

## Global warming and energy insanity

By: Patrick J. Michaels – June 6, 2013

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Rush Limbaugh hasn't made a lot of green friends over the years with his "environmental wacko" tirades, but, given what's going on these days, perhaps his rhetoric has been too mild.

Exhibit No. 1 is the sleek and sexy Tesla Model S. If you want the one with the lowest chance of stranding you on I-95, it will set you back over \$100,000. You'll be refunded \$7,500 from the federal government, several thousand more (in most states) from state taxpayers, plus various other credits that governments bestow upon ostentatious and cheap virtue, like putting a special plug in your garage. Somehow, Tesla is still losing money.

You might have read otherwise. The company's stock price doubled — to about \$110 a share — after it reported a profit last month. Along the way, its genius founder, Elon Musk, hit upon the clever notion of paying off hundreds of million dollars in federal loans by issuing a jillion more shares of TSLA stock.

Supply and demand usually dictates that when the number of shares in a company is dramatically increased, the price goes down, but this is not the case with TSLA. By announcing a phony profit, TSLA made its stock kite to the point that issuing even more of it generated enough dough to retire its massive federal debt.

By "phony" I mean this: Conservatively speaking, Tesla lost about \$11,000 for every car that rolled out the door last quarter. But they covered that by selling \$68 million in "credits" to their competitors.

These competitors had chosen not to enter the obviously limited market for cars with an average real-world range of around 200 miles. We know the market is limited thanks to the paltry sales (averaging around 2,000 per year) of the Honda Civic GX, a natural-gas-powered version with about that range. But the State of California punishes car companies that won't go along with

this craziness, making them buy “credits” to not produce what no sane company would, from the only one that does: Tesla.

Honda (“The Power of Dreams”) thinks it’s a perilous business model to depend upon evanescent global-warming shakedowns and subsidies. They are reading the recent scientific literature in which climate scientists are clumsily trying to thread the needle between backing off their forecasts of the end of the world and maintaining a shred of credibility.

Exhibit No. 2 is the increasing clear-cutting of the jungle-like dense vegetation of the southeastern U.S. to fight global warming. Say *what?*

Remember all that caterwauling that cutting down the world’s forests is a bad idea because it results in increasing carbon dioxide emissions as the felled trees are burned? As Mikhail Gorbachev says, “that’s old thinking.” The EU has now decided that forests are “renewable,” and that their wood is a renewable fuel, disregarding their previous concerns about carbon emissions. But they won’t cut their own forests, because they have laws against clear-cutting, or mowing down the entire woods.

So we cut down ours. The 100-year-old trees of Northampton County, N.C., that are being bulldozed, pelletized, and shipped to Europe to be combusted in (previously) coal-fired power plants indeed are renewed — after 101 years. In the meantime, global concentrations of carbon dioxide increase, but the Euros meet their 2020 target.

The green pashas of the EU have finally come to the realization that their previous favorite “renewable” technologies — solar energy and windmills — aren’t going to get them even close to their silly commitment to reduce their emissions of dreaded carbon dioxide by 20 percent below 1990 levels a mere 6.5 years from today.

Maybe that’s because solar is guaranteed not to work whenever there’s insufficient solar radiation — about 50 percent of the time, or “night” — and Europe’s high latitude means there is little insolation except during the summer. And maybe it’s because the “load factor” for wind is

even worse, running around 15 percent. There is no way anyone would invest in such insanity if it weren't paid for with other people's money.

The Euros *could* reduce emissions the way the good old U.S.A. is doing, by hydraulically fracturing deep shale for natural gas. That increases supply to the point that it displaces coal for electrical generation, which results in cheaper power and half the carbon dioxide emissions. They *could*, but the same nutsos who think that reducing their emissions will have a detectable effect on global temperature also think shale gas is yucky.

Why won't they go our way? Because the green world is stark, raving mad.

Destroying the forest for the good of the environment is insane, right? So is shaking down auto companies that produce profits by selling cars rather than indulgences, and so is giving folks who buy \$100,000 cars an average of \$10,000 of taxpayer largesse.

Rush was right: Wackos.