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EU Tells US Airlines to Pay for Their Carbon Emissions or Lose Flights to Europe

By [Dave Demerjian](#) April 14, 2008 | 6:32:11 AM Categories: [Air Travel](#), [Emissions](#), [Policy](#)



The [European Union](#) is playing hardball with the US aviation industry.

In order to reduce aviation-generated carbon emissions in Europe, the EU is requiring airlines to join a carbon [cap and trade program](#) no later than 2012. It's a European plan, but its not just for European airlines. [Jacques Barrot](#), the EU transport commissioner, announced that all airlines with European service must participate, and those which don't may see access to lucrative European destinations chopped.

The US industry is not amused.

Other industries in Europe have been engaged in carbon trading since 2005, and EU environment ministers decided last year that its time for commercial aviation to come to the party. Under their plan, airlines will be allocated carbon credits that they use to "pay" for their CO2 emissions on an annual basis. Airlines that come in under their quota will end the year with extra credits which they can then sell on the carbon market. And they'll have plenty of buyers -- pollution spewing airlines that exceed their yearly allowance will need to buy additional credits. This, in a nutshell, is how carbon trading works.

European airlines aren't exactly doing [cartwheels](#) over the plan, though with carbon trading a key part of the Continent's environmental strategy, they must have seen it coming. But non-European carriers say it's unfair and potentially illegal that the scheme is being imposed on *any airline flying into or out of the EU*.

The US airlines aren't having it. They say the Europeans are being hysterical and that forced participation in their carbon trading plan violates international treaties. The [Air Transport Association](#), the trade group for US carriers, calls the European's focus on aviation emissions "out of proportion" and believes that the US industry is having success with market driven approaches like buying more fuel-efficient aircraft, [reducing the weight of their planes](#), and investigating alternative fuels.

But EU airlines insist that if they have to join the carbon trading market, their US competitors should be forced to jump in as well. They expect to shell out up to \$65 billion buying carbon credits over the next 15 years, and say that if other airlines aren't forced to do the same, it would amount to a massive tax on European aviation.

It's unlikely that the EU would ever go so far as to actually impose flight curbs. Foreign airlines would likely respond in kind, which would cause serious financial hardship all around. But even the threat shows just

SEND US A TIP!

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how far apart the EU and US are when it comes to aviation-related environmental oversight.

Is the EU overstepping its bounds? Threatening to suck the life out of an already fragile industry with a blanket of stifling regulation? Or is the US, with its "let the market take care of it" approach, not doing enough to hold aviation accountable for its carbon output?

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So it is OK for the USA to unilaterally add costs to flights for anti-terrorism measures, but not for the EU to do the same for global warming? Mmm, bit of a double standard there I think. Also the airlines that are fuel efficient would benefit even more from their investment under this plan, so I don't get why they are bleating so loud. Perhaps because the claimed efficiencies are greenwash ?

Posted by: [tinhat](#) | Apr 14, 2008 5:32:47 AM

Seems fair to me, if EU airlines are paying "taxes" on flying from the EU to anywhere else in the world (by way of carbon credits), then it follows that airlines flying into the EU should be subject to the same regime. Otherwise all the EU airlines would just move their bases to Panama.

Posted by: [commisar](#) | Apr 14, 2008 7:27:45 AM

i agree with tinhat, if US carriers are claiming that their own policies are more effective then that means they would not need exceed their carbon credits anyway...besides their initial allocation of credits will be based on some sort average/median of their current output..if they are a big emitter then they will have more credits than others.

Posted by: [riacale](#) | Apr 14, 2008 8:36:29 AM

this won't stand. if they block US airlines from flying to European destinations, then the tourism industry in those countries will suffer greatly, in the end, if the US airlines refuses, I'd bet the EU will back down.

Posted by: [the angry intern](#) | Apr 14, 2008 8:58:56 AM

This is a pivotal point in history for businesses and nations. Industries can either throw their weight behind the clean technology that will be the backbone of tomorrow's economy or they can be left in the dust. If US companies do not take the lead in developing sustainable infrastructure, someone else will. We can either import that technology or export it. This is an issue of national infrastructure competitiveness. I know where my money is.

Posted by: [lynn](#) | Apr 14, 2008 9:19:08 AM

This is ridiculous. Most Airlines have older, less fuel efficient planes. Nearly all airlines don't have the money to replace 3/4 of their planes instantly. Adding a fine for carbon emissions is the dumbest thing I have ever heard. Its just a way to earn a few extra bucks of the whole global warming scheme. I believe all this global warming stuff is full of crap. Cutting down emissions is still important because pollution is a problem, but the Earths climate has always gone from one extreme to another...

Posted by: [Steve](#) | Apr 14, 2008 9:21:27 AM

So even though the data from NASA and many others shows that global warming ended in '98 is 100% conclusive, people STILL talk about it as reality. And they call religious people brainwashed!!

