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Publisher

Pason Gaddis
pgaddis@floridaweekly.com

Executive Editor

Jeffrey Cull
jcull@floridaweekly.com

Creative Director

Jim Dickerson
jdickerson@floridaweekly.com

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Shelley Lund
slund@floridaweekly.com

Reporters & Columnists

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Production

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Circulation Manager

Penny Kennedy
pkennedy@floridaweekly.com

Circulation

Paul Neumann
Kristl Neumann
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Maria Chavez

Account Executives

Doug Rosburg
drosburg@floridaweekly.com
Michelle Harrison
mharrison@floridaweekly.com
Michele Foley
mfoley@floridaweekly.com
Tauna Schott
tschott@floridaweekly.com

Business Office Manager

Kelli Carico

Street Address:
Florida Weekly
4300 Ford Street, Suite 105
Fort Myers, Florida 33916
Phone: 239.333.2135
Fax: 239.333.2140

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OPINION

The Waxman-Markey travesty

BY RICH LOWRY

The cap-and-trade bill passed the House of Representatives shrouded in a fog of willful ignorance and calculated irrationality.

No one could be sure what he was voting for — not after the 1,200-page bill had a 300-page amendment added at 3:09 a.m. the day of its passage. The bill is so complex and jerry-built that even its supporters can't know how, or if, it will work. And it's metaphysically impossible for someone to know whether the motivating crisis, impending planetary doom, will ever materialize.

Other than that, it's a model exercise in thoughtful lawmaking.

The architects of the so-called Waxman-Markey bill bought off every possible interest group no matter what the policy consequences until they had a bare majority to slam it through the House sight unseen (a physical copy of the final bill didn't yet exist when it passed). Mission accomplished, although at the price of a ramshackle bill that won't succeed on its own terms, even as it introduces costly distortions and invasive bureaucratic controls into the economy.

The basic idea of cap-and-trade is

that government establishes an economy-wide cap on carbon emissions and then creates emission credits, which companies can buy or sell among themselves. It is essentially carbon rationing designed to suppress traditional sources of energy.

Because cap-and-trade is meant to create pain in an economy dependent on fossil fuels for 85 percent of its energy, the only way to make it politically salable is to vitiate it. Originally, the Obama administration counted on \$80 billion a year from the government's sale of emissions credits. To win over industry, Waxman-Markey gives the credits away for free. Poof! There goes the revenue.

The upshot is that an Environmental Protection Agency analysis says that under Waxman-Markey, there will be no reduction in emissions by 2020. The progressive Breakthrough Institute estimates that emissions could continue at their current business-as-usual rate through 2030. Perversities abound. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, under the bill, the U.S. "would use more carbon-dioxide heavy coal in 2020 than it did in 2005." Time magazine writes that "the total amount of renewable energy generation under Waxman-Markey would actually be less than the

renewable energy that would have been produced without the bill."

Isn't saving the planet grand?

Even if Waxman-Markey were perfectly formulated, it would reduce global surface temperatures by only one-tenth of 1 degree Celsius in 100 years. That's a negligible difference, purchased at a great price. The watered-down version is still so threatening to energy-intensive industries that it mandates tariffs on goods from countries that refuse to hamstring themselves so foolishly.

Democrats resorted to any expedient to pass Waxman-Markey as a long-term play: get the bureaucratic structure in place, then work through regulators, the courts and legislation to tighten the screws later. For them, that's the ultimate promise of the Offsets Integrity Advisory Board, the Carbon Market Oversight Interagency Working Group, the International Reserve Allowance Program and all the rest of the vast regulatory machinery engendered by the bill.

President Barack Obama called it an "extraordinary first step." Extraordinary, indeed. ■

— Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

GUEST OPINION

Palin's resignation: A surprise?



tanya AMADOR-DAIGLE

Special to Florida Weekly

A surprise is when you walk into a room and everyone jumps out of closets and from behind sofas and yells "surprise!" usually because it's your birthday. A surprise can also be an awful thing like coming home to find two guys in your living room making off with your brand new flat screen and your grandmothers' china. Is the fact that Sarah Palin suddenly resigned from her Alaskan governorship this week a surprise? I don't think so.

