

Natural Gas is the ‘Real’ Green Deal

Early this year, with great fanfare, several members of Congress proposed a “Green New Deal” to battle climate change through a rapid and drastic reduction in the production and consumption of fossil fuels. Specifically, the program called for eliminating pollution and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by “greening” all new and existing buildings in the U.S., embracing distributed power generation and smart grids, and meeting 100 percent of electricity demand by 2030 with zero-emission energy sources—i.e., no fossil fuels and no nukes.

As proposed, the Green New Deal was naively impractical and prohibitively expensive. For example, according to a study by the Mises Institute, transition to a power sector with net zero emissions of greenhouse gases in 10 years would require a capital investment of \$5.4 trillion by 2029.

Amid all the brouhaha over climate change, a major milestone has been ignored — namely, that **America’s greenhouse gas emissions are 13 percent lower today than in 2005, even with an economy that is a third larger.** This achievement isn’t the result of environmental regulations or the huge subsidies available to wind and solar investors; rather, it has been the increased use of natural gas that has helped reduce GHGs in the U.S.

It is a well-known fact that natural gas burns a lot cleaner than coal or oil. At the same time, thanks to the “shale revolution,” natural gas is abundant, inexpensive and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

Consequently, the power generation sector, which is responsible for about 25 percent of GHGs in the U.S., has moved quickly to adopt natural gas. Electric utilities have shuttered more than 250 coal plants since 2010. A decade ago, coal-fired generation accounted for about 50 percent of the electrons coursing through the nation’s power grids but by last year, that percentage had dropped to 27.

Opponents of fossil fuels acknowledge that gas has a smaller carbon footprint than coal but nonetheless object to its use because of methane (CH₄) releases associated with its production & transportation. But here again they fail to acknowledge the tremendous progress that has been made in recent years to contain methane emissions.

According to recent data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Information Administration, **methane emissions from onshore oil and natural gas production fell 24 percent between 2011 and 2017, even as production increased by almost 50 percent and 730,000 miles of new transmission and distribution pipelines were added.**



America’s natural gas boom also is helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions abroad. From virtually zero a few years ago, liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports approached 800 billion cubic feet last year. Indeed, by 2024 the U.S. is projected to be the world’s second largest exporter of LNG, after Qatar.

Countries such as China, India and Japan — which still rely heavily on coal for power generation — are among the largest purchasers of American LNG. To the degree they substitute our “clean gas” for their domestic or imported “dirty coal,” the air becomes cleaner while global greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

Cheap natural gas, made available by hydraulic fracturing of deep shale, is the “real” green new deal that has made the U.S. the world leader in reducing carbon emissions. Though President Trump took us out of the Paris Climate Treaty, we will surely exceed the carbon reduction targets in that agreement, and well ahead of schedule.

Bernard L. Weinstein is associate director of the Maquire Energy Institute and an adjunct professor of business economics in the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Follow on Twitter @SMUCox. The article as been edited because of space limitations.



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SCHEDULE

- 8:30 AM Keynote Breakfast: *Return on Investment-Cost of Doing Nothing*
Peter Klein, St. Paul Port Authority
- 9:45 AM **SESSION ONE**
- Breakout 1: *Panel Discussion - Planning for the Polar Vortex*
Representatives from: Standby Systems; CenterPoint Energy;
Minnesota Energy Resources, Xcel Energy
- Breakout 2: *Industrial Steam*
Charlie Thomas, Campbell-Sevey
- 10:30 AM Break
- 11:00 AM **SESSION TWO**
- Breakout 3: *Commercial Boiler Operation & Linkage with Control*
Eric Larson, Mulcahy
- Breakout 4: *Panel Discussion - Utility & Rebate Updates by Utilities*
Representatives from: CenterPoint Energy; Minnesota Energy
Resources, Xcel Energy, Owatonna Public Utilities
- 12:00 PM Break
- 12:15 PM Luncheon Speaker: *Overview of Minnesota's Landscape-
Energy Infrastructure & Fuel Mix*
Zoe Cadore, American Petroleum Institute
- 1:00 PM Conclusion & Drawing for Prizes

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Shawn Walls Elected Secretary/Treasurer



Blue Flame Board member and Secretary/Treasurer Eric Schlacks with City of Duluth Public Works & Utilities/Comfort Systems retired and resigned from the Board. At the June Blue Flame Gas Association Board of Directors meeting Shawn Walls was elected to replace Eric as Secretary/Treasurer.

Shawn has over 23 years of experience in the natural gas industry, 13 of which have been with his current employer, Minnesota Energy Resources. Currently, Shawn serves as a Regional Operations Supervisor. He is responsible for the supervision and staffing management of 13 direct reports serving approximately 45,000 regulated customers and 10,000 non-regulated ServiceChoice customers. In addition, Shawn is an active member of the Pipeline Safety

Management System (PSMS) committee and is liaison to external relations and our corporate quality safety observation development and review committee.

Thank you to Eric for all of his service and support of MN BlueFlame Gas Association!

Mark Your Calendars

Thursday, Aug. 22-Labor Day, Monday Sept. 2

Blue Flame Lodge at the MN State Fair

Monday, September 17

Commercial/Industrial Fall Energy Conservation Conference — Mendakota Country Club

[Click here for more information and to REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Blue Flame Fishing Event — Mille Lacs Lake

Thursday, June 11, 2020

Blue Flame Golf Event — Cannon Falls Golf Club

Quote of the Quarter

AUGUST IS
LIKE THE
SUNDAY OF
SUMMER.

New Blue Flame Contact Info — Have you updated your records?

Blue Flame's contact information as of Jan. 1, 2019:

Address: **413 Wacouta Street, Suite 230,
Saint Paul, MN 55101**

Email: **ahenkel@blueflame.org**

Phone: **763.424.1841 (Remained the same)**

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE ASSOCIATION?

Associate members are \$200 per year.
Join the team now!

Benefits to Joining:

- Website exposure on Blue Flame website (Natural Gas Product Finder)
- Networking Opportunities
- Industry Contacts
- Advertising Opportunities
- Member rates for Association events

[Join Here](#)

INTERESTED IN JOINING A COMMITTEE?

The State Fair/Residential Committee is in
need of additional members.

(763) 424-1841 or

ahenkel@blueflame.org

Have something to submit? E-mail change?

If you would like to submit information to be considered
for the next member newsletter or have an email change,
contact Annette at ahenkel@blueflame.org



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