Posted by: [MRE](#) | Apr 14, 2008 9:22:57 AM

I think there is another point, why this is completely right. The US requires European airlines to commit personal data of all passengers so why shouldn't the EU be allowed to make some rules for US airlines too ?

Posted by: [martin](#) | Apr 14, 2008 9:27:38 AM

Sheep. Let's see if you're singing the same tune when you're paying \$1200 for a coach class seat on a flight to London. You really think the airlines aren't going to make you pay? Have you refueled your car lately. Don't be stupid. The U.S. airlines know that the Europeans are just pissed about their sad state of affairs over climate hysteria. They want everyone to have to suffer along with them -- and by everyone, I mean you and me.

Posted by: [Jeremy P](#) | Apr 14, 2008 9:37:22 AM

Martin, there is a substantial difference between requiring airlines to provide advance passenger data and charging airlines an extra 65 billion dollars over the next 15 years.

Posted by: [Ryan](#) | Apr 14, 2008 9:42:30 AM

Well, apparently I need to say it since no one else is going to... MRE, what in the ever-loving hell are you talking about?

Posted by: [mdmadph](#) | Apr 14, 2008 9:47:15 AM

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The whole article is about EU not being completely dumb. Why would they introduce legislation that would favour American airlines over European ones? I'm not an expert on this matter and I don't know whether these credit make sense, but I think that the global warming is a global matter, right?

Posted by: **mceek** | Apr 14, 2008 9:48:05 AM

I'd like to comment back to angry intern. The US isn't the be all and end all of the World! I live in England, and England has been refusing EU laws since the ECC days, to no avail. The European community DOES NOT back down. Trust someone who lives there. But i totally disagree with the fact that tourism in European countries would suffer if, God forbid, the Americans weren't allowed in! It annoys me that some Americans are so blinded by their arrogance that they think if they aren't involved in something or they dont care for it, it doesn't exist or matter!

Posted by: **British European** | Apr 14, 2008 9:49:00 AM

http://www.nasa.gov/worldbook/global_warming_worldbook.html

If your too lazy to read, its the first result when google is searched for "NASA" and "global Warming". The debate among scientists about Global Warming is no longer about whether or not it is occurring, but why and what effect it will have upon the Earth and our society. The EU is taking a responsible approach in dealing with our environment, despite the fact that the member countries are not near the worlds largest producers of greenhouse gases. Hopefully the US can learn to play ball with the European Union and do some good for once.

-Eric

Posted by: **Eric Hansen** | Apr 14, 2008 9:51:33 AM

For a pollution problem, unless you attach a cost to the pollution, "market solutions" do nothing to take care of the pollution. The last sentence of the article makes no sense -- if you want the market to take care of a pollution problem, you do it with a cap-and-trade program, just like the one proposed here.

Posted by: **dr2chase** | Apr 14, 2008 10:12:12 AM

US industry is "investigating alternative fuels"...

LOL

Regarding the environment, the US is always investigating, debating, researching. The US is built around the concept of cheap oil: big SUVs, suburbs, ghettoized inner-cities, highways highways and more super-highways, malls malls and more super-malls. It sure will be interesting times when gas hits 20\$ a gallon.

But do not fear, your leaders are debating and investigating.

Posted by: **jet** | Apr 14, 2008 10:14:26 AM

Global Warming may not be the scam, but carbon trading is. I have no problem with the EU wanting to reduce the carbon output of airlines, but trading carbon is a simple cop-out. Take real steps to reduce pollutants, or don't. Don't play money games which hurt only the consumers, as all penalties will be passed on.

As for arrogance, 'British European', the EU is just as arrogant in deciding for everyone that carbon trading is a necessity to do business there, propped up on their pseudo-moral throne. The only benefit to carbon trading is to the traders.

Obviously EU tourism would suffer somewhat without Americans, as it would without any major populated country participating in flights there. It has nothing to do with Americans being the 'be all and end all of the world', it has to do with money. Tourism doesn't do as well with fewer tourists, or poorer ones. And if Britain can't stand up to the socialistic practices of the EU, that's sad for you.

Let the EU do what it will, and raise the ticket prices accordingly, and let the free market adjust for it. People will stop flying to Europe, maybe take more cruises or vacation closer to home.

Posted by: **sigh** | Apr 14, 2008 10:23:23 AM

To those who refuse to believe in global warming and the fact that we can affect its amplitude, I could go off on a bunch of reasons why humans do impact the global environment, including the temperature, but it would be easier if you just watched "an inconvenient truth" and then made up your mind. Granted the emotional appeal seems silly to me but the movie encompasses trends that can't be ignored.

Posted by: **this man** | Apr 14, 2008 10:31:15 AM

I'm really confused as to how a capitalist society doesn't embrace charging corporations for using valuable resources like clean air. If you want the market to fix itself as it is set up to do then you should let it play with the full deck of cards.

