

Revenue-neutral carbon tax needed

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

[Michael Gerson](#) in his column ("Climate change needs a plan," Aug. 17) wrote about climate policy: "... how do we get technological miracles at a realistic social and economic cost? Only by dramatically increased investment in basic research and development."

Really? A Republican commentator advocates a liberal policy: That government increase spending by investing in clean energy research? Would the [Republican Congress](#), which won't heed governmental climate scientists, fund scientists "to fully explore a variety of speculative options?"

Gerson vaguely argues research be funded by cutting energy subsidies. Does Gerson mean cutting fossil fuels' tax subsidies or their "de facto" subsidies, too? Since fossil fuel companies don't pay carbon taxes, they receive enormous de facto pollution subsidies. Conservative economist [Greg Mankiw](#) just blogged about his continuing support for carbon taxes but stipulated: Carbon taxes must be revenue-neutral because, if government will spend revenues, carbon taxes become politically unfeasible.

Why did Gerson propose vague, unattainable policy? Recently, 2016 presidential candidate [Jeb Bush](#) reversed himself and acknowledged climate change. Simultaneously, Bush insisted we lack viable energy options unless guys invent miraculous new technology. Bush (and Gerson) are wrong: There's lots to accomplish presently.

I understand it's hard for Bush to admit he wrongly denied climate change. But advocating unsound policy now compounds previous errors.

Bush should lobby Congress immediately for a revenue-neutral carbon tax. In response, private money (not government funds)

will race to build clean energy systems and fund research.

If Republicans can't be completely honest about our biggest problem, and can't lead Republican congressmen to enact Republican-endorsed revenue-neutral carbon taxes, then they aren't fit for the White House.

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