

October 19, 2020

SPECTATOR.US

Why Fracking Matters

By Matt A. Mayer

Sigmund Freud famously noted that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. In the case of fracking, even Freud would have acknowledged that fracking is about so much more than just fracking. That is why the issue is so important to voters beyond those in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas where so much oil and natural gas is produced. That is also why Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have tried to walk back their positions on fracking from the Democratic primary, when they said they'd ban fracking and cease the use of carbon-based energy sources, as well as push for the budget-busting and progressive utopian Green New Deal.

Of course, it's about jobs. According to The Empowerment Alliance (TEA), the era of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and horizontal drilling has resulted in the creation of 4.1 million jobs across America in the energy industry. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that energy industry jobs average \$108,000 per year, which is 'nearly twice the private economy average'. Many of these jobs are filled by men and women lacking college degrees, thereby reinvigorating the American middle class hollowed out when jobs moved to Mexico and Asia after the passage of NAFTA and China's entry into the World Trade Organization.

The Biden-Harris ticket's attack on fracking, married to its adherence to the contours of the radical Green New Deal, would kill those jobs and the incomes that come with them. The growth of renewable energy wouldn't replace those wages. North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) president Sean McGarvey 'estimates that many union members would "take a 50 percent or 75 percent pay cut" if they changed jobs into the renewable energy industry'.

It's not just about energy industry jobs. TEA estimates that fracking also resulted in 1.4 million manufacturing jobs being added to the US economy over the last few years. Those jobs came due to the competitive resurgence in US manufacturing due to access to inexpensive and reliable natural gas to power manufacturing facilities.

It's also about the environment. Beyond storage limitations, wind and solar will always be totally dependent upon the wind blowing and the sun shining. The physical footprint needed to produce enough energy to actually power America for wind and solar to replace coal and natural gas is enormous. For example, for wind and solar to generate 1,000 megawatts of power, it would require [a wind farm of 234 square miles or a solar farm of 54.7 square miles](#). Based on 2013 figures, to meet the entire power needs of America, [wind and solar facilities would take 101,772 square miles and 125,013 square miles](#) respectively, which would encompass 100 percent

of all rural farm land in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio, as well as part of West Virginia.

Thus, if you truly care about keeping our air clean, then outside of nuclear power, natural-gas-fired power plants produce large amounts of reliable energy with little to no problematic emissions. In fact, as TEA reported, 'over the last 50 years, gas utilities have added 30 million more residential customers with virtually no increases in emissions'. Per the US Energy Information Administration, CO2 emissions have been falling since 2008 and reached the [lowest point pre-pandemic since the mid-1990s](#) despite far more people and energy uses. The *Wall Street Journal* noted that 'increasing power generation from natural gas has accounted for 60 percent of the country's decline in CO2 emissions from electricity since 2010.' The International Energy Agency reported that 'US emissions are now down almost one gigaton from their peak in the year 2000, the largest absolute decline by any country over that period.'

America is beating Paris Accord countries because of fracking.

It's also about indirect taxes. How you ask? Because of the renaissance of America's energy industry over the last decade, natural gas prices have been at record low prices. Given our substantial supply of untapped shale formations, the US will remain dominant in natural gas production for decades to come. The Council of Economic Advisers concluded 'that price decreases that resulted from the American shale revolution have saved an average family of four \$2,500 a year—that's a \$203 billion annual savings for US consumers'. If the Biden-Harris ticket ends fracking and pushes forward on the Green New Deal, US consumers will see their energy costs increase. Businesses, too, will get hit with higher energy costs. Though Democrats won't call that a tax hike, Americans will understand that they are paying more to heat their homes and power their devices because of policy changes directly impacting their pocketbooks.

It's also about America's national security. America's energy independence unequivocally makes America safer. Instead of being dependent on oil from the Middle East, America can use its energy power to undermine petro-thugs like Russia's Vladimir Putin, Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro, and Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei. Equally importantly, America can serve as an honest broker in the Middle East for peace, as Donald Trump has successfully done by securing peace deals between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. An energy independent America makes the world

safer.

Voters in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas are at ground zero of the fracking debate, given the positive impact it has had on their lives and the devastation that would come from banning it. Voters beyond those states, however, also understand that fracking has benefited America in numerous ways without any real downside. In the last 10 years, we've produced more oil and natural gas than at any point in American history while at the same time improving the quality of our land, water, and air. Voters are deciding now and in the coming weeks as they vote whether they want an America with more jobs, lower energy costs, less taxes, and greater security or if they want to end fracking and put America on an uncertain and costly path described in the progressives' Green New Deal.

Sometimes a cigar is in fact more than just a cigar.

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