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# THE FALLACY OF FOSSIL FUELS: WHY THE UNITED STATES NEEDS TO FOCUS ON DEVELOPING RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

[Natural Resource \(/full-blog/category/Natural+Resource\)](#)

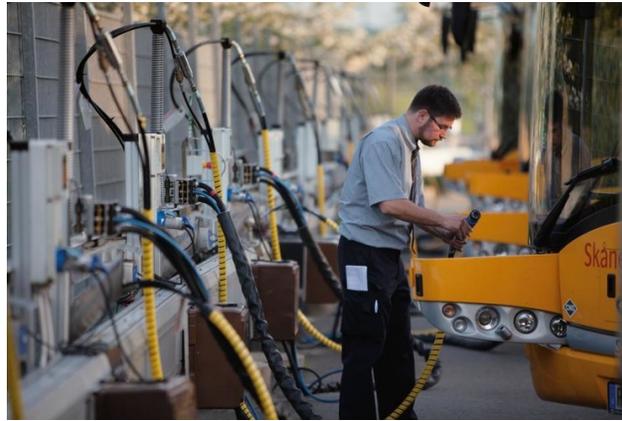
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In 2017, global warming continues to be one of the largest threats, if not the largest threat, the world has ever faced. Humans and animals alike have felt the effects of global warming through harsh droughts, intensifying storms, heat waves, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and warming of the world's oceans.[i] One of the primary causes of global warming is the continuous burning of fossil fuels.[ii] The use of bio fuels is one way to curb the perilous effects of global warming. Ultimately, the United States, and countries throughout the world, should move away from the burning fossil fuels and instead manufacture vehicles and equipment that can run safely on biofuels, as well as, explore other renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar.

At the end of 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), while still acting under the Obama Administration, issued its Final Renewable Fuel Standards for 2017.[iii] Section 211 of the Clean Air Act mandates that the EPA set renewable fuel percentage standards each year.[iv] Section 211 therefore requires that the EPA decide the percentage at which fuel derived from renewable sources, such as biomass, will be blended into gasoline and diesel fuel.[v] For 2017, the EPA, under the Renewable Fuel Standard, set the minimum amount of renewable fuels required to be blended at 19.28 billion gallons.[vi]

In early 2017, the Trump Administration moved into office. On February 17, 2017 Scott Pruitt was confirmed as the new head of the EPA.[vii] Pruitt was Oklahoma's Attorney General before becoming the head of the EPA. He had used his position as the Attorney General to repeatedly sue the EPA for its attempts to regulate mercury, smog, and other forms of pollution. Additionally, Pruitt is not only an advocate, but a close ally of the fossil fuel industry.[viii] Further, Pruitt has a quite delirious view on global warming and the undeniably substantial human contribution to the ever-growing problem. Pruitt has expressed that he does not believe that carbon dioxide produced by human activity is the main driver of climate change.[ix] Scientists and climate activists have

starkly opposed Pruitt claiming that Pruitt's position "ignores a large body of evidence collected over decades that shows fossil fuel burning as the main factor in climate change."<sup>[x]</sup> Pruitt's views on global warming are incredibly dangerous, but even more problematic is his position of power in the EPA that threatens the future of renewable energy. Time is truly of the essence in pursuing sources of renewable energy as the continued burning of fossil fuels will destroy the planet we call home.



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/biofuel/>

In July of 2017, the agency headed by Pruitt decided to maintain the amount of renewable fuels that must be blended into the United States' transportation fuel supply for 2018.<sup>[xi]</sup> However, the EPA indicated that there would be major changes to the agency's current renewable fuels program.<sup>[xii]</sup> Among those changes will be a reset of required bio fuel levels.<sup>[xiii]</sup> The EPA further suggested that the minimum amount of renewable fuels required under the Renewable Fuel Standard be set at 19.24 billion gallons, down from the 19.28 billion gallons set for 2017.<sup>[xiv]</sup> The EPA claims to be proposing these new volumes in order to reflect market realities of actual production and consumer demand.<sup>[xv]</sup> However, considering Pruitt's strong ties to the fossil fuel industry and ignorant stance on global warming, citizens of the United States should not turn a blind eye to the actions of the EPA. Reducing the amount of biofuels that must be blended into the transportation fuel supply is not the answer. A far superior solution is to at least maintain the current levels of biofuels that must be blended into the transportation fuel supply while simultaneously developing vehicles and equipment that can run solely on biofuels. The EPA should additionally focus on developments in solar and wind energy with a nationwide goal of complete dependence on renewable fuel sources.