Posted by: **carl** | Apr 14, 2008 10:44:13 AM

Very funny to hear a "British European" claim that Americans are arrogant. I am pretty sure that arrogance was invented in Britain. An important part of this whole problem is that people always resort to name calling instead of rational discussion. Global warming - maybe it is, maybe it isn't happening. Maybe we can affect it, maybe we cannot. "An Inconvenient Truth" is not scientific evidence. We need real, disinterested science to investigate, if we want the truth. Raising taxes, which appears to be government's solution to nearly everything, will not affect nor even address the problem, if there is one.

Posted by: **JC** | Apr 14, 2008 10:46:12 AM

As a citizen of the U.S., I am embarrassed by this country's gluttony (and yes, I am not without guilt but am attempting to change my ways). For those of you (Jeremy P for one) who decry the financial impact of carbon trading, say "let the free market work" and then in the same breath complain about the increased ticket prices which might result...let me remind you of a basic principal for free-market economics, having the cost of goods represent the true cost of producing them. This country's oil gluttony is due in no small part to the fact that the oil industry has been subsidized. Had we been paying the true cost of oil for the past three decades I'm confident we would not be driving gas-guzzling SUVs today. Let the gas prices rise to reflect the true costs of production, and oh yeah let's begin tying the cost of the war to the cost of fuel. It is after all a cost of production!!

Posted by: **Keith** | Apr 14, 2008 10:49:36 AM

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If the airline CO2 cap and trade permits work the same as the rest of the EU CO2 cap and trade permits this is what happens:

*

Step 1: EU governments "overestimate" how much CO2 their industries produce.

*

Step 2: Industry gets more CO2 emission permits than they need.

*

Step 3: Knowing that there is an oversupply of CO2 permits, the dirtiest industries buy up the extra permits rather than try to become cleaner. The dirtiest plants save money while the sellers who have not actually cleaned up anything get another revenue stream.

*

Step 4: When building a new plant that could produce a lot of CO2, an investment you have to look at in a 30-50 year time frame, industry locates the plant outside of Europe where it doesn't have to worry that the permits could become more strict a decade from now.

*

So really it is all about political posturing. No country wants their airline to be "shorted" on emission permits, so they will all lobby for their "fair" share. This is really an opportunity for the US flagged airlines. They can get the US to lobby for their fair share. Since Europe will try and avoid a tit-for-tat, they will cave to US demands. The US airlines can also partner with European airlines and play "reflag" the Boeing/Airbus as permits allow. This could lead to a lot of jobs trying to figure out how to maximize a new revenue stream by re-painting plane tails.

Posted by: **muD** | Apr 14, 2008 11:11:56 AM

MRE - WHAT?!?!?!?!?

Posted by: **JH** | Apr 14, 2008 11:16:12 AM

All this global warming is BS. All the complaints are heating up in our solar system.

<http://www.prisonplanet.com/articles/november2006/161106suvjupiter.htm>

Posted by: **Tom** | Apr 14, 2008 11:18:42 AM

Just a small note for thought on all the "Research" being done.

California has recently discovered research causes cancer in laboratory animals.

Posted by: **Just a Comment...** | Apr 14, 2008 11:24:23 AM

Electric powered passenger Dirigibles

<http://www.aeroscraft.com/>

Posted by: **GHynson** | Apr 14, 2008 11:25:40 AM

Carbon smarbon, this is all a power grab to create a one world government and restrict our freedoms and rights.

Man has not caused global warming. As it's now cooling, we will not have caused that either.

Riddle me this, if global warming is man exacerbated why have we recorded warming on Mars with our rovers? Oh wait, I know it's all the CO2 they emit.

Granted we need to get off oil, nuclear power with hydrogen power is the way to go. There are also clean coal technologies that can help us along the way.

Like anything in the retail market the true cost of oil is cents per barrel, it's demand and supply that drive the price.

As we live in a representative republic, let your representatives know what you want.

Posted by: **bobknight** | Apr 14, 2008 11:30:35 AM

Remember the Hindenburg???

All kidding aside...

The Dirigibles are great, if time permits you to spend a couple days transiting the Atlantic; comfort yes, speed no.

Posted by: **Blimpie** | Apr 14, 2008 11:31:20 AM

Keith, you need a refresher in economics. Free market economics is not "having the cost of goods represent the true cost of producing them." That is the classic definition of a Communist market. The value of goods in a free market is what people are willing to pay. Period. If the EU artificially raises the cost of air travel, demand will fall, and they will lose money from tourism, trade, and other air-related activities. This really isn't difficult.

Posted by: **Smitty** | Apr 14, 2008 11:45:21 AM

Considering how the market is addressing safety inspections on US aircrafts... clearly it is not enough a regulator, or else why is American Airlines locking their planes on the ground?

When the US introduced anti-terrorism regulations, they forced the entire industry to comply or else lose the ability to land in the States. Why couldn't the EU do the same for global warming? To bad the US airlines did not invest on planes, and are using older, and less fuel-efficient planes than European companies...

