

Greetings Students, Colleagues and Friends,

I've had you on my mind for some weeks now. A few of you have asked about "the next newsletter" so after a summer hiatus, here it is.

I was thinking about Henry Ford last night - and that whole Industrial Revolution thing. I was thinking in the context of many of you who have graduated (or are in the process) and what kind of job you'll be getting when you leave school. Mr. Ford had this great idea, about mass production, which fed - and fed into a lot of other people's ideas of how to create more prosperity and better living conditions for the greatest number of people. Starting with textiles in Western Europe, folks started filling new business niches in a frenzy of growth, which did beget a higher standard of living (along with a jump in population). It also had no regard for the environment because simply put, the ratio of the number of people to the riches of the environment posed no foreseeable threat.

Today we're actually at a place where a new wave is building. Many of us have been pushing against a giant boulder we'll call "change to integrate environment and economics". We have recognized the impact of finite natural resources. We have created rivers on fire, gyres of trash in our oceans and many smaller but no less ugly atrocities. Fortunately, we are educable. We recognize that not only are these things ugly and yes, morally wrong; they're also bad for business. In recognizing that, *many* of our businesses and emerging business leaders have joined in pushing the boulder - and it's started to roll.

Much like Mr. Ford, we are starting to see a greater number of business niches and opportunities in sustainability, which will fuel *our* generation's Industrial Revolution (although it needs a different name). In fact, across the business and social board we are creating "sustainabilists". (It wasn't a word before - but we needed it, don't you think?) The following article discusses one of three major challenges still serving as rocks we need to roll our boulder of integration over to successfully achieve a better world for ourselves and future generations - that of semantics and win/lose thinking. The attached River Network reports on the carbon footprint of our water needs and the energy requirements for water cleaning/production/distribution/capture/re-cleaning address another of our challenges to move things forward - good data. The third challenge looms almost 7 billion times larger - that with increased prosperity from the new business opportunities created by sustainabilists, we are also looking at *more* people able and ready to consume *more* things. That is the element comparable to the natural resource gaff of Mr. Ford's generation. The question is - will we ignore it too? - or learn not only from our forbearers' successes, but their mistakes as well.

Margo Farnsworth  
Screendoor Consulting

Adjunct Faculty, Lipscomb University Institute for Sustainable Practices  
615-478-4889

*Give good people good information and they'll do good things.*

(If you've just received this single newsletter, it may be because I thought you'd be interested in this particular subject. You may or may not get others. If you want on my list regularly, e-mail me. If you want off my list, e-mail me. Thanks!)

## **Why we need to stop talking about climate change**

By [Tom Catania](#) and [Andrew Hoffman](#)

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In April, the Heartland Institute posted a billboard in Chicago comparing those who believe in climate change to convicted Unabomber terrorist, Ted Kaczynski. This month, climate proponents posted billboards mocking the Heartland Institute and attacking its corporate funders.

This is what passes for public debate over climate change today; two sides sniping at each other in a contest of "mutually assured rhetorical destruction."

In the hopes of creating a social consensus on climate change, extensive money and resources are being spent to convey the message that the science is settled. And yet, the message is not taking. In fact, the words "climate change" themselves are increasingly and semantically clouding the national debate on the country's energy and environmental policies and standing in the way of adopting a variety of technological and policy solutions.

In a battle of extreme rhetorical attacks, one side sees the planet hanging in the balance and the other sees the world economy and individual liberty under grave threat. This partisan divide makes further pursuit of communication strategies to win over the opposition a distraction at best, and doomed to failure at worst.

It's time to call a truce in this rhetorical war, and instead look to the sidelines, where less-political business initiatives are cumulating significant impact every day in mitigating human-caused climate change, while reducing consumer costs.

A cornucopia of business driven solutions and products are on the market now, and many more could flourish in the context of a more coherent national energy and environmental strategy. Sadly, such a strategy is being held hostage to the toxic politics of climate change. We need to put aside debates about the role of government and markets by dropping these charged words when we discuss solutions to the nation's energy and environmental challenges.

