

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

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NEWSMAGAZINE

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A Year in Review

DESPITE THE PATHETIC and tragic breakdown of basic governance at the federal level under the Bush administration, there have been rays of hope around the world. Internationally, nations like Germany, Denmark and Spain have made incredible strides with renewable energy – standing in dramatic contrast to the stodgy troglodyte mentality of many U.S. utilities that have been pushing new coal and nuclear power plants. Even companies like Duke Energy that cloak themselves in green are going ahead with new coal and nuclear power plants. Luckily in that case, Friends of the Earth intervened with the South Carolina Public Service Commission against Duke Power's proposed new nuclear reactors.

In addition to investing in renewable energy, countries like Spain have expanded rail service. Earlier this year, I rode the superb Spanish high-speed trains that make the 300-mile trip from Barcelona to Madrid in less than three hours while providing the smoothest train ride my family and I have ever experienced. Local train service is also fast, clean and modern – putting America's rail passenger service to shame. Spain intends to build 10,000 new miles of high speed rail. In contrast, Bush has strangled funding for Amtrak and refused to enforce Amtrak's legal priority over freight trains on shared tracks, increasing passenger delays and lowering service quality at the very time more people are turning to the rails to avoid high gasoline prices.

Last March Spain got about 30 percent of its electricity from wind power



– shattering the myth perpetrated by some utilities that because wind blows intermittently it can only supply less than five percent of the electricity for a grid. Imagine, a country just one-fifteenth the size of our lower 48 states took wind power seriously and became the number two country in the world behind Germany in wind electricity generation.

Another success story, Denmark, a country of five million people, provided government support to the wind energy company Vestas that in turn became the number one producer of wind turbines with numerous worldwide exports.

But here at home, the sorry Bush administration, in cooperation with the Republican leadership in the Senate, has allowed wind energy tax credits to expire three times in the past eight years. Fortunately a number of states are moving into action independently of federal support. Texas has surpassed California as the number one wind producing state and with Texas in motion the U.S. – which is the Saudi Arabia of wind – finally eclipsed Spain in wind electricity generation.

If environmentally-minded organizations and individuals facilitate investment in the amazing renew-

able energy options and end-use efficiency ideas available we can break free from the grip of the Stone Age energy companies that dominate U.S. decision making and bring polluting projects that harm life on earth to an end.

The Republican leadership in the House and Senate again and again throughout 2008 has blocked progress toward a clean energy economy. They have viciously attacked Speaker Nancy Pelosi's efforts to cut energy waste in the Capitol and to reduce the carbon footprint of the Congress. Four times during this 110th Congress the House has passed legislation to remove some of the tax code handouts to big oil, only to have the measures killed by Republican leader Senator McConnell and his colleagues. It's this sort of tug-of-war that impedes much-needed action and puts the planet at risk.

The next president will be responsible for setting right the policies that have put us in an environmental, social and financial straight jacket. This year has witnessed a cascading series of financial crises, brought on by the reckless deregulatory agenda. Friends of the Earth has called for comprehensive reform of the financial system as to ensure environmentally responsible investments in the future and closure of tax loop holes, accompanied by requirements for government oversight and corporate accountability.

But Blackwell

Victory! World Bank Can't Capitalize on Climate

THANKS TO FRIENDS OF THE EARTH international finance campaign coordinator Karen Orenstein, president Brent Blackwelder – who testified before the House of Representatives this summer – and others, Congress rejected the Bush administration's request for a \$400 million blank check to subsidize the World Bank's newly established climate funds. The World Bank is the largest multilateral funder of fossil fuel projects in the world, so

it's no surprise that the Bank's plan endorses so-called "clean" coal. Additionally, rather than holding industrialized countries accountable for their greenhouse gas emissions, the funds from this undemocratic institution push loans on developing nations to pay for adapting to the impacts of global warming, and divert money and political energy away from international climate negotiations under the United Nations. ○

China's Banks Going Green

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH is releasing an update to the 2007 *Time to Go Green* report on Chinese banks. Chinese banks are playing an increasingly important role in financing large infrastructure and natural resource projects throughout the world, often without the social and environmental standards necessary to protect local communities and ecosystems. The new report overviews efforts to green Chinese

finance since the Chinese government released new environmental regulations for financial institutions, including limiting financing to energy-intensive and polluting industries. It also highlights environmentally- and socially-sensitive projects Chinese banks are financing around the world right now. You can find it online at http://www.foe.org/pdf/Chinese_Bank_Report_2008.pdf. ○



Fighting Cloned Food

IN JANUARY 2008, the FDA approved cloned cows, pigs and goats for entry into the U.S. human food supply, in defiance of two congressional requests to wait for more evaluation and more than 150,000 public comments opposing the approval. In response, Friends of the Earth has launched a consumer campaign asking grocers not to stock and sell products made from cloned animals and their offspring. In just a few months,

we got more than 9,000 people to sign a petition that we sent, along with letters, to 50 major grocers in the U.S. asking for their policy on selling food from cloned animals. So far only Harris Teeter, PCC Natural Markets, SUPERVALU and Albertsons have responded – all say they do not sell cloned animal products. Look for a list of clone-free stores and food companies coming soon! ○

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Get involved in issues and debates affecting human health and the planet by signing up for Friends of the Earth action alerts and bi-weekly newsletters by email. Go to www.foe.org and enter your email address in the box provided at the top right-hand corner of the page.