Posted by: **H.** | Apr 14, 2008 11:45:43 AM

@British European (that's redundant, btw): I realize that America is not the end all be all of the world, though I would agree that most Americans think this way, however I do not. It's not arrogance, it's fact: a **LOT** of Americans go to Europe for vacation and business, and spend a lot of money over there, you think that the tourist destinations aren't going to throw a fit if a large chunk of their business dries up because American planes can't fly into European airports? I realize that Americans aren't the only ones who travel to these destinations, but I'd wager that it amounts to at least 10% of the total business they do. How about we just take away 10% of your income just like that, you'd start bitching, same as these tourist spots. 10% could have a significant impact on your bottom line when we're talking millions of euros. I'm not saying the EU will back down, or even that the US Airlines will put up that much of a fight, but I can guarantee that the EU will get an earful from everyone that makes money off of tourism if they do indeed block American planes.

Posted by: **the angry intern** | Apr 14, 2008 12:03:22 PM

Okay Smitty, I accept that I was not as clear as I might have been, but I must point out that I did not offer any "definition" of Free Market Economics, and there was nothing even remotely approaching "communist market" principles in my post. As you correctly stated, the market will set the price of fuel at the pump, but assuming the oil companies intend to return a profit to their shareholders, then they need to maintain reasonable profit margins. My point is that if the oil companies were to incur the true costs of production (which they do not today), then to maintain profit margins the price at the pump will rise and demand would fall – as it should. In time this would lead to more fuel-efficient cars. My point stands - had this "free market" model been in effect for the past...oh three decades or so, I submit that we would be driving more fuel-efficient (less dirty) cars today.

Posted by: **Keith** | Apr 14, 2008 12:21:41 PM

Wanting to greatly reduce pollution is a cause worthy of praise. I for one am not buying into the mass hysteria of the global warming crowd, Al Gore, et al. One only needs to look at the amount of energy Al Gore consumes both in his house and flying all over condemning the average person's use of energy.

Posted by: **Bob** | Apr 14, 2008 12:29:30 PM

MRE is talking about this...

http://wattsupwiththat.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/rss_msu_mar2008_large.png
that's the satellite temp record from 1979, around when the latest warming trend started, to current. Apocalypse cancelled.

Alarmists love to talk about models preprogrammed to spit out desired results, they talk about anecdotal evidence like this glacier here or there retreating, then they give emotional please by showing polar bears floating on an iceberg (nevermind that they can swim 30 miles in the ocean, and that polar bear populations have significantly increased over the last 30 years). But what they don't like talking about is reality...and reality is that global temperatures have not increased in the last 10 years. They peaked in the 1998 El Nino, and have been flat/slightly declining since. It is hard to justify the need for immediate, drastic, economy-killing action for an urgent problem that has been on hold for 10 years. Big oil is not behind this scam, as big oil loves high energy prices that will be created by the warmist policies. No, it is a hodgepodge of interests from anti-capitalists, energy independence advocates, left leaning media, rent seekers, and sheeple enviros who latch on to the latest cause without understanding the issues at hand. Sorry, I'm not buying it, and when the general population realize what they will have to pay to achieve a zero/negligible benefit, they will come around as well.

Posted by: **WR** | Apr 14, 2008 12:32:10 PM

@the angry intern

Microsoft took the view that the EU would back down. It looks like costing them \$690m in fines. It's a high risk strategy unless you can play Brussels politics _really_ well.

Posted by: **tinhat** | Apr 14, 2008 12:41:22 PM

Considering the exchange rate between the dollar and the euro, I don't think nearly as many Americans will be visiting Europe for the time being, increased airplane tickets or not.

Environmental pollution should be a factor in the price of goods. Right now we use the market to determine what the cost of goods are but if there are additional costs like pollution, they should be included.

The difficulty is in putting a financial cost to something that can't be measured in dollars. I think the point is to raise money for alternative less polluting forms of transportation but there is no guarantee carbon trading will lead to that.

Posted by: **Bob F** | Apr 14, 2008 12:42:43 PM

Can anyone buy Euro carbon credits?

I'll bet one bought now will be worth alot more in 2023.

Posted by: **marcko** | Apr 14, 2008 12:45:44 PM

Carbon Dioxide is not pollution. When will people wake up and figure out this is all a big hoax?

Posted by: **George** | Apr 14, 2008 12:53:04 PM

@ WR

If what you say is true then why have numerous scientific magazines reported recent years as being hotter and hotter.

<http://www.universetoday.com/2008/01/18/2007-was-tied-for-the-second-hottest-year-on-record/>

"You weren't imagining things, 2007 really was an unseasonably hot year. In fact, it was tied with 1998 for the second hottest year on record. All in all, the 8 warmest years have all occurred since 1998, and the 14 warmest years since 1990. This mini-record was announced by NASA climatologists this week."

While I have not analyzed in depth the various studies each claiming different high temperature years, I will offer this bit of wisdom I heard a long time ago: 'leave a small footprint'.