Countries around the world have found success in using biofuels. Brazil, for example, has been using biofuels derived from sugarcane for decades.<sup>[xvi]</sup> Additionally, Brazil has successfully developed cars that are able to run on pure ethanol, a type of biofuel.<sup>[xvii]</sup> Moreover, several countries in Europe use biodiesel derived from palm oil to power their vehicles.<sup>[xviii]</sup>

Opponents of biofuels will argue that manufacturing biofuels consumes so much energy that the energy used to make biofuels is actually greater than the energy produced by it.<sup>[xix]</sup> However, developments in equipment capable of running solely on biofuels will completely solve this problem. Indeed, biofuels have the capability of being a wholly renewable energy source.

While dependence on renewable energy sources is not something that can happen overnight, it is necessary that the United States continue to work toward total dependence on renewable energy. Fossil fuels are a nonrenewable, rapidly depleting energy source. Further, it is no secret that fossil fuels have caused the planet to warm at an alarming rate, threatening wildlife and the balance of ecosystems around the world. In order to preserve the planet for generations to come, it is vital that renewable fuel sources be the focus of future innovations in the energy industry.

[i] *Effects of Climate Change*, World Wildlife Fund,

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/effects-of-climate-change> (last visited Aug. 23, 2017).

[ii] *See id.*

[iii] *Renewable Fuel Standards for 2017, and the Biomass-Based Diesel Volume for 2018*, Env't Protection Agency, <https://www.epa.gov/renewable-fuel-standard-program/final-renewable-fuel-standards-2017-and-biomass-based-diesel-volume> (last visited Aug. 23, 2017).

[iv] *Renewable Fuel Standards for 2017, and the Biomass-Based Diesel Volume for 2018*, 81 Fed. Reg. 89,746 (Dec. 12, 2016) (to be codified at 40 C.F.R. pt. 80) <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-12-12/pdf/2016-28879.pdf>.

[v] *Id.*

[vi] *Renewable*, *supra* note iii.

[vii] Brady Dennis, *Scott Pruitt, Longtime Adversary of EPA, Confirmed to Lead the Agency*, The Wash. Post (Feb. 17, 2017), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/02/17/scott-pruitt-long-time-adversary-of-epa-confirmed-to-lead-the-agency/?utm\\_term=.4b6c6f03aa67](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/02/17/scott-pruitt-long-time-adversary-of-epa-confirmed-to-lead-the-agency/?utm_term=.4b6c6f03aa67).

[viii] *See* Brady Dennis & Steven Mufson, *Thousands of Emails Detail EPA Head's Close Ties to Fossil Fuel Industry*, The Wash. Post (Feb. 22, 2017), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/02/22/oklahoma-attorney-generals-office-releases-7500-pages-of-emails-between-scott-pruitt-and-fossil-fuel-industry/?utm\\_term=.af9832213fe9](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/02/22/oklahoma-attorney-generals-office-releases-7500-pages-of-emails-between-scott-pruitt-and-fossil-fuel-industry/?utm_term=.af9832213fe9).

[ix] Doina Chiacu & Valarie Volcovici, *EPA Chief Pruitt Refuses to Link CO2 and Global Warming*, Sci. Am., <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/epa-chief-pruitt-refuses-to-link-co2-and-global-warming> (last visited Aug. 23, 2017).

[x] *Id.*

[xi] Keith Goldberg, *EPA Keeps Biofuel Requirements Steady for 2018*, Law 360 (July 6, 2017), <https://www.law360.com/articles/941440/epa-keeps-biofuel-requirements-steady-for-2018>.

[xii] *Id.*

[xiii] *Id.*

[xiv] *Id.*

[xv] *Id.*

[xvi] *Biofuels*, Nat. Geographic, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/biofuel> (last visited Aug. 23, 2017).

[xvii] *Id.*

[xviii] *Id.*

[xix] *Id.*

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