

## 'Coal' from page 4

the acidified surface. We are killing of the base of the marine food chain.

Finally, I'm talking about the havoc starting to be seen by the insane level of greenhouse gases being pumped into our atmosphere; primarily carbon dioxide. Coal-fired power plants are the leading contributor of carbon dioxide.

For every ton of coal burned, more than 3.5 tons of carbon dioxide are emitted into the atmosphere. The world burned nearly 7 billion tons of coal in 2007 and more than that each year since. This is a major contributor to the global warming that is driving the climate change we are only now starting to witness.

I hope you get my point. Who pays for the clean-up? It's certainly not the mining companies or the power companies. If they did, your electric bills would skyrocket out of sight. They would no longer be able to tout that coal is the cheapest source of electricity.

But you pay for it anyway. Instead of seeing it in your electric bill, it's disguised as your tax dollars at work. These tax dollars subsidize coal mining. These tax dollars fund a slew of federal agencies to oversee, regulate, and fine the abuses of an industry that lives high on the hog using our money and our natural resources. These tax dollars fund the clean-up of the multiple

messes that coal mining and coal burning leave behind.

You might wonder, "Are they insane? Why do they do this?" You should wonder, "Are we insane? Why do we let them do this?"

I have to ask a pair of hypothetical questions. "How much would we change our energy future if we invested one year's \$2.3 billion in North Carolina instead of sending it out of state? What would happen if we began developing North Carolina's renewable energy resources and investing in energy efficiency?"

A quick walk around the Brevard College campus reveals dorms that are too hot in winter and too cold in summer. Most of our windows are single pane and not well caulked allowing heat to escape. Brevard College isn't alone. These problems, or other similar efficiency problems, are standard in most buildings in the Southeast. With efficient thermostat controls and modern windows, we would save a bundle every year.

North Carolina is already a member of the Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Consortium. The U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that the offshore wind of the Atlantic outer continental shelf alone has the potential to generate four times the total electricity needs of the entire United States. I regard this as a minimum number. They assumed only 5 Megawatts of power output for every square kilometer (Mw/km2).

A visit to any existing wind farm—onshore

or offshore—reveals that their production is much higher than 5 Mw/km2. Which state in the consortium has the largest continental shelf on the Eastern Seaboard (note: Florida is not a member of the consortium)? You guessed it: North Carolina.

In reality, wind power is only a fraction of the potential. The inexorable push of the Gulf Stream has the potential to generate much more than the wind and each passing wave could be tapped for a portion of its energy up and down the coast. With a little forethought and planning, North Carolina could become the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy within several decades—and I haven't even mentioned solar power.

If North Carolina invested \$2.3 billion in itself by developing the abundant clean, natural energy flowing through the air and water just over the horizon from our coastline, we could put thousands of state residents to work and create a sustainable energy boom that will carry us for decades, if not centuries, into the future. The power companies would continue to make a profit and we would continue to benefit from abundant, relatively inexpensive electricity.

It is essential that our politicians, our populace and our power companies change their mindset. The old ways are becoming the source of our ruin. There are too many of us to allow the continued poisoning of our world. We need to create a new, clean, abundant, sustainable energy future. The consequences of not doing so will be detrimental to all of us.

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## Fundamentalism: failing to see the middle ground

By John M. Climer  
Editor in Chief

Recently, the national news media has been focused on the threat of "radical or fundamental" Islam, as it pertains to the security of the Western way of life.

I'll keep myself out of that argument, by asserting another: fundamentalism, in any form, is dangerous. When a person's ideology is fundamental, they no longer see anything from the perspective of another; everything becomes black and white according to their own ideology.

Some of the most horrific events in history have occurred at the hands of fundamentalists. For example: millions of Jews were slaughtered by fundamental Nazi's; the Oklahoma City Bombing was carried out by American militia fundamentalist Timothy McVeigh; the Centennial Park bombing occurred at the hands

of fundamental Christian, Eric Rudolph; and more recently, the terrorist attacks in the US, Russia and England by fundamental Muslims.

Again, I assert, fundamentalism in any form is extremely dangerous. Fundamentalists fail to see the middle ground to any issue, because



their viewpoint is completely jaded by rhetoric and embedded in their own ideology. They are incapable of rational thought because their mantra, whatever it may be, is the only scope through which they view the world.

In my opinion, I don't really know the answer

to combating fundamentalism, in any form, because by trying to change a fundamentalist perspective, you're addressing irrational thought through rationality. Perhaps that leaves those at odds with fundamentalism two options: to stand-by and watch it become the status quo, or to vehemently oppose it, so as to prevent it from subverting your own values and way of life.