Whatever the case is with global warming, we should be endeavoring to leave the rest of the world in great shape so the rest of the life on this planet can flourish. With the sheer amount of pollution we put out in the form of toxins and chemicals and destruction of natural habitat, we are not doing that. I'd hazard a guess that the reason so many forms of life died out around 10,000 years ago (wooly mammoth, saber tooth tiger, etc) is that we hunted their food supply which led them to starve and we hunted them as well. How many other forms of life have to go extinct so humankind can continue to cheaply expand its population?

Posted by: **Bob F** | Apr 14, 2008 12:53:51 PM

I knew this article would have people on both sides, in the end it's a win for the future. Survival of the fittest. If your old slow and inefficient you'll get passed by, that stands for the airline industry and the US in general.

Can't wait until 1-20-2009.

Posted by: **Devin Serpa** | Apr 14, 2008 12:54:19 PM

i'm confused co2 is causing "global warming" so tell me what gases humans and animals breath out- co2 is one of them right? so if co2 is the "biggest" problem in the world why don't we just take a bomb over to china or India or other populated area... and also go and kill all the animals from elephants to rats.. seems like getting rid of trillions of world killers would help wouldn't it? i believe in global warming not for these idiotic reasons but the fact that we are not walking on glaciers now - centuries ago what did the world do to create the global cooling- not create enough pollution? anyways the european union is just trying to get money and a hand up out of this- if they were not allowing extra points-credits?? to be sold it would force companies to either cancel flights or find a more efficient way of flying to be able to fly all that they want to fly and not pollute as much

Posted by: | **Apr 14, 2008 12:54:35 PM**

@-tinhat

I personally wish M\$ would have just bailed on sales in Europe. Wait until the realisation sets in that M\$ isn't going to provide sale/service in the EU and considering carefully before selling once the EU realises the problem they created for themselves.

Plus, some of the 'fines' are absolutely silly. Fining M\$ for properly labeling "M\$ Windows w/o Media Player" vice "M\$ Windows". That is simple "Truth In Advertising"

The Carbon Credit Trade only benefits those who are in the 'trade' aspect of this business. Think of your stocks trade commissions. Same game for CC traders.

@-Bob F - You've struck a good point, until the dollar recovers versus the Euro, think huge cut in USD tourism revenues in Europe. I'm friends with a lot of travelers who have put off trips to Europe simply because of the exchange rate. Many are considering much closer/cheaper alternatives.

Posted by: **JM** | Apr 14, 2008 12:54:53 PM

The so-called market approach will not, and cannot, solve airline emissions for a very simple reason: operating an airliner imposes a cost on the environment that the airline doesn't have to pay! Since the airline can stick the rest of society/the world with the cost of its operation, there no market incentive for it to curb emissions. Claiming that regular market incentives to reduce fuel consumption (to lower costs the airline DOES have to bear) amount to "dealing with" the emissions problem is disingenuous because, again, the cost of fuel paid by the airline does not include the cost its use imposes on everyone else in the form of environmental damage. The best way to factor in that cost is with a carbon tax. Cap and trade is just a way to spread the pain equally among participants in the industry being regulated. Unfortunately it cannot take into account differential impacts between industries.

Posted by: **Chuck Darwin** | Apr 14, 2008 1:12:19 PM

Just out of interest as well, If American planes are stopped from flying into the EU areas, which is highly unlikely, will it not mean more Americans will just fly via European lines? I mean those who need to get to europe, ie. Business trips? Also do any of the Americans know that our (England's) biggest airport, Heathrow, is screwing all American airlines by charging higher landing and parking fees at gates than any other country because of the bigger transatlantic planes. does this mean that the american lines are already part (almost) in the system because BAA (the people who own the airport) are passing on a UK government pollution and airline tax to the airlines that land there. Just interested to get your thoughts.

Posted by: **British European** | Apr 14, 2008 1:19:03 PM

Simple answer to the Global Warming problem... Destroy the Sun.

Posted by: **tally-ho** | Apr 14, 2008 1:22:27 PM

The cap and trade system, just like the rest of the european carbon trading scheme is a big fat shell game. I'm a european and am sick at what the whole carbon trading fiasco has turned out to be. The real insult is others have reduced emissions more than we have with no carbon trading racket.

Posted by: **Capn Trade** | Apr 14, 2008 1:23:04 PM

AFAIK not the entire airline is hit, the requirement regards flights destined to or originating from an European airport. As such, the proposal will not oblige other countries to follow suit on domestic flights or flights to other destinations. But it does require all airlines with European routes to compete on the same terms.

An alternative regulation with less impact could be to apply the regulation to flights with both origin and destination in EU. Again, all airlines on those routes will be submitted to the same regulation.

When EU wants to include transcontinental flights it may be because otherwise these become relatively cheaper, it may hit local tourism at the expense of the environment.

Posted by: **Erik Norgaard** | Apr 14, 2008 1:26:41 PM

I am thrilled to read about industry leaders who are actually trying to make carbon trading work. I agree that the carbon trading system has been a "fiasco" up to this point. However, this issue is too important to abandon.

