

Use what we have

If the debate about climate change is entering a new phase, then we must make sure that the new phase includes action. Debate is always a healthy part of any public discourse in America, so it was encouraging to read last week's "Public opinions sought in state climate change survey" by Diane Conradi.

Hopefully by incorporating the prevailing views of Montanans, some sort of comprehensive, popularly supported climate change legislation can be submitted by the Environmental Quality Council to the 2009 Legislature.

The proposed answers to climate change are varied. Some suggest solar, wind or nuclear power.

Rather than shutting down our power sources or placing arbitrary emission standards on them, climate change legislation should focus on further research and development of ways to make our current energy sources as clean as possible. Montana contains the most extensive coal reserves in the nation.


Using clean coal technologies in the fight against climate change would fully utilize these reserves further helping Montana by strengthening our local economy.

Unfortunately current climate change legislation in the Senate, the Lieberman-Warner Bill, chooses to mandate a cap on emissions as opposed to focusing on the development of cleaner technologies. By taking this approach Americans may see energy prices rise an estimated 65 percent before the year 2020, potentially stifling economic growth.

Economic prosperity and environmental sustainability go hand in hand, one need not be sacrificed for the other. Montanans understand this, hopefully Sens. Jon Tester and Max Baucus and their colleagues in the Senate do too.

— Abbie Skelton,
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VIEWPOINTS

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