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What 'Earth Hour' Ignores

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For some of us, “Earth Hour” passed on Saturday rather nonchalantly. Many even forgot about it altogether. (Like yours truly.) However, the annual event is considered by the environmental Left as a sacred obligation to respect Mother Earth with an hour-long reduction in fossil fuel use. The title “Earth Hour” is ironic from the standpoint that, if it were extended any longer, life for most would quite literally be upended. Those who demonize man-made emissions won’t — indeed, *can’t* — argue against their own dependence on it. That’s *not* to say conservation is a bad thing. In fact, it’s a very *good* thing, as is every effort to be good stewards with the resources with which we are blessed. However, the point environmentalists make with “Earth Hour” hides the strides we’ve made to reduce emissions without government intrusion.

For example, did you know that the global rate of man-made CO₂ has actually stabilized? On March 17, the International Energy Agency reported, “Global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions were flat for a third straight year in 2016 even as the global economy grew ... signaling a continuing decoupling of emissions and economic activity. This was the result of growing renewable power generation, switches from coal to natural gas, improvements in energy efficiency, as well as structural changes in the global economy.”

As Cato Institute’s Chelsea Follett observes in a Washington Examiner op-ed, “This is arguably as momentous as the well-documented decoupling of agricultural land area from crop yields and the decoupling of forest area loss from growth in population.” She rightly underscores the importance of fracking (from which natural gas is derived) in this development. Truth be told, in the U.S., emissions and electricity bills have actually *fallen*. And fracking — an extraction method founded through entrepreneurship — is the biggest reason. Next year, it might be more appropriate to celebrate “Earth Hour” by honoring the amazing carbon reductions that have been achieved through the free market.