

**Remarks of Dr. John J. Berger on the National Climate Assessment  
and the Obama Administration's Energy and Climate Policy  
May 8, 2014**

“Despite the President’s current stands on climate change, neither the President nor Congress nor the American people have made climate protection a top priority. The current National Climate Assessment, like the one that preceded it, documents the predictable results of a continued business-as-usual approach to fossil fuel energy development.

“The Obama Administration, while advancing energy conservation and renewable energy, has gone full speed ahead with fossil fuel development as part of the President’s avowed, ‘all of the above’ energy policy,” Dr. Berger noted. “Yet at the same time the Administration has sought to position itself on the right side of the climate issue by remarks such as those in the President’s 2013 Georgetown University climate speech when he announced his Climate Action Plan.

“But the President has also taken credit for aggressively promoting fossil fuel development throughout the nation. ‘Under my administration,’ he said at a March 2012 speech in Cushing, Oklahoma, ‘America is producing more oil today than at any time in the last eight years. That’s important to know. Over the last three years, I’ve directed my administration to open up millions of acres for gas and oil exploration across 23 different states. We’re opening up more than 75 percent of our potential oil resources offshore. We’ve quadrupled the number of operating rigs to a record high. We’ve added enough new oil and gas pipeline to encircle the Earth and then some. So we are drilling all over the place--right now. . . . the fact is that my administration has approved dozens of new oil and gas pipelines over the last three years--including one from Canada. And as long as I’m President, we’re going to keep on encouraging oil development and infrastructure.’

“On the subject of domestic climate policy,” Dr. Berger notes, “the President did not make climate change a high priority in his first administration, focusing instead on domestic health care policy. The Waxman-Markey cap ‘n trade climate bill was never even taken up in the Democratically controlled Senate in 2009 after passing the House at a time when the Democrats controlled both Houses of Congress and President Obama had the political capital to push climate legislation.

“Also during the President’s first term, the Administration devoted massive financial resources to the U.S. economic crisis while spending relatively little on climate protection. Internationally, the President spent only about a day at the UN Climate Action Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 where the U.S. delegation sided with rearguard rather than vanguard nations on the issue of mandatory international greenhouse gas emission limits.

“Since then, the Administration has refused to join the Second Kyoto Protocol commitment period, has supported weak voluntary international greenhouse gas reductions, and has not set ambitious domestic greenhouse gas emission reduction goals comparable equal to those of the European Union and its member states.

“President Obama has also refrained from calling attention to the dangers of fracking or to the greenhouse gas implications of the fossil fuel industry’s plans to export strip-mined coal and build facilities to liquefy and export natural gas.”