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The Global Warming Task Force: A Special Series of Hot Air Reports – Part 2

“This Report is a first step only. It will not solve the climate change problem. The issues the Task Force has addressed will be revisited and new policies proposed on an almost continuous basis.” (Governor Doyle’s Global Warming Task Force Final Report)

This is a shocking quote, straight from the Global Warming Task Force’s final report.

- How can 232 pages of very expensive and far-reaching proposals be “*a first step only?*”
- If these items “*will not solve the climate change problem,*” what will?
- If the Task Force recommendations are not the final destination and we are supposed to have “*new policies proposed on an almost continuous basis,*” where does it end?

To continue my series of reports on Governor Doyle’s Global Warming Task Force, I will summarize the extensive list of proposals it put forth.

Overarching Policies – More Government Taxpayer Funded Jobs

- Create a bureaucracy to monitor greenhouse gas emission goals in Wisconsin.
- Create the “*Wisconsin Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Reduction Initiative,*” which would “*motivate and enable individuals, communities, farms and other businesses to reduce their GHG emissions through a variety of strategies...*” (emphasis mine)
- Fund research and development of low-carbon technologies with your tax dollars.

You and Your Family

- Study the possibility of mandatory energy efficiency upgrades to existing single and multifamily residences (selling your home might trigger this mandate).
- Lift school spending caps to spend new money reducing the carbon footprints of schools. This change was included in the state budget. Also, incorporate the footprint reduction process into your children’s curriculum as an educational tool.
- Create a fee for using LP gas and fuel oil for residential purposes.
- Discourage you from using energy during peak times. The Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) has already begun pursuing this item.
- Reduce your use of electricity and natural gas. The PSC has already begun considering and pursuing this item.
- Reduce your water usage.

- Increase future housing and business costs by changing residential and commercial building codes to achieve “*net zero energy*” residential buildings by 2040 and commercial buildings by 2030.
- Make utilities see eye-to-eye with Task Force goals by “*Aligning public and private interests for conservation and energy efficiency.*” The PSC has already begun pursuing this item.
- Encourage you to use less energy by charging you more, through “...*adopt(ing) innovative rate designs that provide more accurate price signals to customers to incent reductions of GHG emissions associated with their energy consumption.*” (emphasis mine) The PSC has already begun pursuing this item.
- Reduce land filling of food waste.
- Expand landfill bans on paper, reduce forests from being harvested for paper production, increase paper recycling.
- Expand and enhance current recycling programs.
- Increase the cost of rental housing by requiring installation of energy efficient lighting.
- Create state appliance efficiency standards for products not covered by federal standards, increasing your costs as a consumer when purchasing these appliances.
- Spend tax dollars to retrofit and rehabilitate lower-income housing to meet energy standards.
- Create a bureaucracy to track and reduce government emissions.

Your Family’s Electricity

- Study the possibility of geologic carbon sequestration, which is storing carbon dioxide underground.
- Enhanced Renewable Portfolio Standard – Expand Wisconsin’s current Renewable Portfolio Standard, which already requires utilities to use increased amounts of renewable energy. The Task Force estimates this change could cost you (utility consumers) between \$612 million and \$1.1 billion more by 2025.
- Study the possibility of a green tariff to encourage development of renewable energy.
- Establish tariffs to deploy small renewable generation projects.
- Give tax dollars to those who enroll in certain utility service options.
- Have utilities set emission reduction goals and report them to the Public Service Commission.
- Evaluate changes to our statewide and regional electric transmission system.
- Establish statewide wind-siting standards for wind farms. This piece of legislation has already been introduced in the legislature. (AB 256)
- Study the possibility of developing wind energy systems over Lake Michigan and Lake Superior.
- Nuclear power - The Task Force does not recommend constructing new nuclear power plants.
- Study ways to reduce the inevitable out-of-control rate increases caused by their recommendations.