Kudos to the EU for sticking to their principles! If we only had some progressive politicians on this side of the Atlantic ...

Posted by: **Canadian** | Apr 14, 2008 1:31:26 PM

what is new here? this has been in discussion for a while. did the eu take some definitive step today? this week? this month?

Posted by: **Capt. Bob** | Apr 14, 2008 1:40:09 PM

OH! WELL?

TIME TO START WALKING ON WATER,
I'VE BEEN SO FAR AND LONG AWAY FROM THE CHURCH,
HAS TO BE A GOOD THING?: AYE?.

Posted by: **harryandponzjr** | Apr 14, 2008 2:04:16 PM

George,
I referenced satellite data from RSS. Other data sources, satellite or land based, show similar trends. Since satellite data has only been available since the late 70's, when the previous cooling trend ended and the recent warming trend begun, then it is not saying much that 8 of the 10 hottest on record were this decade...that is a stat designed to deceive you. Just look at the data and tell me if you see a dangerous warming trend.

Posted by: **WR** | Apr 14, 2008 2:05:49 PM

As some has observed, yes, the cost of carbon credits will be passed on to the passenger. That's the whole point!
People will travel less, or rather shorter distances, when price goes up. More CO2 efficient means of travel can better compete with less efficient ones, train may be preferred over plane or car. Al this will cut emissions, which is the central objective.
Europeans will go less to US as americans go less to Europe, tourism will change towards the home market. As a whole I don't think tourism on either continent will suffer. It may suffer in destinations such as South America, Africa or Asia where there is a significant difference in spending by foreign tourists compared to locals.
Meanwhile those with interest in long distance travel will find new ways to compete to win back their market - by cutting their emissions so they can compete with local travel.
Introducing carbon credits introduces the incentive to cut emissions. No one expects companies to change their fleet over night - just as other industries have not been forced to do so. Their credits are gradually reduced meaning they will gradually have to buy more credits and it gradually becomes more attractive to invest in new tech.
The carbon trade system is brilliant in that it allows countries to earn credits by investing in CO2 efficient tech in other countries. This means that CO2 efficient tech will be employed where the effect is the greatest. No one claims that carbon trade is perfect in its current implementation. Theoretically it is the most direct and obvious way to give market an economic incentive to improve on efficiency, and let the market resolve the problem. If anyone has other ways to induce such incentives more efficiently, do bring them forward instead of just bragging about how this is a giant failure.

Posted by: **Erik Norgaard** | Apr 14, 2008 2:12:27 PM

@WR:
There are temperature records much further back than when the first weather satellites were sent into orbit. There are reliable and standardized data covering the whole planet since 1860, while local records date back till the 17/18th century.
The difference is that satellites can give an unprecedented detailed picture of any region of the planet and regional changes during that time.
There are also methods for getting averages over larger periods: Dig a hole! On the surface temperature changes with the day and night. As you dig, measure the temperature in each layer. The further down you dig, the temperature you measure corresponds to an average over a longer period, much longer back. This with other tests builds a picture of the temperature way back, and then you see a clear increase in the last decades.

Posted by: **Erik Norgaard** | Apr 14, 2008 2:31:19 PM

Carbon credits. lol. A scam if there ever was one.

Posted by: **Enzo** | Apr 14, 2008 2:32:45 PM

Erik Norgaard:
You want a better way than a cap-and-trade system? How about a carbon tax on jet fuel and all other fossil fuels? Surely a carbon tax is more efficient and equitable than a cap-and-trade, and a lot easier to manage as well. And you don't even have to get in a row with head-in-the-sand Americans to make it work...that is, unless they don't plan on refueling in Europe once they land.

Posted by: **Chuck Darwin** | Apr 14, 2008 2:36:09 PM

@Chuck Darwin:
A tax is certainly simpler to manage an implement but it has it's problems:
1. There is a huge difference in the industrial and economic development among countries. Some countries should be allowed to develop their economies before being hit by the bar. Others should have the capacity and ability to change.
2. The trade scheme, as mentioned, introduce the possibility of investing in clean tech where the margin is the greatest. It is better to replace an old inefficient coal power plant in eastern Europe than a recent highly efficient one in western Europe. This benefits both countries and the climate.
3. A general CO2 tax would be the first transnational tax in history. Introducing a direct tax will be a political battle, every country will claim it hits them unfairly, and everyone will make sure they get more back from the taxes collected than they pay. That will quickly become more complicated than the trade scheme.
4. There is still a battle about the quotas, but it appears to be easier: They are based on emission estimates for 1990 which are difficult to forge, although some exceptions have been made due to the fall of the eastern block. Giving carbon credits out, countries are given an asset that can be sold. Certainly this is easier to accept than asking same to pay a tax. And then scheme opens for attracting investment and technology to countries that do not have the economy to upgrade their energy production.
Btw, IIRC, the trade scheme was introduced by the Clinton administration in the Kyoto protocol, as a means for US not to commit to cuts by reducing elsewhere.

