



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on July 18, 2014

## Australia Leads the Way; America Should Follow

Three years ago, the Australian government led by Prime Minister Julia Gillard bowed to the questionable claims of environmentalists and imposed a carbon tax on large companies. Any company releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere was required to fork over a hefty penalty per ton of emissions. However, on July 17, 2014, the Australian Senate followed the lead already taken by the nation's House and approved a measure repealing this onerous tax.



Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who succeeded Gillard in 2014, saluted the legislature's wisdom. He had campaigned for the office on a [pledge to do away with the assault on carbon dioxide emissions](#). Repeating what he stated in his campaign, he called the now-cancelled measure a "useless destructive tax, which damaged jobs, which hurt families' cost of living, and which didn't actually help the environment." As expected, opponents of the repeal insisted that doing away with the carbon tax would adversely impede efforts to address climate change, the new label for what was formerly known as global warming.

Only a few weeks earlier here in the United States, [President Obama endorsed a plan created by the Environmental Protection Agency](#) to have states devise plans to reduce the amount of carbon emissions produced by coal-fired power plants. Approximately 40 percent of the electric power generated in the United States comes from burning coal. If the EPA's regulations are imposed, the effect on energy production nationwide will be enormous, and the loss of jobs by coal miners and others in coal-producing areas will be catastrophic. So, too, will jobs be lost when the cost of energy formerly generated by coal skyrockets.

Addressing the EPA plan, Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) stated, "The Obama administration must think our country ... can operate on windmills." Senator Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said of the EPA's targeting of carbon dioxide emissions: "Never before has the federal government forced an industry to do something that is technologically impossible." He added: "If these regulations go into effect, American jobs will be lost, electricity prices will soar, and economic uncertainty will grow."

The great bugaboo targeted by environmentalists and the EPA, of course, is carbon dioxide. No one doubts that burning coal to produce energy puts the substance into the atmosphere. But when pressed to address the scientific fact that [carbon dioxide is absolutely essential for plant growth and therefore a definite good](#), the fright peddlers seek to change the subject into claims about rising sea levels, droughts, and severe weather outbreaks — all supposedly resulting from human activity and carbon dioxide.

Australia has shown the way. Prime Minister Tony Abbott is correct about the effects of the carbon tax in his country. The same effects would be seen here. But proponents of a similarly destructive measure would have the United States impose its own counterproductive tax on carbon dioxide emissions. U.S. leaders don't like to admit that anything can be learned from some other country. But if enough Americans merely inform our officials what Australian officials have just done, the damage a carbon tax



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and the related war on coal would cause can be avoided.

*John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*

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