Friends of the Earth Japan Holds G8's Feet to the Fire on Climate Change

By Karen Orenstein

For well over a decade, Friends of the Earth Japan has played a leading role in the country's fight against climate change. They carried this torch well during the annual Group of Eight (G8) Summit, at which heads of state of eight major industrialized countries – including the U.S. – met in Hokkaido, Japan, in early July to discuss pressing global matters, including climate change. With only 13.5 percent of the world's population, G8 countries are historically responsible for over 62 percent of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, while continuing to emit some 39 percent of today's global warming pollution.

Throughout the G8 Summit, the Japanese government came under heavy criticism for its repression of G8 protesters. The Summit itself was entirely isolated and under intense security. Several hours' drive from the summit, activists gathered at the 2008 People's Summit in Hokkaido, an alternative summit coordinated by a coalition of Japanese NGOs. Friends of the Earth Japan organized a panel and discussion on "Climate Injustice and the Responsibilities of the G8," in addi-



Karen Orenstein, far left, participates in a panel on climate justice organized by Our World is Not for Sale in Japan

tion to a similarly-themed press conference. Japanese national television covered the well-attended panel. Friends of the Earth Japan invited and hosted Friends of the Earth U.S. international team staffer Karen Orenstein for G8 activities.

Friends of the Earth Japan, with Friends of the Earth International, called on G8 and other industrialized countries to equitably address the climate crisis at the heavily-guarded official International Media Center, where Friends of the Earth and other NGOs provided commen-

tary on the G8 Summit. Friends of the Earth urged leaders of industrialized countries to address climate injustice by:

- cutting their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020;
- stopping the development, production and international trade in biofuels from large-scale, monoculture plantations and declaring a moratorium on targets for biofuels in the transportation sector;
- providing financing – under the authority of the United Nations

Beyond climate change, Friends of the Earth Japan campaigns on multiple other pressing matters, including public finance and the environment. Among other projects, Friends of the Earth Japan is holding the Japan Bank for International Cooperation to account for its financing of the controversial Sakhalin II oil and gas project in the Russian Far East, which in particular threatens the critically endangered Western Gray Whale with extinction. Friends of the Earth Japan has been working for conservation and sustainable development in the Russian Far East for more than a decade and has even published the comprehensive book, *The Russian Far East: A Reference Guide for Conservation and Development*. They are further engaged in forest protection initiatives within and outside of Japan, as well as addressing desertification, as exemplified by Friends of the Earth Japan's *Greening the Desert Project* in China.

- climate convention – for developing countries to tackle global warming, in part due to the climate debt wealthy nations owe developing countries; and
- reducing the estimated 20 percent of global warming caused by forest loss in an equitable manner that protects the rights of forest-dependent peoples and addresses the over-consumption of forest products and commercial agriculture by industrialized countries, a primary driver of deforestation in developing countries.

As expected, the G8 failed abysmally to address the climate crisis. The same can be said of the G8's response to the global food crisis.

G8 leaders declared their support for newly established World Bank climate funds. Friends of the Earth U.S. has vigorously opposed these widely-criticized funds, which will supposedly be used to finance clean technology and help communities in developing countries adapt to the impacts of climate change. However,



Activists protest against G8 concessions for GMOs and biofuels.

the World Bank is both the planet's largest multilateral funder of fossil fuel projects and an undemocratic institution with a poor environmen-

tal track record. Its new climate funds include coal as a purported "clean" technology, push loans on developing nations to pay for adjusting to the impacts of global warming caused by industrialized countries, and undermine international climate negotiations under the United Nations. Back in Washington, DC, members of Congress concerned about global warming refused to go along with the Bush administration's request for a \$400 million blank check for the World Bank's climate funds.

As the United Nations' major annual climate change conference in Poland approaches in December, Friends of the Earth Japan, together with Friends of the Earth International and Friends of the Earth U.S., will continue to strive toward a just and equitable resolution to the world's climate crisis. ○

For global, multilingual coverage of international events and activities, check out Real World Radio, an alternative news source sponsored by Friends of the Earth International: <http://www.radiomundoreal.fm/rmr/?q=en>.

MATCHING GIFTS ■

You Stand Up for the Environment, So Why Not Ask Your Employer to Help the Planet Too!

MANY EMPLOYERS will match charitable donations made by employees as a way of giving back to the community. Businesses of all types and sizes have programs, so check with your employer to see whether your company can make your gift go twice as far to protect the environment!

To make a matching gift, just ask for an application from your employer and follow their instructions on how to request the match. It's that easy to get the satisfaction of knowing that your hard-earned dollars will have twice the impact. If your employer doesn't have a program, encourage them to start one! ○



Carbon 202:

The Current Credit Crisis: Lessons for Carbon Finance?

By Michelle Chan and Elizabeth Bast

In the last *Friends of the Earth* news-magazine, our 'Carbon 101' article gave some background on carbon trading – what it is and how it's supposed to work. Following on the heels of that article, we thought we would dig a little deeper into some of the potential pitfalls of carbon markets – what might happen when large amounts of "carbon credits" begin to be traded.

Carbon trading has been heralded as an efficient and cost-effective method of reducing global warming pollution by harnessing the incentives and innovation of the markets. While it's critical to put a price on carbon, can we trust the system that brought us the Enron accounting scandal, the subprime mortgage meltdown and commodities speculation to save us from global warming?

