

# Carbon tax would benefit nation

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Norris McDonald's commentary ("Coal plant should not reopen," Feb. 18) explaining why the coal power plant in Newburgh should not reopen rightly notes that responding to rising electricity prices by producing cheap coal power is a false economy.

Burning coal causes expensive health issues and exacerbates climate change.

Why is our nation having trouble closing coal plants? Why did Northeastern states sue to force coal plant closures in Indiana and Ohio? Will the attorney general of my state (Massachusetts) have to sue to keep the Newburgh plant closed?

The answer to these questions is Congress failed to establish a unifying environmental policy, leaving the job to the Environmental Protection Agency, individual states and the courts.

When Congress enacts a carbon tax, coal prices will include their related health care costs, emergency management costs and climate change adaptation costs all incurred due to coal use. Then all states will be equally motivated to close coal plants.

A carbon tax will also eventually bring down the cost of electricity. Private investors will respond to a carbon tax by injecting money into new clean energy technologies. New energy sources will come on line faster and cheaper.

The Capitol Region's congressional delegation should support a revenue-neutral carbon tax bill to fix this local, state, regional, national and global economic problem that has grave environmental consequences.

We can fix climate change if we work together. A carbon tax with border adjustments adding the tax to imports from countries without proper pricing of coal will impel foreign countries to adopt similar carbon tax policies.

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<http://blog.timesunion.com/opinion/carbon-tax-would-benefit-nation/27915/>