

Posted: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:00 am

Re: "[Clean coal's moonshot](#)," Oct. 9 editorial:

I appreciated your editorial on creative ways to capture carbon from burning coal, bury it in old mines and even produce methane in the process. You mentioned that Wyoming's Governor Mead is pushing for research to make this technology economically feasible, but you didn't point out that at the same time Wyoming is developing an enormous renewable energy (wind) industry.

Perhaps Gov. Matt Mead will also think outside the box about retired mines: Engineers have been working on converting retired mines into giant batteries to store electricity from wind or solar installations. By building a water reservoir inside an old mine, water can be pumped up when the sun is shining or wind blowing, and then allowed to flow down generating hydroelectricity when electricity is needed. The U.S. has tens of thousands of retired mines (some estimates go as high as 250,000) that might be suitable for this very creative recycling of coal mines.

And, of course, renewable energy keeps getting cheaper due to economies of scale and advances down the learning curve: for example, every time the world's solar production doubles, panel prices drop 26 percent. The Houston Chronicle reported recently that "residential prices for electricity have dropped this year for the first time since 2002, despite worries that shuttering coal-fired power plants and relying more on wind and solar would ruin the economy."

Finally, let's remember that a national carbon emissions fee would help the governors of all 50 states determine the most economical, effective ways to cut their state emissions. If only Congress would do its job and price carbon emissions, every governor and state legislature would have an easier time making local decisions.

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