Measuring and Verifying Carbon Offset Credits: A Rigorous Task

Buying and selling carbon credits on a market sets a price for carbon, much like prices are set for corn, soy or other goods. Unlike corn or soy though, which are assets you can physically possess, carbon credits are intangible. Carbon offset credits are essentially promises on paper representing an amount of carbon that would be

“Climate change is the greatest and widest ranging market failure ever seen.”

– Sir Nicholas Stern, Former Head of the UK Government Economic Service and Adviser to the UK Government on the economics of climate change and development

released into the atmosphere under business-as-usual practices. Reducing, avoiding or sequestering these carbon emissions creates offsets credits.

Some offset credits are meaningful, and do indeed represent a decrease in the amount of carbon pollution we are emitting. For example, retrofitting an industrial plant to be more energy efficient or replacing an aging coal-fired power plant with wind power creates reductions in GHG emissions that can be measured with relative accuracy and verified.

However not all offset projects clearly lead to emission reductions. Some of the most visible scandals to date have revolved around:

- forest-related carbon reduction schemes, where trees have been planted to store carbon, only to die a few years later;
- construction of large, environmentally destructive dams, where builders who were going to con-

struct the dams anyway claimed “new” emissions reductions; and

- HFC (a chemical byproduct of refrigerant production) destruction projects, where factories purposely created these very potent greenhouse gas chemicals just so they could destroy them and make money off of the credits.

Who measures the emissions reductions – and how – are critically important questions, especially when it comes to the carbon offset credits that consumers might buy to compensate for their travel or other personal emissions. When it comes to international offset projects – those created outside the U.S. with the intent of offsetting emissions produced within the U.S. – there is no global standard to ensure that emissions reductions are measured and verified in a uniform manner. Different actors work under a variety of regulatory structures on behalf of different interests. When carbon offset projects are measured and verified in wildly varied ways, distinguishing between fake and real carbon reductions is a serious challenge.

There are clearly a number of challenges just in generating carbon offset credits. In particular, determining that offsets are meaningful – that is, ensuring that real carbon

reductions occur and that we are actually getting closer to saving the planet from global warming – is a big issue. But another whole host of problems arise once large numbers of carbon offsets begin to be traded.

Carbon Credits in the Market: Need For Strong Regulation

A smooth-functioning carbon market is dependent on the capacity and good faith of a whole host of participants – analysts, verifiers, auditors and consultants. The greatest market fiascos of recent history, the Enron accounting scandal and the subprime mortgage crises, have been marked by a spectacular failure of auditors, credit ratings agencies, and other parties to create a functioning market.

The Enron accounting scandal came about because “independent” checks and balances, which were supposed to ensure that the company was acting appropriately, failed. Shortly after the energy firm filed for bankruptcy in 2001 it became clear that Enron had been systematically hiding its true financial status. This deception was facilitated by a number of clear conflicts of interest. For example, investment banks that provided “objective” stock advice to investors were also earning fees on selling that stock. Furthermore, regulators were understaffed and verifiers were asleep at the switch.

The subprime mortgage crisis has also emerged from a failure of market checks and balances. Initially, banks offered mortgages to people who couldn't really afford the homes they were buying – in effect making

loans that were not likely to be paid back. Banks then bundled these mortgages together into packages that were then bought, re-bundled and re-sold many times over. This created bundles of promised revenues that were increasingly difficult to track. When it became clear that a significant portion of the loans were bad, the whole system began to unravel, affecting everyone in the banking and investment system connected to these bundled mortgages, including average Americans with savings accounts and retirement savings, and turning a sub-prime mortgage problem into a system-wide credit crisis.

The carbon markets are being built on the same faulty system that gave us Enron and the subprime mortgage crisis. What's more, some analysts predict that the carbon trading markets could become the biggest financial markets in the world. If this comes to pass, will those regulating the market be up to task?

Carbon 101: REVIEW

There are two kinds of carbon credits:

Allowance credits are government-allocated permits given or sold in limited quantities to regulated industries that permit the holder to emit a certain amount of greenhouse gases, or GHGs. Polluters that emit more than they are allowed must buy more credits to match their actual GHG emission levels.

Offset credits represent greenhouse gas reductions that are made by a non-regulated entity – a sector or body that is not required by the government to limit GHG emissions. These credits can then be bought by polluters trying to meet their obligations under the allowance credit system. They are also the same type of credits that individuals can buy voluntarily to compensate for the GHG emissions they create from, for example, their travel.

Potential Pitfalls of Carbon Markets:

- **Weak verification leads to inaccurate pricing of carbon credits.** “Innovative” financial engineering characterized both the credit crisis and the Enron crisis. In both situations, complex financial instruments were created that made it very difficult to determine the actual value of assets. In the carbon markets, weak verification systems, combined with the bundling

and re-bundling of carbon assets, may create similar problems. Markets already discount low-value, poorly-verified carbon credits called “junk carbon,” but discovering carbon credits’ true value is difficult when junk assets are bundled with good ones and sold to unwitting buyers.

