

U.S. has cut emissions ---- without cap and tax

Dick Morris, Escondido North County Times, 2-21-11

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While the federal Environmental Protection Administration is about to impose regulations and taxes on carbon emissions by executive fiat ---- in the name of stopping global climate change ---- the United States has already dramatically cut its emissions, and probably has already complied with the Kyoto/Copenhagen goals for reduced emissions. This has been done without taxes, without regulations and without government intervention.

In 2007, the U.S. emitted 6.12 billion metric tons of carbon. In 2008, emissions fell to 5.92. In 2009, while President Barack Obama was promising that the U.S. would cut its emissions to 5.0 by 2015, the American economy and public ---- on their own ---- cut the emissions to 5.5 billion. Most likely, by the time the 2010 measurements are in, we will have reached the Obama goal.

While many attribute the cut to the recession, which presumably will end sometime, the fact is that emissions dropped before the recession hit and have continued to fall. A big part of the reason is the reduction in the use of coal to generate electricity.

As we explain in our new book, "Revolt!" (to be released on March 1), coal accounted for 52 percent of electric generation in 1996, but only for 45 percent today. In the past 12 months, coal's share has dropped from 49 percent to 45 percent. Natural gas has almost doubled its share from 13 percent in 1996 to 23 percent in 2009, while renewables have risen from 2 percent to 4 percent.

Here are the figures from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, reflecting changes from 1996 to 2009::

-- Coal: 52 percent to 45 percent

-- Natural gas: 13 percent to 23 percent

-- Nuclear: 20 percent, 20 percent

-- Renewable: 2 percent to 4 percent

The free market, free enterprise system has responded to persuasion and incentives like it does in free societies without the heavy hand of taxation, government regulation and coercion.

These data expose a basic truth: Cap-and-trade or carbon regulation is not necessary to lower U.S. emissions. The government bureaucratic/environmentalist alliance wants these measures to increase public control over our economy, not to fight global warming. Just as the Obama stimulus package was designed to increase public spending, not to stimulate anything, so the environmental regulations are exploiting public concern over climate change to ratify a growth in government power and oversight.

And that's the inconvenient truth.