In fact, a social consensus on climate change may be unnecessary to mitigate it.

The fact is that we are in the midst of an energy renaissance where we are beginning to think about energy in an entirely new way: Virtually every nameplate in the auto sector offers a hybrid vehicle and many are offering electrics; virtually every company in the construction sector offers green construction materials and supplies; private equity firms are looking to the next big breakthrough in the energy sector; consumers no longer think of gasoline as the only fuel source that can run their automobiles and consider energy efficiency in the products they buy.

And those products are changing to meet that demand. A 2012 FWD 4 cylinder Chevrolet Equinox SUV gets better combined gas mileage (26 MPG) than a 2010 4 cylinder Honda Accord (25 MPG). GE Lighting just announced the release of a 27-watt light-emitting diode (LED) that meets all of the 100-watt incandescent performance metrics (and contains no mercury).

The fact is that, facilitated by enabling public policies, the global economy is being transformed to one that's much less energy intensive -- regardless of whether a societal consensus exists on climate change.

The National Appliance Energy Conservation Act, passed during Ronald Reagan's term and signed by President George Herbert Walker Bush, has been projected by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy to save the nation's households in excess of \$1 trillion (in 2010 dollars) in utility bills and over 200 quadrillion BTUs of energy through 2035.

Let's take a moment to bask in this national achievement. This is the amount of energy generated by 72 billion tons of coal, or about 70 years worth of US coal consumption. Of course not all energy consumed by appliances is electricity or generated by coal, but it illustrates the magnitude of what can be achieved through policies enacted without having been justified by their effect on climate change.

And we can now turn our attention to the electric grid itself, where those same appliances can collectively eliminate the nation's projected growth in peak demand over the next 20 years. The world of energy is changing -- but people aren't noticing because they are caught up in partisan bickering over climate change. People rarely know they are part of a renaissance until it ends.

Government must continue to set the conditions that will advance the energy renaissance that is already underway. Companies need sound energy policy to secure stable, long term energy supplies; they need sound and predictable technology policies for long term investment planning; they need clear and coherent industrial policies that recognize we operate in a globalized marketplace where we are competing against countries that heavily subsidize their domestic industries; and they need a knowledgeable consuming public that can make informed purchasing decisions.

In developing sound energy and environmental strategy, experimentation built upon existing successes should be the order of the day. Success will come in the form of a variety of government policies, which reflect and build upon shifts in the more central aspects of the market: rising and uncertain energy prices; disruptive technologies; shifting consumer demand; increased insurance risk; supplier and buyer standards; rising cost of capital; and the list goes on.

Wise public policy will focus on reducing or eliminating market failures and distortions, and ensure that widely acknowledged externalities are reflected in price and cost. It may be time to acknowledge that a universally agreed and effective price on carbon will not be the deus ex machina forming the foundation of a global energy and environment policy in the near term. Instead the world's collective sleeves must be rolled up to continue the good work already in progress.

The nation's energy and environmental challenges are too important to become mired in the partisan political stalemate of our times. And we can expect the upcoming Fall elections to turn the rhetorical cloud around climate change into a dense fog for several months.

But even the staunchest climate non-believers can see that new technologies that lower utility bills and reduce the monthly cost to consumers is sound economic policy. And the staunchest climate believers can acknowledge that "climate change" has become a politically inartful shorthand.

Consigning anything associated with climate change to the "wedge issue" box is hurting the economy, so let's stop branding these energy efficient technologies and policies as tools of climate change mitigation, and call them what they also are: a path to prosperity. This is not "picking winners and losers." That's the rhetoric of partisan stalemate. This is simply recognizing the market shift that is underway already and hastening its arrival by creating the conditions that allow great solutions to emerge.

2 attachments — [Download all attachments](#)

**Water-Energy%20Toolkit-**

 **Understanding%20the%20Carbon%20Footprint%20of%20Your%20Water%20Use%20(Bevan%20Griffiths-Sattenspi.pdf**

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