The media displayed its usual attitude of shock and dismay at the news while simultaneously debating the cause of Michael Jackson's death. On CNN, the caption under her speech read "reasons are unclear." The timing, just before Independence Day weekend, was a bit bizarre, I must admit. Was she hoping the fireworks and beer would deflect the news? I doubt it.

I believe Palin's timing was contrived for the opposite reason. The media blitz surrounding her shortened term as chief executive of Alaska certainly got the

tongues wagging. And after all, any type of publicity is going to keep her in the limelight. As painful as it is for some to watch, Sarah Palin is setting the stage.

Are Palin's reasons really unclear? Well, that's where the know-it-alls come in to explain her behavior to us. Republicans and Democrats alike cannot agree on her motive. REALLY? Big shock there! Some said it was a "nutty decision" and added that she should have finished her term. It seems that if you are elected governor of your state, you have the responsibility to at least finish out your term, correct? Nope, wrong answer! This IS politics, after all. It's not about responsibility to the citizens, it's about a little thing called AMBITION. And Sarah Palin, as humble and ordinary as she seeks to appear, has plenty of it.

The fact is, that as governor of the great state of Alaska, Palin cannot juggle her duties as governor and run a campaign for the presidency at the same time. The largest population centers of the lower 48 are thousands of miles away from her state and four time zones from the east coast. The last time I checked, you had to do a lot of traveling to campaign for the presidency.

As I continue to watch the debating unfold, I see headlines like "Analysts struggle with Palin's motivations"

(courtesy of ABC News) and I realize, I, myself, am NOT surprised. Although Palin hasn't given the public a clear reason in so many words, it's a pretty good assumption that she is priming herself for the 2012 election as a GOP candidate. The talking heads don't have to tell me that.

All you have to do is look at the closing statement in her speech: "In the words of Gen. MacArthur, 'We are not retreating. We are advancing in another direction.'" I'm pretty certain she doesn't mean on the soccer field. Pardon the obvious soccer mom reference.

SarahPac.com is still accepting political contributions and a quick check on Palin's Facebook page makes her intentions even more blatantly obvious. She writes, "I am now looking ahead and how we can advance this country together with our values of less government intervention, greater energy independence, stronger national security, and much needed fiscal restraint... Now is the time to rebuild and help our nation achieve greatness."

Love her or hate her, we haven't seen the end of Sarah Palin and her "no more of politics as usual" speech. The big "surprise" will be if she DOES NOT make a bid for the presidency in 2012. ■



PALIN

MOMENTS IN TIME

► On **July 8, 1776**, in Philadelphia, the Liberty Bell rings out from the tower of the Pennsylvania State House (now known as Independence Hall), summoning citizens to the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. Though the document was adopted by delegates on July 4, the Liberty Bell was not rung until the Declaration of Independence returned from the printer on July 8.

► On **July 9, 1877**, the All Eng-

land Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club begins its first lawn tennis tournament at Wimbledon. The Wimbledon Championship is the only major tennis event still played on grass.

► On **July 10, 1992**, the Alaska court of appeals overturns the conviction of Joseph Hazelwood, the former captain of the oil tanker Exxon Valdez. Hazelwood had been found guilty of negligence for his role in the massive oil spill in Prince William Sound in 1989.

The Exxon Valdez, renamed Sea River Mediterranean, still transports oil, but is legally prohibited from entering Prince William Sound.

► On **July 11, 1656**, Ann Austin and Mary Fisher, two Englishwomen, become the first Quakers to immigrate to Boston. Austin and Fisher, whose liberal teachings enraged the Puritan colonial government, were arrested and jailed. After five years in prison, they were deported. ■