- **Pushing carbon markets too fast leads to speculation.** Once on the market, the price of carbon can be gamed and speculated upon. Proponents of carbon markets argue that bigger markets increase the price of carbon credits, thus spurring more greenhouse gas reduction efforts. The rush of capital flooding into carbon markets is in part due to the fact that carbon offsets are marketed as a way for individuals and financiers to help save the world – while benefiting many who stand to make money along the way (project developers, brokers and speculators especially). But with so much capital flooding the carbon markets, the risk of a speculative bubble developing increases. When carbon prices collapse, then it becomes cheaper for polluting companies to simply buy more carbon credits rather than make emissions reductions themselves.
- **Unscrupulous intermediaries push bad projects.** The subprime crisis was exacerbated by the proliferation of mortgage brokers and other middlemen who provided questionable, if not unscrupulous, services. Similarly, in the carbon finance markets (particularly unregulated or voluntary markets), unscrupulous intermediaries may engage in fraud, for example by offering offset projects that simply do not exist, that would have been done anyway, or that



have already been sold to another buyer.

- **Independent third parties fail to enforce good practices.** In the carbon trading market, where credits may vary wildly in price (anywhere from \$2 - \$30 per ton of carbon dioxide equivalent), scandals have already emerged. But notably, it has been the media, rather than third party verifiers, that has exposed offset projects that have failed to deliver the promised results.
- **No one is policing the policeman.** Currently there is no standardized system for ensuring the quality and integrity of emissions verification firms, particularly those who verify carbon credits sold to individuals. This means that fly-by-night outfits, who get paid by project developers to verify how many emissions were reduced by a project, may be too generous in “verifying” that a project has resulted in real emissions reductions. This threatens not only carbon asset quality, putting buyers at risk, but it also threatens the credibility of the entire system of carbon credits.
- **Auditing and consulting generate conflicts of interest.** Although the

Enron scandal prompted a separation between audit and management consulting functions in many of the large accounting firms, the carbon finance field has not yet followed suit. In the carbon finance field, some consulting firms offer consulting and project development services, and also verify emissions – creating a potential conflict of interest.

- **Accounting rules remain inadequate.** While the Enron scandal encouraged a fresh look at the adequacy of accounting rules and accounting standards-setting bodies, international accounting standards bodies so far have not promulgated clear accounting rules to guide companies in presenting carbon assets and liabilities.

Carbon Trading: Solution to the Climate Crisis?

In Washington, DC, carbon trading is being touted as the centerpiece to solving the climate crisis. However carbon trading actually might not be an effective solution to achieving greenhouse gas reductions, especially compared with other strategies, such as introducing aggressive new energy efficiency requirements, investing in public transit and smart growth, and instituting carbon fees. By putting all our eggs into one basket, we’re playing a dangerous game with the fate of the planet.

If we are to meet the greatest challenge of our time, we need real action and real solutions. While carbon trading may have some limited role to play, do we really want to rely on it as the backbone of international efforts to stop climate change? In short, if climate change is indeed the greatest market failure ever, can we really rely on markets to solve it? ○

Deadly Doping

By Gillian Madill

THE XXIX OLYMPIAD in Beijing showed us the great ability of the world's top athletes and, in equal measure, reminded us of the constant battle against cheaters who will break rules and laws in order to win. Just prior to the Olympics, a German TV documentary exposed a Chinese doctor offering the latest in doping technologies – gene doping – for \$24,000 to someone he thought was an American swim coach. Although China has made great efforts to prevent illegal doping practices, its increasing availability is a sign that gene doping is no longer simply a science fiction fantasy.

Gene doping is an extremely dangerous and quickly developing technology that would allow athletes to genetically enhance themselves to become bigger, stronger or faster. Gene doping uses the exact same technology as gene therapy – they



both involve the genetic modification of human life – which has proven to be lethal in multiple cases since the first gene therapy trial in 1990.

Gene doping is prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), which governs the Olympics, but there is currently no way to detect this high-tech method of cheating. WADA has invested more than \$7 million in research to find a way to detect gene doping in athletes, but until they do, it is possible that athletes are already trying this extremely dangerous type of doping. Athletes have approached scientists that publish their break-

throughs in genetic research on mice, seeking the most cutting edge developments in doping technologies – willing to risk their lives by using an unproven doping method to improve their performance.

The U.S. Congress passed a law in 2006 prohibiting gene doping in all amateur athletics, following the WADA policy, which means a two year suspension for the first offense, followed by lifetime ineligibility for the second offense. However, U.S. professional sports organizations are not required to abide by these policies. Star athletes already violate their own organization's doping policies – think Roger Clemens, Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi – in an effort to hit harder or run faster. Unless we establish a strong, universal policy against gene doping, it is very likely that athletes will put their lives at risk for the chance at athletic stardom. ○

On July 18, 2008, Friends of the Earth sent letters to the top U.S. professional sports organizations asking them to prohibit gene-doping. This chart outlines the organizations we sent letters to, and the responses we received. We requested that the organizations respond by August 4, but so far have only received responses from a few. For the most recent and updated list and to take action, please visit our website: www.foe.org and click on *Healthy People* on the left hand side.