Posted by: **Erik Norgaard** | Apr 14, 2008 3:03:33 PM

@ angry intern (and similar sentiments):"if they block US airlines from flying to European destinations, then the tourism industry in those countries will suffer greatly, in the end, if the US airlines refuses, I'd bet the EU will back down."
Could not the EU tourist transportation needs then be serviced by EU planes, which could bring EU tourists to the states and transport US tourists to the EU on the return trip, possibly benefiting the US tourist trade in the process though discounted fares to EU passengers and resulting increased clientèle? I know this could be a very challenging thought experiment for many who expressed the above mentioned sentiment. but you could still try to understand this possibility.

Posted by: **the plane...the plane...** | Apr 14, 2008 3:11:52 PM

I think the whole cap and trade idea is bad. What happens when big money steps in and buys the carbon credits to hold till the price goes up, and then they can sell at a profit, which in effect will raise the costs more. Just look at oil. Who's making the most money? Those buying in the futures market which artificially raising the price we pay.

Posted by: **old dog** | Apr 14, 2008 3:15:56 PM

"Global Warming" is unmitigated crap for uninformed sheeple. This is the American version of Lysenkoism. The scientific method has been thrown in the toilet and pissed on by the Nobel Committee. Any scientist who dares to question the politically correct dogma of Goreism is systematically stripped of credibility by the media, of grants by the federal government, and of credentials by accrediting institutions.

There was once a scientific consensus that the earth was flat. Is the earth flat? No, not really. That is because consensus without proof means nothing. This is why the scientific method is so important. It does not go: hypothesis: consensus: Media: Nobel Prize: Tax.

We have chosen to focus on one variable in a multi-variable chaotic system, and pretend that we can derive a linear relationship between that one variable and the output. What an abdication of science. What is really driving global temperatures? I mean, get real and look at the entire system. Q in is certainly one of the major factors, probably much more than a selected trace gas filter. And the truth is, in my opinion, we are much more in danger of an ice age than the ridiculous claims of extinction for humans that can not manage to build a 3 foot seawall in 300 years. The sun is showing definite signs of entering a Maunder Minimum. Of course, since that term has not been used in the media, none of you know what I am talking about. Google it.

I could point out how cold the winter has been, but that would be intellectually dishonest. You can not discuss weather and climate in the same timeframes. To talk about climate, you must look at centuries. Amazing what a crisis we have produced with suspect data in a couple of decades.

And, for all you greenies out there, who do you think is going to pay these carbon taxes? Corporations don't pay taxes, they raise their prices. Oh, it's for the good of the planet, right? Well, follow the money. I would bet you would be surprised where that money is going.

Posted by: **speedy** | Apr 14, 2008 3:45:07 PM

I love it when people stand up to the USA. It should happen more often.

Posted by: **gatzke** | Apr 14, 2008 4:04:03 PM

This is great! The US has been doing this for so long: not giving any support to other countries if they have legalized marijuana, not giving family planning money if they allow abortions. Now that we're no longer the biggest player in the game, the EU is going to give us a taste of what it's like. I love it. I just hope the EU continues to keep its corruption under control. Would hate to see them turn into another USA.

Posted by: **Parker** | Apr 14, 2008 4:31:44 PM

Just a few comments to clarify some points I haven't seen in the thread so far:

- In theory a market driven approach could work. Even though causing pollution does not create any costs for the airlines so far, burning fuel does. So even though they might not be motivated to conserve energy to help against global warming, they compete with other airlines over customers by price, so lowering the operational costs is in their interest. Unfortunately increasing the efficiency also increases the costs in the short term (e.g. you have to buy new planes), so the airlines often prefer short term earnings over efficiency. An carbon trade program still allows airlines to do so, but moves the balance towards efficiency.

- To work ANY SUCH SYSTEM HAS TO include any flight in and out of the EU. Otherwise you might get a situation where a plane starts in Greece and does not fly directly to Spain, but makes a short landing in northern Africa and then continues to Spain just to declare the flight as "not within the EU" and avoid the carbon tax. That way

you would have made the flight even worse than before instead of improving the situation. If the flight to Africa and from Africa are treated as flights in the EU, there is no incentive to "cheat".

- The EU basically fucked up the first round of emission trading by giving out way to many rights. But they are learning and are reducing the rights, to create real incentives to operate more efficiently. And please be aware that this is not a tax system, i.e. the EU does not keep the money they demand from the airlines. It is a market that redistributes this money, rewarding the more efficient airlines and punishing those who fall behind the current state of the art. In the end the airlines will win if they can decrease their operating costs.

Posted by: **Christian Schildwaechter** | Apr 14, 2008 4:38:52 PM

I looked up Maunder Minimum. I think your suggestion is irrelevant -- apparently the Little Ice Age began before the minimum, and extended past the minimum.

