

GOP should embrace carbon tax

George Will almost hit the nail on the head as he described Trump's anti-immigrant hysteria ("Trump defines down the GOP," Aug. 25). Will rightly noted that the ugly policies Trump trumpets will entail big, cruel, invasive government. Will explained clearly that, although the GOP believes big government is bad, they only hate big government when discussing policies they dislike, but they want to enlarge government to deal with policies they favor. However, Will failed to show readers that this type of thinking is true for other recent Republican ideologies.

On Monday, President Obama spoke in Las Vegas about the clean energy revolution (especially solar) that's happening in Nevada. Obama noted there are folks invested in dirty energies that want to stop solar's growth. Their lobbyists push state legislatures and Congress to enact laws to slow the growth of renewables, roll back clean energy goals, charge huge fees for small solar electricity providers, and stop governmental clean energy subsidies. After all, they say, the free market should let us choose what energy to use, government shouldn't choose and shouldn't monkey with capitalism's free market.

Except these same folks want the government to choose their dirty energies by continuing dirty energy's special tax incentives, and by not enacting a carbon tax. A carbon tax's entire rationale is to help the free market price energy properly - because as long as carbon emissions are free, the price of dirty energy is kept artificially low by the government, and taxpayers must pay the difference (in higher FEMA costs, higher health costs, higher firefighting costs, higher flood insurance). Until Congress taxes carbon emissions, the free market isn't free - it's being manipulated by dirty energy interests. Former Congressman Bob Inglis (R-SC) constantly calls on Republicans to support a national carbon tax, and retired Republican politician Barry Goldwater Jr. is pushing a national effort (TUSK) to stop Republican-sponsored state legislation intended to prevent individuals from choosing electricity from renewable energy sources.

Republican contenders for president also dislike the EPA's new emissions regulations because - they say - one nation cannot make a difference by cutting its emissions. How many times have Republicans ranted about Obama and the USA not leading the world enough? But when Obama wants America to lead the world on clean energy, Republican candidates disapprove.

Two Republican candidates (Bush, Fiorina) recently adopted the position that climate change is real and we need to fix it, but they also asserted that we don't have the technology yet to fix it - we need new

innovations. What they mean is - they want us to wait until someone invents “clean coal” or “affordable carbon capture and storage” technologies. These two technologies would benefit their dirty energy donors. These candidates don’t want to acknowledge that we already have all the renewable energy technology we need to cut emissions, and more innovation will happen quickly as soon as clean energy is allowed to compete freely.

Indeed, Citi just issued a research study that found: developing clean energy costs about the same as sticking with our old dirty energy, and switching to clean energy reduces the risk of serious, expensive damage. Citi knows we have the technology and it won’t cost more than dirty energy. Why don’t Republicans running for president know this? As Will noted, only one Republican candidate, Sen. Lindsey Graham, is honorable enough and honest enough to trounce Trump’s ridiculous proposals on immigration. But Will didn’t add that only Graham has insisted that the Republican Party must formulate a workable policy for dealing with climate change. Graham once supported a carbon tax plan . . . before it became too toxic within the Republican Party to think clearly and speak honestly.

While Republican candidates speak about being proud to be American, they aren’t proud of all our innovators and all our climate scientists. . . they’re only proud of the ones who help them prevent clean energy from unseating dirty energy.

Emerson taught that “Foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.” The converse is also true: hobgoblins manipulate little minds when they foolishly choose when to be consistent (when it favors them), and when to be inconsistent (abandoning principles of pride, honesty, capitalism, individual liberties and personal integrity).

I call on Gov. Baker to work with our legislature to enact a state carbon tax this fall to proudly lead to Congress to do likewise. I call on Republican Sen. Kelly Ayotte to team up with Sen. Graham to introduce revenue-neutral carbon tax legislation into Congress this fall. It’s an honorable Republican response to EPA regulations, to Emerson and to climate change.

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