ORGANIZATION	RESPONDED? (as of 9/11/08)	ACTION?
National College Athletic Association (NCAA)	YES	Supports all anti-doping efforts, but currently does NOT prohibit gene doping
National Football League (NFL)	NO	
National Basketball League (NBA / WNBA)	NO	
Major League Baseball (MLB)	YES	Currently does NOT prohibit gene doping , will consider it for 2009 season
National Hockey League (NHL)	YES	Adopts WADA list of prohibited substances and methods, which means gene doping IS PROHIBITED
Major League Soccer (MLS)	YES	Adopts WADA list of prohibited substances and methods, which means gene doping IS PROHIBITED
United States Golf Association (USGA)	Still waiting for full response	World Golf Federation (WGF) is working with World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) experts in developing doping policy
Arena Football League (AFL)	NO	
Major League Lacrosse (MLL)	NO	
National Lacrosse League (NLL)	YES	Currently does NOT prohibit gene doping , but "intends to adopt an anti-gene doping policy" (no date specified)

High Gas Prices: Pain or Gain?

By Danielle Fugere, Kate McMahon
and Colin Peppard

AS OIL PRICES RISE, quick-fix scams such as gas-tax holidays and drilling for oil in fragile ecosystems have been promoted as potential solutions for people struggling to make ends meet. Yet these are gimmicks that will do nothing to relieve pressure at the pump and serve to only pad the pockets of Big Oil, while delaying any real action to reduce energy costs in the long run.

Our limping economy reflects decades of ad-hoc energy, transportation and development policy. Transportation is now the second largest living expense after shelter, guzzling an average of 18 percent of household income. And as the weather gets colder in many parts of the country, heating expenses are expected to reach record highs, further increasing the cost of shelter. While the wealthy more easily absorb the extra cost, the less affluent are forced to make unrealistic choices between getting to work and feeding one's family. Although this is a choice that no family should have to make, high oil prices are here to stay.

Dire as it seems, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Friends of the Earth's work on transportation and energy can help lead us toward a more economically and environmentally sustainable future. By making smarter choices about how we grow and invest in our communities, by revitalizing the way we move people

and things, and by improving the cars that we drive and weaning ourselves off of dirty and expensive energy, we can begin to climb out of the hole we have dug for ourselves. This move calls for a shift away from a fossil fuel based system and towards a green energy future. As a nation, we can do this, and here is how.

If Not Oil, Then What?

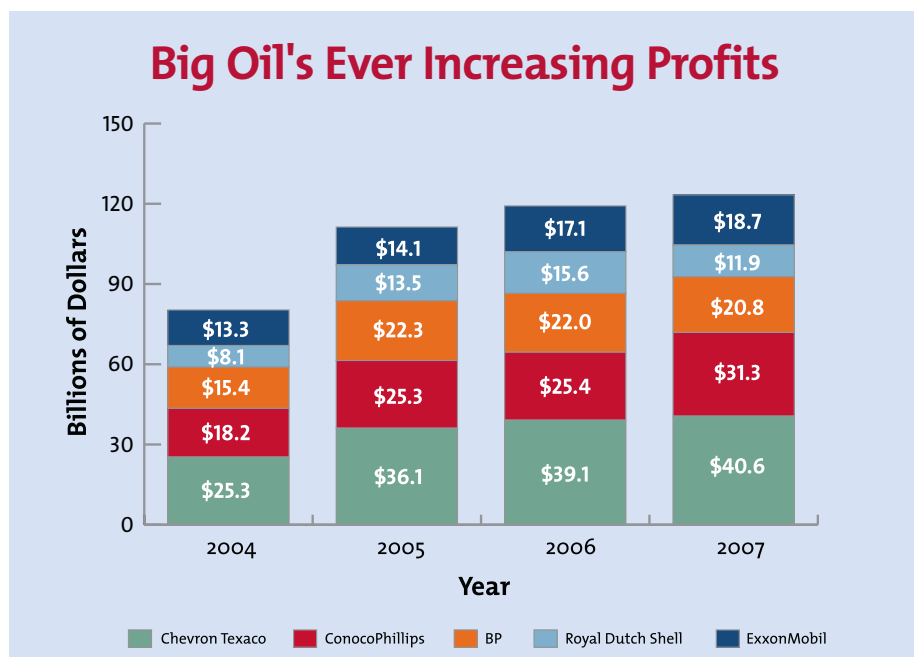
We can't change the reality of the situation – our energy and transportation infrastructure, our psychological framework and our very culture are based on consumption of fossil fuels. Like an addict scrounging for a fix, we are spending our last dimes on dirty, polluting oil. And Big Oil loves it; last year the top five oil companies raked in \$119 billion in profit, all the

while receiving at least \$32.9 billion in tax breaks and subsidies.

Excuse the cliché, but we must break this addiction. Yet in doing so, we must be wary of false solutions and quick fixes.

In recent years, biofuels have been touted as a panacea to wean ourselves off of oil. However biofuels, for the most part, cause far more harm than good, contributing to global warming and keeping us shackled to the whims of corporate interest – in this case Big Agriculture instead of Big Oil.

Nuclear power advocates are trying to revive the industry, but the fact remains that it is an immensely expensive source of energy, with a price tag of \$8,000 per kilowatt of energy, and there is still no viable storage option for toxic nuclear waste.





Even the coal industry has tried to re-brand itself as a “clean” energy source available right here at home. But make no mistake, even if the technology existed to reduce the global warming pollution from coal, with thousands of deaths attributed to coal mining and production, and horrific degradation to our mountains, waterways and other natural ecosystems, coal is no cure-all.

