

## Not In My Backyard, Or With My Money

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A recent U.S. poll, taken in the wake of the Gulf of Mexico oil leak, revealed that 58 percent of Americans believe that U.S. energy policy needs to “fundamentally” change, but 51 percent say that they would oppose a tax to pay for the development of renewable energy.

That’s a remarkable statistic that reminds us that when it comes to the failure to fix energy policy, in the immortal words of the cartoon world’s Pogo, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

The same poll revealed that 59 percent of Americans believed that the U.S. would have an alternative energy platform to oil by 2035 — and that’s the key to much of the slowdown in energy policy, as well as biofuels developments. Citizens as well as strategic investors sincerely believe that someone else is going to pay for it.

For a long time, we knew that “someone else” was going to host all of this energy infrastructure, including waste storage. That’s the well-understood NIMBY — Not in My Back Yard. Everyone’s for nuclear waste storage, until every feasible location in the country opted out of hosting such a facility, on the grounds that it would be dangerous — as if not having a storage facility is any less so.

### **Drill, Baby, Drill (Elsewhere)**

There was, amongst the chanters of “drill, baby, drill” between 2008 and 2010, a lot of support for added oil exploration. It appears to be ever true that everyone is for more exploration, as long as it does not occur in the Arctic Wilderness (land), or near the Pacific, Gulf or Atlantic shorelines (coastal water), or in other countries (“energy security” ring a bell?).

It does not take a remarkable piece of mathematics to conclude: World as we know it - Land - Coastline - Other Countries = Deepwater Horizon, or W - L - C - O = DH.

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Why are we drilling in the Gulf in increasingly risky scenarios? Corporate greed? Lax governmental oversight? We've heard all about that on CNN.

It's simpler than that. There's drilling in the Gulf because it is in nobody's backyard, and cost nobody any gasoline taxes to pay for it. It was the cost-free, consequence-free procurement of energy ... until it wasn't.

Except of course that the impact will be felt in a lot of backyards and a lot of wallets if this leak continues to get much worse, and possibly overwhelms — even in the long-term — BP's ability to pay for all the impacts.

### **Massachusetts: The Grandsons of Liberty Go Another Way**

The lesson that “we have met the enemy and he is us” was “drilled” home again when the state of Massachusetts canceled enforcement of its own Clean Energy Biofuels Act because of what it termed a finding of “unreasonable cost.” The cost in question — pertaining to the enforcement of a 2 percent biodiesel mandate — was 3 cents a gallon.

Three pennies. Holy cow. That's three bits a fill up or around \$15 per year for the average Massachusetts car owner. That biodiesel mandate, of course, would have supplied not only a lifeline to the beleaguered biodiesel industry, but also replaced lubricity lost when ultra-low sulphur diesel was introduced. Keep in mind that fuel additives that replace lubricity can reduce the overall maintenance cost by up to 5 percent. Certainly that's more than \$15 in savings per year.

Massachusetts demonstrated its commitment to advanced biofuels not so long ago when, prior to canceling enforcement of the mandate, the state outlawed the use of algae as a biofuels feedstocks in counting towards the mandate's fulfillment. The only feedstocks allowed — waste greases and fats.

In its latest ruling, [the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources opined](#) [1]: “Additional costs associated with the mandate (infrastructure upgrades, specialty blending and administrative costs for compliance) would add substantially to the net increase in costs to the fuel industry and fuel prices to consumers. Due to the practical challenges of achieving industry-wide compliance and the cost implications of doing so, implementation of the Massachusetts mandate is determined to be infeasible at the present time.”

### **The Politics of NUMBEE**

What does that mean? Massachusetts has at last given its great croak. The familiar NIMBY and a new one, NUMBEE. That is, Not in My Back Yard, and Not Using My Bucks Either, Ever.

The principle of other people's money is a well-worn principle in financing the operations of the United States government, Enron, and a lot of households that racked up and walked away from consumer and mortgage debt during the late

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2000s.



We hear a lot from the Tea Party — well, when the citizenry of Massachusetts conducted the original Tea Party in 1773, they were opposing “taxation without representation,” rather than opposing taxation “so that China can pay for my lifestyle.” The patriots of Boston and their descendants, right up until a few years ago, understood the principle of sacrifice, and that the achievement of any kind of freedom — energy or otherwise — cometh not cost-free.

Three pennies a gallon — three bits a fill up. The \$20 billion cost being discussed for the BP clean up will be a cost equivalent to \$180 per U.S. household.

### Energy Freedom — A DIY Endeavor

That’s why we do not have a renewable energy policy, and will not until the shock of realization occurs to the American people that the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy is a DIY job, and like any home improvement enthusiast this weekend at Lowe’s or Home Depot can tell you, you have to spend a little before you realize the benefit.

In his second inaugural address, Lincoln said, “It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces,” and it is a message that once was considered so significant that it is chiseled on the north wall of the Lincoln Memorial, the side nearest the White House. It is a message on energy, too. President Obama of Illinois (a state proclaimed on license plates as the “Land of Lincoln”) would do well to mosey eight blocks south and read that one. [You might read it, too.](#) [2]

For now, we nod off aimlessly, aimlessly in the land of Nod, aimlessly east of Eden, asking when someone, or the good Lord himself, will come and save us from ourselves, and pick up the tab.

### Wipe Me Daddy, I’m Dirty

It is an energy policy worthy of a baby’s “wipe me, Daddy, I’m dirty.” For now, there is no government, only a large number of parties in opposition ... in opposition to each other, in opposition to investment, in opposition to the long term.

Are they idiots? No, they are populists, responding to the mob. And we have put them there. And we have told them “NIMBY, NUMBEE and Nod” so many times, in

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so many ways, that they finally have the message.

They are the parties of “No” because we are the people of “No.”

The policy of voters can be fairly summed up as Churchill once put it: “Decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful for impotence.”

That’s one more acronym — ROI. It spells return on investment. As opposed to Not Using My Bucks Either, Ever, or just Don’t Use My Bucks.

That’s DUMB, and it sure is.

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*For more information, please visit [www.biofuelsdigest.com](http://www.biofuelsdigest.com) [3].*

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