

Selective writing undercuts reliability of facts

Thomas Kiley, natural gas association president, wrote a pro-natural-gas-pipeline article that didn't wrestle with relevant facts. He emphasized that during the 1990s, Conservation Law Foundation, with some other environmentalists, embraced natural gas as cleaner than coal. Natural gas now dominates our energy mix. Kiley therefore urges us to build pipelines to protect the environment with more natural gas.

Kiley didn't grapple with CLF's 2013 efforts to fend off a new natural gas plant. CLF relented when it was agreed that the plant must regularly reduce emissions and close by 2050. This agreement represents awareness that natural gas use risks not meeting our emissions goals.

Kiley didn't confront Harvard's 2016 study that found U.S. methane emissions spiked 30 percent since 2002, coinciding with increased natural gas production (which leaks methane during drilling and transmission). Kiley didn't contend with 2015 research suggesting, "if coal can be replaced by near-zero carbon energy in less than 12 years, replacing it with natural gas in the near-term would do more harm than good." He disregarded a 2014 study indicating that even if methane emissions drop to zero, more natural gas use won't substantially cut our emissions and will stall deployment of renewables.

Kiley ignored a 2015 study commissioned by Maura Healey that determined building pipelines is unnecessary for meeting energy needs, and isn't financially or climatically sensible. Similarly, Citibank (2015) found that continuing our current energy mix is more expensive than investing in renewables and creates enormous climate liabilities.

Bloomberg technology news reported (12/15/16) that, globally, solar is now cheaper than coal and natural gas. Unlike Kiley, Bloomberg considers the flip side - in wealthy nations, sunk costs make it harder for solar to compete financially with existing fossil fuel plants.

Neither Kiley nor Exxon's former CEO Rex Tillerson lobby with environmentalists for carbon taxation (which favors natural gas over coal), suggesting that they understand that, if natural gas prices included even a modest fee for health and climatic effects, natural gas wouldn't compete financially against renewables.

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