

Fossil fuel warnings

Regarding the Nov. 19 article “Two California cities weigh putting climate-change warnings on gas pumps,” why is it okay for Reuters to quote an oil group’s objection to labels without mentioning the objection is false?

When I was pregnant with my first child, New York City wrote legislation requiring establishments serving or selling alcohol to post warnings that if a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, it could harm the fetus’ health. Liquor industries and the Chamber of Commerce opposed labels for business and economic reasons. Congress followed New York City by requiring alcohol manufacturers to label all bottles and cans. Did anyone sue because labeling is a violation of constitutional rights? Yet Reuters says an oil group claims warning labels are an “illegal attempt to require compelled speech in violation of constitutional protections.”

Why wouldn’t Reuters balance the claim with information that all labeling campaigns emphasize the public’s right to know how products they use could affect them?

My first child now lives in Bangor. He’s the father of my first grandchild, whose health and future can be seriously affected by overuse of fossil fuels. The public has the right to be reminded of that possibility whenever they buy fossil fuels.

Perhaps Sen. Susan Collins would protect her young constituent, my grandson, by helping consumers understand the dangers and costs to society of fossil fuels. The best way to educate the public is by legislating a price on carbon emissions, instead of merely a silly warning label.

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