Friends of the Earth believes that part of the solution lies in promoting policies that support sustainable energy alternatives. We currently have the wind power capacity to supply 20 to 25 percent of our electricity generation – but we need the infrastructure to distribute it. Solar power is getting cheaper every day, and soon options like covering our roofs with solar panels could be commonplace – but offering incen-

tives for installing solar power could make it more affordable. We can even use waste plant materials, such as orange rinds and peanut shells, to produce biomass electricity – if only we had the infrastructure.

Feeding all this energy into an efficient electrical grid could electrify our homes *and our cars* as plug-in hybrids and electric cars are brought

(continued on page 6)

Take Action: No Federal Money For New Roads!

WITH 20 PERCENT OF U.S. GLOBAL WARMING pollution coming from cars and trucks, it’s time for the federal government to stop encouraging automobile use as our main transportation option. Friends of the Earth is calling on Congress to stop funding new road construction and instead focus on

repairing crumbling roads and bridges and expanding and improving our public transportation network.

Cut out the card below, fill it out, including your name and address, and send it in to the address below. If you want to know more about why we are calling for an end to federal

funding of new roads, or to take this action online, please go to: www.RoadToNoWhere.org

Send this message to:

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear members of the House Committee on Transportation:

It’s time to declare the National Highway System complete. The reality of global warming and the poor state of our current transportation infrastructure make the investment of any federal dollars in new road construction a bad choice.

Experts estimate that over \$100 billion is needed annually for the next 20 years simply to bring our roads, bridges and public transportation systems into good repair. Shifting federal spending away from new roads would be a big help, making up to \$30 billion available each year for more important priorities.

Please take the historic and courageous step of transitioning the United States from an oil-addicted, car-driving nation to a sustainable one by ending federal funding of new road construction.

Sincerely,



on the market. But we need representatives in Congress to make these options a reality.

The United States once led the world in innovation – and we have the opportunity to use our ingenuity to tap into energy from the responsible use of geothermal, waves and even pressurized air. The solutions are there, we just need to embrace them.

Electrifying Cars

As with every grey cloud, there is a silver lining to high oil prices – Americans are driving less and demanding much more fuel efficient cars. According to the national highway agency, Americans drove 53.2 billion fewer miles from November through June 2008 than they did over the same eight-month period a year earlier.

Record numbers of Americans are also trading in their gas guzzlers for more fuel efficient cars. Smaller cars and hybrids have been flying off auto dealer lots, and many consumers say they want even more clean-vehicle choices.

The good news is that such vehicles are on their way. Friends of the



Earth has worked over the past seven years to pass and defend the Pavley law – California’s landmark greenhouse gas vehicle law. Now adopted or being considered by 18 other states, this law requires automakers to significantly reduce greenhouse gas pollution from new cars. Last year, we were successful in winning a district court decision upholding the law. Not surprisingly, the only thing currently standing between its application and a wave of clean new cars is the Bush administration, which has denied California the EPA waiver needed to move forward with the law. Friends of the Earth believes that this policy will change with a new president

and that highly efficient and alternative fuel vehicles will soon be coming to auto dealers near you.

Along with fighting to implement the Pavley law, Friends of the Earth has also been working to promote plug-in hybrid vehicles that can be charged at home overnight, providing up to 40 miles of all-electric-powered driving at a cost of less than \$1.00 per gallon equivalent. One of the most important benefits of plug-in cars is that they have the potential to be fueled with 100 percent renewable power, including renewable power generated by electric utilities or even solar installations in parking lots and on homes. With GM’s recent announcement of a 2010 target production date for the plug-in hybrid *Volt*, the transition to clean, electric-drive vehicles is on the way.

Automobile Independence

By signing the Federal Aid Highway Act in 1956, President Eisenhower embarked the United States on a historic mission: to build one of the greatest highway systems the world has ever seen.



Yet due in part to the stranglehold that Big Oil and the corporate road building lobby have on our national transportation policy we've neglected other more equitable and environmentally sustainable transportation options such as public transportation and passenger rail. Left with few alternatives, most people have little choice but to hop in their cars and fill up their tanks.

In fact, fewer than five percent of Americans live within one-half mile of rail transit, and only half of Americans live within one-quarter mile of any public transportation at all. It shouldn't be surprising that only five percent of U.S. commuters take public transportation to work.

There are options to un-tether us from our cars; public transportation, high speed passenger rail, biking and walking are viable transportation solutions that can ease both our warming climate and our wallets. For example, a typical two-adult, two-car household can cut its greenhouse gas emissions up to 30 percent by eliminating one car and using public transportation for some trips. That same family could save between \$6,000 and \$8,000 per year on gasoline, since the typical transit rider consumes about half as much gasoline as a driver with no transit access.

What's more, public transportation investments have been shown to stimulate local economies, helping neighborhoods and communi-

ties to grow and develop in a sustainable way. Coupled with public transportation access, such "livable communities" bring jobs, schools, shopping and recreation closer to where people live, offering families the opportunity to spend less time in traffic and more time together. With the right combination of better transportation choices and livable communities fighting climate change, saving money and boosting the economy go hand in hand.

Moving Forward

Seeking energy independence is not a choice between protecting the environment and supporting the economy. Often the most economically viable option is also the most environmentally sustainable. For example on the flipside of this maxim drilling for oil will not reduce our transportation costs but it will endanger countless natural habitats. On the other hand, if we embrace new technologies that produce sustainable energy and use it more efficiently we could unfetter ourselves from the whims of Big Oil, create jobs and lighten our carbon footprint.

