

Opinion

Electricity, continued from p. 4

The only reason nuclear and coal survive as power generators is through heavy government subsidies that serve to mask the true cost of our energy use.

If we took away the subsidies, both nuclear and coal electrical generation would disappear within months or years.

Similarly, if we subsidized wind and other renewable energy at the same level as coal and nuclear, they would out-compete both coal and nuclear and drive them from the marketplace. Dropping all subsidies as soon as possible should be our goal. The market will sort out which techniques are truly economical.

Guardians of the energy status quo also cry out to do away with government regulation and champion a free-market economy.

Then they claim that converting to renewable energy will bankrupt our grandchildren's future because we will need to pay too much to convert to renewables. If we completely did away with subsidies and let market forces take over, my bet is

that nuclear power and all forms of fossil fuels would become, well, fossils, in a very short time. Instead, these noble guardians cling to the present and offer a decimated, poisoned landscape, ocean, and atmosphere as their vision of the future. Such logic reeks of short-sighted, self-serving profit and corruption. Who, in their right mind, would prefer a poisoned planet over a clean one?

Wall Street, for all of its ills, sees the writing on the wall. Nuclear power plants can only be constructed with government-backed loans because banks and investors know a poor risk when they see one. A similar, wholesale flight from fossil fuel-generated electricity is accelerating rapidly. Last year, the Environmental Defense Fund successfully argued down the construction of 100 coal-fired power plants by a Texas utility. The result: Texas has seen a surge in the growth of renewable energy, particularly wind power, and recently passed Iowa and California as the leading renewable-energy producing state.

Following conservative principles into a green future is not an oxymoronic statement. All that is needed is to put conservation back into conservatism.

Remember, Texas is the home state of our last president. He will never be remembered as a friend of clean, renewable energy but that's what happened in Texas anyhow.

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