

Letter: Baker can act on carbon tax

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Steve Urban reported last week that environmentalists urged Gov.-elect Charlie Baker to promote solar energy, and the week before they advocated for wind ("Local, county officials to Baker: Get behind solar in a big way," Dec. 10). However, did activists notice average Bay Staters don't care about the fuel source behind our heat and electricity until prices spike?

We're motivated by budgetary concerns much more than than by environmental or moral considerations.

Environmentalists should learn from this: They need Baker to fix a fundamental flaw in our market system. A state tax on carbon pollution will prevent polluters from polluting for free. Their free pollution costs us all money in higher medical bills and the high cost of adapting to warming.

But we are blind to these high costs. We only see our monthly utility bills or weekly costs of filling the tank. Permanently raising prices of all fossil fuel energy will motivate us to switch to emissions-free energy. We'll do it for the right reason: It's cheaper when all costs are considered.

Now we have regular winter price spikes leading to silly demands for more pipelines and more natural gas.

Baker can stop this silly cycle by correcting the pricing of carbon. Let him also ask congressional Republicans to price carbon nationally.

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