the ways this would be achieved:

- Create an Enhanced Renewable Portfolio Standard (Beyond existing Wisconsin standards)
- 50% of all Wisconsin gas stations to sell E-85 by 2020 (E-85 gas contains up to 85% ethanol)
- Adoption of California vehicle emission standards
- Convening a special commission to explore the potential for carbon sequestration
- **Reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled by individuals**

The recommendation to create **Enhanced Renewable Portfolio Standards** would prove to be extremely expensive for you and your family. Wisconsin now has a law in place requiring us to produce 10% of our electricity from more expensive renewable resources (solar, wind, bio-mass, etc.) by 2015. According to experts this current requirement has already created significant upward pressure on electric rates, even though we only are only managing to produce 4% of our electricity from renewables now. (*Milwaukee-Journal/Sentinel 10/28/08*)

Under the proposed Enhanced Renewable Portfolio Standard, the Task Force would like our state to move the 10% mandate ahead to 2013 and then achieve a 25% renewable level by 2025. How much of a rate increase would these requirements produce? By the way, WE Energies has already requested a 2.8% rate hike for 2010.

The Enhanced Renewable Portfolio Standard that Governor Doyle's Task Force thinks we should mandate may not even be achievable, regardless of the cost. We can only put up so many wind mills, and Wisconsin's climate isn't exactly ideal for solar. But if we try to reach these goals, expect to see your electric rates go through the roof.

E-85: The Governor wants to take your money to support the development of Wisconsin's E-85 or ethanol infrastructure. Your money will go to retail price incentives to make E-85 competitive with regular unleaded gas and be available at 50% of gas stations in the state by 2020. How much will this super ethanol mandate add to the cost of a gallon of gas? No one knows because Governor Doyle specifically charged the Task Force to not evaluate cost.

Adopting California vehicle emission standards: The Task Force cites the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturer's estimate that these standards will increase average vehicle prices by \$3000 in 2016. The Task Force also cites the California Air Resources Board, a quasi-government entity made up of bureaucrats, which estimates a \$790 average vehicle price increase in 2016, but a \$3253 lifetime savings on each vehicle due to reduced energy consumption. Any savings will likely be offset by higher gas prices due to other Task Force recommendations. And can you imagine how difficult it may be to get the car you want or need when Wisconsin becomes an island of California car standards surrounded by more sensible Midwestern states.

Carbon Sequestration: This would involve piping carbon dioxide emitted in Wisconsin to underground pipelines, which would probably have to be located in other states. That's right, Wisconsin taxpayers would pay to build pipelines to other states and then pay those states to store our "Hot Air."

Vehicle Miles Traveled: Last but certainly not least, it is absurd and offensive **that Governor Doyle wants to take "regulatory action and state funding to reduce vehicle miles traveled by individuals."** In order to create "Energy Efficient Communities," the Governor wants to tell us how, where and when to travel. Ironic that he comes to work in a taxpayer-paid SUV. Yes, that is correct the government wants to limit how far you drive your car to fight global warming.

There's much, much more in the Global Warming Task Force report. The Task Force, at the direction of Governor Doyle, has recommended a wide range of new laws and regulation be imposed upon state residents which would lead to untold costs. **These costs are in addition to those which would be imposed by the federal cap and trade scheme,** which will also result in incredibly higher energy costs in the years ahead. Will this mean the doubling of prices? Tripling? By the time we find out, it may be too late to undo the true impact of all these proposals. It all makes a reasonable person wonder what Task Force members were thinking when they voted to finalize this report.

We already spend a large sum of money in Wisconsin to keep our air and water clean. A clean environment is vital to our health and economy. So the question is what will we get for all the

money Governor Doyle wants us to spend to “fight” global warming? The answer in next week’s Hot Air Report.

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