

Energy Sustainability in the 21st Century

Alexandra Liddy Bourne

*Energy, Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture
Task Force Director*

America is at a crossroads in environmental and economic policymaking. Leaders in the public sector and in the private sector are flirting with the idea of carbon regulation utilizing carbon dioxide emission standards and credit trading. Theoretically, carbon trading is a market-based plan to trade greenhouse gas emission credits between energy producers and consumers to improve air quality and reduce temperature increases in global warming. Sound too good to be true? ... It is.

Internationally, there has been great debate over trade agreements with an environmental component. Foreign governments in Europe have pushed for the Kyoto Protocol to enhance their ability to trade globally and gain ground against the United States as an economic power. The science is quite uncertain and the economic impact upon developing countries is so significant that it could be described as inhumane.

Brian Mannix, of the Mercatus Center, clearly warns us of the potential establishment of a carbon cartel, in which the price of energy, a necessity for industries and individual consumers alike, is set by governments, not the marketplace. Democracy, and its gift of hope for prosperity, as designed by our Founding Fathers, would end within a generation.

Robert Bradley describes an optimistic energy outlook for the United States as an “affordable, plentiful supply to meet increasing demand.” ALEC developed a comprehensive policy strategy for energy sustainability at the state level that includes energy security, production, and distribution in the states that are consistent with the Jeffersonian principles of free markets and federalism. This strategy is outlined under ALEC’s Energy Principles and fortified in the policy tools and model legislation developed for use by state legislators in all 50 states.

Recently, a significant amount of legislation has been introduced at the state level in an effort to promote the goals of the Kyoto Protocol and possibly force federal action. *The Myth and Facts About Global Warming* has been written to assist decision makers as they enter the debate over the human impact upon climate change and determine the best approach to investigating and developing energy technology that is clean and affordable.

Thomas Jefferson looked seven generations into the future as he thought about freedom. Environmental stewardship walks hand in hand with economic freedom. We should not leave a legacy of carbon-based trade that restricts the free market and individual prosperity.