We have reached a crossroads. Decisions made today could either help us blaze new trails in energy innovation and make us stronger and more resilient to fluctuations in the cost of oil or they could keep us on the same destructive path and encourage further instability. The very future of our civilization and planet will be shaped by the choices we make in our homes and personal lives and by what we demand from decision makers in Congress. We must demand sustainable and alternative transportation and energy choices and seek out those options when they become available. If there ever was a moment to act, now would be the time. ○

Friends of the Earth Staffer David Hirsch Shares His Home Efficiency Story:

Studies have shown that buildings account for more than two-thirds of electricity and wasted energy, and nearly 40 percent of our national carbon dioxide emissions. Ready to make some changes, this year I decided to get serious about energy conservation in my own home.

I had already insulated my attic and added an exhaust fan to push hot air out and keep the house cooler, and installed higher-efficiency windows. Creating a net-zero-energy home by superinsulating the entire house and adding solar panels was out of my price range, so I looked at some small, yet important changes that could be made by anyone. I bought an inexpensive device called a "Kill A Watt" that, when plugged into an appliance, measures how much energy the appliance uses. I discovered that my computer, my TV and even my cell phone charger, were using energy even when turned off. Tired of wasting energy and money, I used a series of power strips to cut the juice to my various appliances and electronics. Combined with an effort to turn off lights when I'm not in the room and other common sense moves, this has slashed my monthly power bill by more than 40 percent.

I also made some changes to my water usage, including installing new, adjustable flappers in my toilets and dropping bricks into the back of each tank – combining new technology and old-fashioned methods to conserve water. Along with simple things like shutting the faucet while washing dishes or brushing my teeth, these effortless changes have cut my monthly water bill nearly in half.



Friends of the Earth Action Needs Your Help!

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH'S sister organization, Friends of the Earth Action, takes on politicians in both parties who vote against clean energy, human health and environmental protection. Friends of the Earth Action is a non-tax deductible organization and therefore does not have financial restrictions placed on its advocacy, meaning there is no dollar limit on its grassroots and legislative advocacy.

In the face of devastating climate destabilization and unregulated new technologies, Friends of the Earth Action is urging all voters to

learn where their elected officials, at all levels of government, stand on the crucial issues of our time. Big Oil is making campaign contributions in hopes that its priorities are favored in the coming years. And the recent bribery scandal involving major oil companies and Interior Department personnel proves that not all those in public service positions are working towards the public good. Friends of the Earth Action endorses candidates for office that have strong pro-environment records and opposes those that vote against the environment. You can learn more by going

to the website at www.foeaction.org.

Tax-deductible organizations are restricted in how they use donations. But by giving money to Friends of the Earth Action you are helping to shape the future of environmental and human health in a big way. Please join and contribute this fall.

– Brent Blackwelder, President,
Friends of the Earth Action



To donate, please go online to www.foeaction.org or send a check to: Friends of the Earth Action, 1717 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036 Please make your check payable to Friends of the Earth Action. If you have questions, call our Donor Relations Office at 1-866-217-8499.

Friends of the Earth Action is a 501(c)(4) and donations to FoE Action are not tax deductible and may be used for political purposes such as supporting and opposing candidates through independent public advocacy.

Paid for by Friends of the Earth Action

WHAT YOU CAN DO

An Easy Way to Give Now to Ensure the Planet's Future!

A PAYROLL CONTRIBUTION made through your employer is an easy way to support Friends of the Earth. You can make a single contribution or have monthly amounts deducted from your paycheck. No stamps, checks or bother – and your gift is tax deductible.

A gift of as little as \$5-10 per pay period adds up to a substantial contribution to our efforts to reverse global warming and protect water, forests, wildlife and people.

Friends of the Earth is a member of Earth Share, the workplace giving federation that supports environ-

mental organizations, environmental protection and healthy communities nationwide.

If your employer participates in the federal government's Combined Federal Campaign, or in a corporate, nonprofit, state or local government workplace giving campaign, you can donate a portion of your salary to Friends of the Earth through payroll deduction just by designating Friends of the Earth on your pledge form.

If you don't see Earth Share and Friends of the Earth listed on your workplace giving pledge form, you

can simply write in a gift by naming Friends of the Earth.

For more information and to find out if Earth Share participates at your workplace, visit www.earthshare.org. Friends of the Earth's Combined Federal Campaign designation number is 12067.

If your company might want to add Earth Share to its workplace giving options, please let us know. For questions, contact Stephanie Lozano at (866) 217-8499 or slozano@foe.org.



Earth Share

Announcing Friends of the Earth's Global Stewardship Council

THE GLOBAL STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL, co-chaired by Ed Begley, Jr. and Jayni Chase, is a select group of Friends of the Earth supporters formed in 2007. Members of the Council receive special benefits including personal copies of Friends of the Earth's groundbreaking reports, invitations to film premieres and exclusive events, and the opportunity to receive special "thank you" gifts with their initial contribution of \$500 or more.

