



When Does the Future Begin for Renewable Energy?

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Duke Brooks asks:

Renewable/green energy without question is the future; the question is: When, exactly, does that future begin?

Here are a few ways I would choose to frame this:

The vast majority of our scientists tell us that climate change is already manifest, evidenced by the startling increase in extreme weather events, the melting of the glaciers, the measurable rises in the sea levels, etc.

The pH of the oceans is falling, potable water is becoming scarcer, food shortages are becoming more frequent and widespread, and there are dozens of other environmental horrors unfolding as I write this note.

The planet has plenty of crude oil left, but it comes at an increasingly terrible cost: financially, ecologically, and militarily.

In the U.S. the leading consulting firms predict that our grid-mix will feature at least 35% coal for the foreseeable future, loading our atmosphere with, not only CO₂, but with toxins too numerous to list in this short piece.

I'm reminded of my talk with Jerry Taylor at the Cato Institute, who suggested as follows: In the next decade, there is little danger of catastrophe, though we agree there is a great danger 100 years from

now. Our suggestion, therefore, is that we take minimal action now in terms of a tax on carbon, but a big one a century from now when the problem becomes severe.

Apparently this logic makes sense Mr. Taylor, and a heck of a lot of other people, but it's totally lost on me. We have identified a threat to the survival of humankind that is expanding in its consequence daily, but we want to postpone its mitigation until we're all gasping for our last breaths? We realize that we have a problem that we could handle now, albeit at a cost, but we suggest that whatever is left of society 50-or-so years hence should deal with the costs that, by that time, will have grown exponentially?

Sorry, I'm lost.