



Obama's Plan for Energy and the Environment

On his campaign website, Obama starts off by offering a variety of "short-term" solutions for the "pain at the pump." Among them are plans to give every American family \$1,000, funds taken from oil companies' profits and "setting aside a portion of a second round of fiscal stimulus to ensure sufficient funding for home heating and weatherization assistance as we move into the fall and winter months."

Another idea listed as a short-term solution is a crackdown on energy speculation by closing loopholes that supposedly exist in the regulations of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Obama and Biden plan to enact "simple legislation" to "prevent traders from unfairly lining their pockets at the expense of the American people." Next is a plan to release light crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve with the goal of bringing down gas prices, but the plan was written before the recent decrease in prices so whether it will be implemented is up in the air. And since increased taxes on oil companies mean less oil exploration, less dividends for investors — often retirees who are funding their retirements — and higher fuel prices, one wonders how this benefits Americans.

In terms of mid-to-long-term solutions, Obama highlights the supposed dangers posed by man-made "global climate change," a phenomenon that scientists are still debating. In the *Blueprint*, Obama states that he will also eliminate all oil imports from the Middle East and Venezuela within 10 years by reducing the demand for oil. The first proposal is to mandate that car makers (if they're still around) improve their fuel-economy standards by four percent per year. Obama plans to help them do this by providing \$50 billion so they can retool their factories. Since there aren't new technologies available to make vehicles more fuel efficient while retaining performance and safety, we can look for lighter, smaller, less safe vehicles. In a move that sounds suspiciously Sovietesque, he also plans to have a million plug-in hybrid cars on the road by 2015, insisting that these automobiles can get 150 miles to the gallon and that they should be built in America. To help consumers warm up to the idea, he will provide a \$7,000 "Tax Credit for Purchasing Advanced Vehicles." Of course, the country will need about three additional electricity-producing power plants to charge the batteries for these cars, and since one million cars is about 0.4 percent of the 250 million registered cars in the United States, this is unlikely





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to make much of an impact on our country's oil consumption.

Next, Obama says he will establish a "National Low Carbon Fuel Standard" to reduce by 10 percent the carbon in fuels by 2020. This will be accompanied by a new requirement that 60 billion gallons of "advanced biofuels" be phased into the American fuel supply by 2030. Question: "What new 'advanced biofuels'?" Ethanol has proved to be a disaster. It boosted the cost of crops and led to food shortages and starvation in Third World countries. Unmentioned is the fact that if any advanced biofuel — such as commercial amounts of "green crude" from algae — is introduced, it would be eagerly embraced by Americans, with or without Obama's backing. Speaking of biofuels, Obama will mandate that all cars have "flexible fuel" capabilities by the end of his first term in office. He will also adopt a "use it or lose it" approach to existing oil and gas leases, claiming that 68 million acres of land (40 million of which are in the ocean) are currently being leased but not developed. But his plan says nothing about fastracking the lawsuits that are holding up all offshore oil exploration on those leases. In addition, he will promote "responsible domestic production of oil and natural gas" by establishing a process for early identification of "any infrastructure obstacles/shortages or possible federal permitting process delays to drilling in the Bakken Shale formation, the Barnett shale formation, and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska."

Next on the agenda in Obama's *Blueprint* is his plan, also discussed in other sections, to "create millions of new green jobs." On his campaign website he gives a specific number: five million green jobs. He will accomplish this with a series of mandates, regulations, and new government programs. These include ensuring (somehow, he doesn't mention specifics) that 10 percent of America's electricity comes from "renewable" sources by 2012, with a goal of 25 percent by 2025. Again, as yet another question remains unanswered: "How will this create jobs when his plan will make our nation's energy much more costly?" (Because solar and wind power are intermittent power sources, they must always be backed up by conventional power plants that are always running — called "spinning reserves" — so all of the costs of new solar and wind power must be added to the costs we, and American industry, now bear.) This will be coupled with his plan to reduce demand for electricity by 15 percent from projected levels with ideas like having the federal government weatherize a million low-income homes a year for the next 10 years.

The new administration also plans to order the Department of Energy to enter into "public-private partnerships" to develop five coal-fired plants with "clean carbon capture and sequestration technology." Obama will also "prioritize" the construction of the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline by working with Alaska and the Canadian government to "facilitate" the construction of this job-creating pipeline that Obama says will be "critical to our energy security." How much will all these new "green jobs" cost taxpayers to create? Obama says on his campaign website that he will invest \$150 billion dollars over a 10-year period. Apparently that will be in addition to a new federal investment program that will give states grant money to give to manufacturers with ideas for clean technology.

The new administration will also provide increased federal funding for workforce training programs that Obama will direct to incorporate green technologies. In addition, Obama has big plans for the construction industry. He plans to establish "National Building Efficiency Goals" that would require all new buildings to be "carbon neutral," as in producing zero emissions. He also wants to improve the efficiency of existing building by 25 percent over the next 10 years. The new administration will also invest in a new "smart grid" for electricity by creating a Grid Modernization Commission. The idea is that the new grid would help America use and transmit electricity more efficiently. Obama also believes America needs new national standards for how much energy appliances are allowed to consume. The



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last point mentioned in the Energy and Environment section of his campaign website is an ominous sounding "build more livable and sustainable communities" by reforming federal transportation funding and changing our land use and development patterns.

Obama does admit that the federal government is the number one consumer of energy on the planet, noting that in the 2008 fiscal year it spent about \$14.5 billion on energy. The plan calls for reducing this number by 15 percent by 2015 through everything from buying only plug-in hybrids for the White House to making sure all the federal government's new buildings have zero emissions.

But the broadest and most alarming measure discussed among all these new plans is the implementation of the "cap and trade" program across the entire economy. Unnamed scientists cited by Obama claim that America needs to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent before 2050. All "pollution credits" for carbon dioxide will be auctioned off to ensure that "all industries pay for every ton of emissions they release." Obama expects these auctions to raise \$15 billion for the federal government every year, which would be used to do everything from creating "migration corridors" for wild life and "assist fish and wildlife to adapt to the effects of a warming climate" to investing in energy efficiency improvements and other federal energy programs.

As always, these costs too will be passed onto the average American through increased energy costs and job losses. In Germany, where a cap-and-trade system has recently been implemented, energy costs skyrocketed and thousands of jobs fled the country. The costs to the economy are not tabulated but are projected by experts to reach alarming levels, dealing another blow to the already troubled economy. Obama and Biden also plan to make the United States a "leader" on climate change while re-engaging the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and "invigorating" the Major Economies effort which will supposedly bring countries that have high-emissions together to "develop effective emissions reduction efforts."

None of the plans proposed by the new administration have any justification in the Constitution, with the exception of lowering the federal government's energy use (most of which is used unconstitutionally anyway.) If Obama and Biden succeed in implementing their plans, America's economy will descend further down the road to socialism while likely lowering the standard of living significantly. But with the new wave of liberals soon to be arriving in D.C., the prospects for stopping this onslaught of government-mandated environmentalism look increasingly slim.

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