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Opinion

**Edward Cross: A Consequential Moment is at Hand**

**By Edward Cross / Special to The Capital-Journal**

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The upcoming elections could be a very consequential moment for our future. In a political climate rife with hyperbolic rhetoric, unsubstantiated claims, and naïve pleas to keep oil and natural gas in the ground calling oil the “fuel of the past”, the choices for the American people are becoming clear.

Inexpensive energy is necessary for economic advancement by the world’s poor and for economic recovery. Ideological opposition to fossil fuels is an anti-human stance that views ordinary people not as problem-solving sources of ingenuity but as only mouths to feed, producing environmental damage.

President Biden signed the *Inflation Reduction Act* into law in mid-August. The measure will only increase taxes on families and businesses at a time when people and companies are recovering from post-Covid woes and rising inflation.

Increasing taxes and regulations results in fewer jobs because businesses spend their resources on tax burdens and regulatory compliance instead of job creation. When tax expenditures and regulatory costs increase more than the real economy, the results are destructive to economic growth. The wrong governmental policy framework generates wrong policy and this is what we are seeing with Biden energy policies.

That’s not only bad politics; it’s bad policy and an unnecessary drag on the economy. This is an example of what happens when political orthodoxy drives energy policy and highlights the need to get our nation’s energy policy right.

As we think about energy policy this election season, we should listen to American voters on the direction of our nation’s energy policy. A Heartland Institute poll released in summer 2022 found that 82% of likely voters are very concerned about energy prices under the Biden administration. In addition, 60% of likely voters favor a law that would dramatically increase American energy production while only 30% believe that “climate change” will be catastrophic for humans, plants, and animals.

American energy policy is not a Republican issue or a Democrat issue. It is an American prosperity and leadership issue. The American people want, expect, and deserve elected leaders who will place what's best for our state and nation's economy and energy future above partisan ideology and political posturing.

I strongly believe that the American people need and want moral, intellectual, and strategic clarity and courage from our policymakers.

The most pressing issues facing the U.S. economy in the foreseeable future are not those arising from climate change or an energy transition. Rather the factors to watch are inflation, rising energy costs, and national security threats. The Biden Administration is too focused on climate change to anticipate or deter these significant real threats.

As we look ahead to November's elections and beyond, energy policy discussions should focus on facts and reality, not political ideology and hyperbole. Oil and natural gas can be a part of the solution to our nation's energy policy challenges. We need energy policies based on science, the free market, and entrepreneurial spirit. Those who act on our behalf at all levels of government would be wise to use those principles as the foundation for energy policy decisions.

Policymakers at all levels should pursue energy policies that drive economic growth, lower costs for consumers, protect the environment, increase American competitiveness, and use our considerable energy resources as a way to lift people up.

*Edward Cross is the president of the Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association*