Global Stewardship Council members are part of the vanguard of environmental philanthropists standing behind our most important, far-reaching efforts to combat global warming, prevent air and water pollution, and keep toxins out of consumer products. Council members have made possible some of our most important recent victories including:

- Winning a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in a case that we initiated that places responsibility for regulating CO₂ as a pollutant squarely on the shoulders of the Environmental Protection Agency;
- Pressuring the EPA to re-evaluate out-of-date testing for fuel mileage posted on window stickers of new vehicles, leading to



Zach Bouchard and Katie Mae Simpson

new, more accurate tests that show actual fuel economy as much as 15-20 percent less than previously advertised;

- Exposing threats to children's health posed by toxins in baby products and furniture;

- Winning new regulations to require new, cleaner engines on ferries, recreational vessels and tugboats;
- Leading the opposition to defeat the flawed Lieberman-Warner Global Warming Bill. The bill failed to set reduction targets for global warming emissions at the level that sound science requires and proposed give-aways of more than \$1 trillion to coal, oil, gas and nuclear industries. Thanks to our advocacy, the House is already considering stronger bills.

For more information on joining the Global Stewardship Council, please contact Hillary Blank at (415) 544 0790 x-19 or hblank@foe.org.

"I was looking for an organization that works on a myriad of environmental issues, has a strong influence, and doesn't compromise its values the way other, sometimes larger, environmental organizations do. I found that in Friends of the Earth and we look forward to continuing our support."

— Zach Bouchard, co-contributor with business owners Rob Tafuri and Lee Eudy of Boston, MA

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We urgently need your feedback to help us set priorities for protecting the environment and human health in the coming year. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey inserted in this issue and return it to us within 14 days in the attached envelope. Alternatively, you may go to www.foe.org/survey to take the survey online. Your valuable input is greatly appreciated.

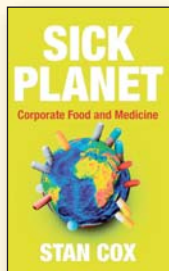
Fall Into a Good Book

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH STAFFERS and friends have compiled another list of not-to-miss books and movies:

Stan Cox is a senior scientist at the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas. In **SICK PLANET: CORPORATE FOOD AND MEDICINE** (Pluto Press, \$24.95), he builds a structural critique of global capitalism's destruction of the Earth's ecosystems. Cox interviews people struggling with waste from "big pharma" chemical plants in India, industrial agricultural workers poisoned by pesticides used in the heartland of the U.S., and other losers in the globalization sweepstakes. With great research and carefully footnoted data, this book is an essential primer for anyone concerned with sustainable agriculture and nicely complements recent volumes by Bill McKibben and Michael Pollan.

– Ben Terrall, Freelance Journalist

As a member of our *Clean Vessels* campaign I can tell you, untreated sewage is a real threat to our waterways. In **FLUSH** (Knopf, \$8.99), Carl Hiaasen has written a book for young adults that exposes the lax regulation of sewage and enforcement of sewage discharge laws. Noah's father has been sent to jail after sinking a casino boat he swears is dumping raw sewage into the harbor. After the boat's owner gets back in business without penalty, Noah and his sister decide to take



matters into their own hands – and find an ingenious way to bring the polluters to justice.

– Neesha Kulkarni

Carbon is in the news everyday, whether it's carbon emissions, sequestration or footprints. Rarely do we speak about carbon with the reverence it deserves as life's building block. In **THE CARBON AGE** (Random House, \$25.99), Eric Roston gives us the history of the element, starting with the Big Bang all the way to present day. He focuses on human interaction and manipulation of the element, touching on diamonds, coal mines, and even the carbon nanotubes in Lance Armstrong's bike. Roston does a great job of explaining the science of this basic element and the monumental policies surrounding it.

– Rebecca Connors

Humanity's over indulgence and wasteful consumption leads to absolute devastation of the planet, transforming it into an uninhabitable wasteland so toxic that no form of life can subsist. Sounds a bit like a warning you might hear from Friends of the Earth, not the back story for a kid's movie, right? Released in theaters early in the summer of 2008, the movie **WALL-E** (Disney-Pixar) takes place in such a setting. The title character is a goofy, little trash-compactor robot-that-could, who is now the lone inhabi-

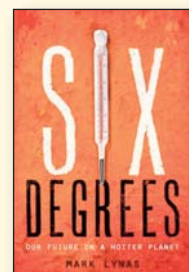


tant of Earth. Surrounded with the chatchkas of a lost civilization, WALL-E spends each day, for hundreds of years, sorting through landfills as tall as skyscrapers, until suddenly an unexpected visitor arrives and the loveable WALL-E's world changes abruptly as he stumbles into the role of hero. The DVD is expected to be released during the holiday season; we highly recommend queuing it up on your rental list.

– Kate McMahon

How much hotter can it get before multi-year droughts are common in the Great Plains breadbasket? Or northern China suffers chronic droughts that dry up farms and city taps alike? At what point will a five-meter sea-level rise, due to Greenland's ice melt, flood Miami, central London, and much of Manhattan, Bangkok, Bombay and Shanghai? The potential slow-motion collapse of our life-support systems is previewed in **SIX DEGREES: OUR FUTURE ON A HOTTER PLANET** (National Geographic Society, \$26.00). Reflecting a systematic review of hundreds of climatology journal articles, journalist and master storyteller Mark Lynas brings to life endangered habitats, paleoclimates and the hidden drama of climate research, depicting the path we should not take, one degree at a time. [The answers to the questions above: one degree (Centigrade), two degrees, and two degrees, respectively – after that it gets considerably worse.]

– Will Driscoll





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