



April 21, 2009

Benefits of the “Fight”= Not Defined

Statement: “The Task Force also was not asked to evaluate whether the cost of addressing climate change will be greater or less than the benefits achieved.” *Governor’s Task Force on Global Warming: Final Report to Governor Jim Doyle, July 2008.*

Interpretation: Come up with some ideas of how Wisconsin can fight global warming. Don’t worry how much they will cost and whether they will do any good. Just do it! And did they ever - 232 pages of calls for legislations, regulations and other initiatives at the state and local level.

Nowhere does the Task Force Report estimate the benefits for Wisconsin to fight global warming. That was left undefined. There is not one estimate of how much temperatures will be reduced, how much Lake Michigan water levels will rise or how much background levels of carbon dioxide will be lowered.

Can you imagine spending thousands of dollars making your home more energy efficient, without having any idea how much money or energy you would save?

Even if Wisconsin could reduce carbon dioxide emissions to zero, there would be no measurable impact on global background levels of carbon dioxide. Therefore, there will be no measurable impact on global temperatures and no measurable benefit to our state’s climate.

You may hear comments such as, “Someone has to take the lead,” or “If groups of states join together we will have an impact.” As far as taking the lead, the first state to jump in will become economically disadvantaged to surrounding states. The residents and businesses will be paying much higher prices for energy and may decide to move to one of the more friendly neighboring states. The more friendly neighboring states would have no incentive to drive away these new residents with ridiculous economic, energy and environmental policies.

If a small group of states did decide to join together in the “fight,” however, the impact will still be negligible at best. China surpassed the United States in carbon dioxide output three years ago, so even if Iowa, Minnesota and Michigan joined Wisconsin, the effects on background levels of carbon dioxide would not be noticeable.

When government decides to spend millions, billions or trillions of our dollars to fight a problem, it’s fair to ask what we will get for our money.

Those who believe the doomsday scenarios of human induced global warming probably assume we will be stopping drastic sea level rises, preventing devastating storms and helping to keep our planet's thermometers within a range we can all tolerate. This is a huge assumption and it is based on the unproven theory that increasing carbon dioxide levels will cause disastrous temperature rises.

For anyone really concerned about rising atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, there is something we can do to make a difference and not damage the economy. It would involve producing more of our electricity through the use of nuclear power. Why aren't we doing that? More in next week's report.

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