

Pursue cost-effective use of all forms of energy

Written by Deb Thornton Writers' Group
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In May, two professors at San Jose State University in California posted a photo showing them burning a book. Aside from what the photo says about their maturity level, respect for the First Amendment and honest debate, the book itself deserves further discussion.

Titled "The Mad, Mad, Mad World of Climatedism: Mankind and Climate Change Mania" by Steve Goreham, with a foreword by astronaut Harrison Schmitt, the book discusses the climatedism movement, debunking the claims in a humorous — yet serious — manner.

Goreham deals with the history of temperature changes on Earth, discusses the impact of carbon dioxide, delves into ocean level changes and generally discredits the alarms of the climate change movement. He cites many extreme examples of the supposed "negative" impacts of global warming and addresses the actual potential benefits of both warming and energy use.

The San Jose State University professors were, I'm sure, cheered by many of their peers. The jobs of these alarmists depend on government funding of climate change studies and renewable energy activities. And it is big business.

How big was demonstrated recently by MidAmerican Energy when it announced a plan to build almost \$2 billion worth of wind turbines (some 650 units) in Iowa, a 50 percent increase. (Chicago is losing its claim to the windiest place.)

Fortunately, state government is not subsidizing the project. Unfortunately, these turbines will not make electricity cheaper to customers. The storage and transmission of this power to other locations is problematic, with significant electricity losses and high costs.

In reality, rates should go up but won't because the federal government (read the taxpayers — who just happen to also be ratepayers) will be subsidizing the turbine costs through federal tax credits. The circle of money goes round like turbine blades.

If a new technology does not make a product less expensive to purchase or of better quality, why are we using it? The oil and natural gas potential in North Dakota and Montana is far higher than previously thought.

On May 1, the U.S. Geological Survey "nearly tripled" Bakken Formation estimates to about 7.4 billion barrels of oil. These new numbers make the amount of recoverable oil 49 times more than originally estimated in 1995. Natural gas levels are estimated at 6.7 trillion cubic feet.

Continental Resources, one of the main producers, has estimated 903 billion barrels of oil, with more than 24 billion recoverable. Importantly, these numbers keep increasing as the technology improves. The technology also is delivering the product in a more cost-effective manner. Becoming an oil and gas engineer might be a good career path.

Additionally, blue-collar jobs in the oil and gas fields are paying very well, providing overtime and bonuses. The economies of North and South Dakota are some of the most robust in the country.

Unfortunately, environmental activists in Winneshiek County have just submitted a petition asking for a 24-month moratorium on frac-sand mining. Their desire is to shut down a highly

profitable and growing oil and gas industry.

We must pursue the efficient and cost-effective use of all forms of energy. Renewables such as solar, wind and hydro-electric power all have their place. The drive to develop these technologies should be driven by market demand and real improvements, not over-hyped political correctness and government subsidies.

San Jose State University professors, Winneshiek County activists and others continue to pursue ever more expensive and limiting, government-controlled energy development. Expect the book burning to continue — but not to be posted on the Internet.

It is a mad, mad, mad world.

Writers' Group member Deb Thornton is a research analyst at the Mount Pleasant-based Public Interest Institute.