Transportation

- Adopt California vehicle emissions standards.
- Speed of Travel Reductions: Require a strict enforcement of the 65mph highway speed limit, study the possibility of future speed limit reductions, encourage “*voluntary*” speed reduction policies, and provide funding for additional law enforcement (so they can write more speeding tickets).
- Create “*Energy Efficient Communities*” by reducing the number of miles *you* travel, provide funding for favored types of neighborhood designs, develop new parking ordinances, and encourage walking and biking.
- Fund rail transit, such as a line running from Chicago to Milwaukee to Madison. Such a line would have to be highly subsidized with our tax dollars.

- Expand the E-85 (gasoline with up to 85% ethanol) infrastructure so that by 2020, half of Wisconsin gas stations will sell E-85.
- Limit semi-trucks from idling longer than 5 minutes at truck depots, overnight rest areas and other parking locations.
- Emissions reductions for “off-road equipment,” which could include anything from lawn and garden care products to construction and agricultural products.
- Use your tax dollars so the state and large cities can purchase Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles for their vehicle fleets.
- Educate you on the various hybrid vehicles available and give your tax dollars to consumers who actually purchase the hybrids. Encourage businesses “*to allocate favorable parking for these vehicles.*”
- Establish a “*low carbon fuel standard,*” which would create a cap and trade system for fuel providers.
- Require a “*carbon-audit*” for all state transportation projects, adding to the cost of road construction in Wisconsin.

Agriculture & Forestry

- Use taxpayer funding to develop biomass and biofuels.
- Encourage land owners to engage in afforestation on their properties. This includes giving your tax dollars to private land owners so they can plant trees.
- Change zoning laws to discourage forest land from being converted into other types of zoning.
- Encourage private landowners to increase the carbon storage potential of their forests by giving them your tax dollars.
- Use tax dollars for urban forestry expansion.
- Reduce methane through better animal nutrition.
- Capture animal methane for energy.
- Reduce certain types of agricultural fertilizers and fund education of manure handling.
- Research storing carbon in prairie plantings using your tax dollars.
- Encourage carbon storage in agricultural soil.
- Give your tax dollars to farmers so they can grow certain types of vegetative cover.

Industry

- Require electronics manufacturers to recycle old consumer electronics. This legislation is already far into the legislative process. This will cause electronic products to cost more. (SB 107)
- Give your tax dollars to industrial sector businesses to improve their industrial boiler efficiency.
- Give your tax dollars to industrial sector businesses so they can pay for efficiency improvements. This is in addition to current programs, such as Focus on Energy.
- “*Provide incentives*” (aka – give your tax dollars) to industrial boiler owners so that they can afford to use more non-wood biomass and non-commercial forest residues for fuel.
- Reduce “*energy intensity*” for industry sectors by 2%. Include a “*feebate*” program which would charge fees to businesses performing below average, and give rebates to businesses performing above average.
- Recover untreated waste wood for combustion and energy production.
- Provide incentives or mandate the replacement of older heat and power systems with newer systems.
- Study the future training needs for the emerging “*green jobs sector.*”

Carbon Tax/Cap & Trade

- Participate and provide leadership in the development of a Midwest Regional Cap and Trade scheme which would include Wisconsin and some of the surrounding states. This recommendation is in addition to the federal cap and trade scheme that the U.S. Senate may take up this fall.

Finally, the Task Force also included 11 “*Additional Policies for Consideration.*” These are ideas the Task Force proposed, but did not analyze in detail. Here is one:

- “*Food consumption emissions impacts **and related behavioral change strategies.***” (emphasis mine)

So there you have it, an overview of the proposals in Governor Doyle’s Global Warming Task Force. While a select few of these ideas may have merit, most will result in massive increases in taxes and energy bills, and will provide no measurable benefit for the environment. Unfortunately, several of the Task Force proposals have already come forward. Further legislation appears likely to be introduced in the very near future and there is strong support for it among Democrats.

If this is “*a first step only,*” what is next? They intend for our state to have “*new policies proposed on an almost continuous basis.*” In the next few Hot Air Reports I will look at several of these proposals in greater detail. Stay tuned for next week.

You can access the full Task Force Report [here](#).

Access all my reports online, at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm23/news/media.htm>.

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