Furthermore, there's only been one MM, so we are more in the land of anecdote, not data, nor do I know of any credible "signs" that such a thing (70 years of very low sunspot activity) is about to occur.

Where do you deniers get this stuff, anyhow? How can you possibly find this more convincing than melting glaciers, melting ice cap, melting permafrost, earlier spring, earlier river/lake ice melts, and deciduous trees moving uphill? There's a clear explanation for why more CO2 should add to the heat input; what's unclear is how the climate reacts, but the first guess is that it gets warmer, and that has generally been the case.

Where do you guys get your idea of what scientists are like? James Bond movies? "No, Mr. Speedy, I expect you to fry!"
Good grief.

Posted by: **dr2chase** | Apr 14, 2008 5:31:20 PM

just another brilliant european idea... just like them backing airbus so they can operate at a loss....

i wonder how much this plan is going to benefit them
i love how europeans say americans have their heads up their a** its kind of funny how most of the bashing other countries on this is not from "all of the US idiots" but from them europeans

Posted by: | Apr 14, 2008 5:32:18 PM

i have an idea for all you idiots out there if you think co2 is causing all these problems THEN PLANT SOME TREES put plants on the roof of your apartment let vines grow along the sides of your house let the grass grow a little plant some more bushes and flowers and what not PROBLEM SOLVED... if you think "global warming" is so horrible why dont you do something about it if you dont your all talk just like all of the big bad companies WHO PROVIDE A SERVICE TO YOU if you divide the total carbon by the amount of passengers carried i bet it wont be as bad of a ratio as it would be for all the cars

Posted by: | Apr 14, 2008 6:55:00 PM

One more thing if engine companies made their parts stronger and of better materials it would be possible to increase the boost of the turbo allowing for more fuel burn and more thrust produced reducing the emissions one problem for the consumer will be the increased cost of the engine. maybe the eu and others can focus more on the people making the product then the people using it because they have no other choice than what is available to them to put on the plane ya airlines could put pressure for better aerodynamics and engines but imagine how much more presser would be on them if major countries did the same look at the american cars in '60-70's some cars got maybe 7 mpg- with little government laws and many other big factors today for chevy 7 out of 17 models get 30+ mpg, no model (not while towing b/c of obvious reasons + probably the 2500 and bigger trucks) gets lower than 20 highway mpg. now imagine if Europe and the US required airbus, boeing and others to have similar increase in efficiency and maybe also somehow helping the airlines change to these newer hopefully better planes. this would effect the entire market reducing prices for customers and increasing business for the air industry

Posted by: | Apr 14, 2008 7:05:24 PM

Hey WR, regress that line and tell me the slope. Bet it's positive. Moron.

Posted by: Tracy | Apr 14, 2008 8:51:37 PM

@speedy: This is BS!
Scientists are well aware of other parameters. It is well known that water vapor is by far the strongest green house gas, but it is also known that it water vapor changes the albedo. It is well known that methane produced by cattle is a stronger green house gas than CO2, but at present the concentration is low and the total effect of CO2 is greater.
This will change as other countries such as China demands more meat and begin to eat like americans - just as Chinese CO2 emissions rise as they begin to drive like americans.
This does not mean that CO2 effect becomes smaller and more irrelevant, but that other effects become greater. But any contribution counts and effort should be made to reduce impact where possible.
It is well known that the impact of CO2 by airlines is greater than the same amount of CO2 by other means of transport because the airline exhaust is in the upper atmosphere whereas car exhaust is easily absorbed by the vegetation.
It is environmentally illogic to exclude air transport. It will make flight more competitive compared to car or train and the CO2/passenger km is worse than for any other type of transport. Hence, excluding air transport will result in a negative effect in the end. Including air transport in the system is only a step to bring the different means of transport on the same level.
You argue that scientific consensus and media has established global warming as a fact. But this is reversed, facts upon facts have established a consensus. And critics are easily proven to be simply uninformed or ignorant.

Posted by: Erik Norgaard | Apr 15, 2008 1:17:38 AM

Whether global warming is real or not (it is, by the way. Not a myth. A fact. Deal.) is not the issue here. I love how the EU air carriers are mad at their own government for creating this "tax," and yet instead of lobbying the government for change, they think American carriers across the pond should simply help them bear the burden and smile while doing it? Unh huh. Like we should just take that. The financial issue is an EU problem, and instead of even consulting us, they've simply decided we're going to help them solve it??? We started a revolution over that kind of absentee ruling, once. Remember?

Posted by: JAFO | Apr 15, 2008 6:22:13 AM

Europe will start the next great war, just wait. They started the global warming crap as a tool to attack the greater economies of the world.

Posted by: Jim | Apr 15, 2008 6:01:45 PM

Not a fact. Not a deal. A myth. Done. You're wrong. You must shut up. No dissent. Ever. Learn to agree. With me. Or else.

Posted by: vanderleun | Apr 15, 2008 6:04:33 PM

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