



SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE 

# Federal appliance proposal ignores energy and environmental equity | Opinion

Updated: Aug. 06, 2022, 1:54 p.m. | Published: Aug. 06, 2022, 1:53 p.m.

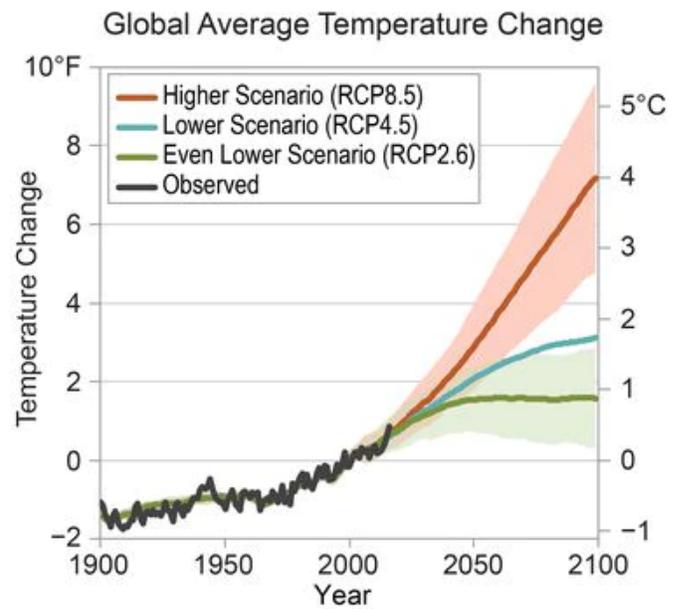
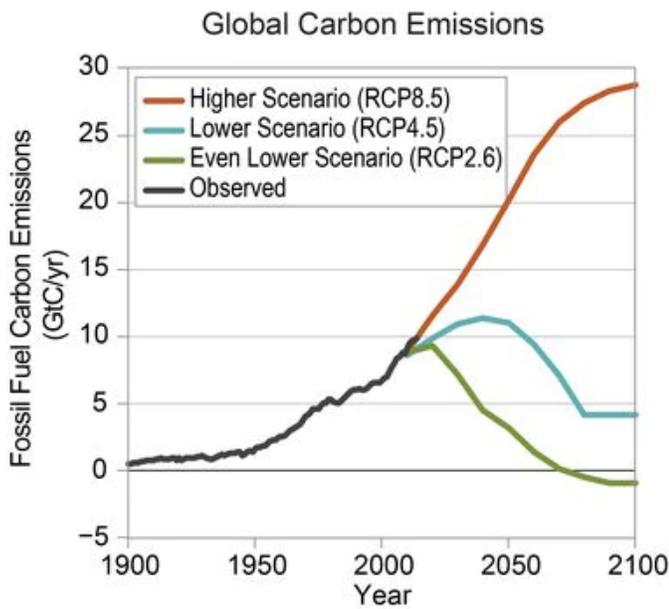
By Guest Editorial

By Tucker Perkins

COVID-19 creates a number of health-wrecking symptoms for people. Fever and chills, cough, shortness of breath, and even loss of taste and smell are all part of the package. Our economy appears to be suffering from these same symptoms. Supply chain shocks and the fever of inflation have pushed prices up on everything, especially energy.

The national average price of regular gasoline is hovering near \$5.00 per gallon with diesel fuel at about \$5.80. Likewise, electricity has hit 14.26 cents per kilowatt hour on average, an all-time high, now costing the average American household nearly \$130.00 a month.

Advertisement



These two charts show the carbon emissions expected through 2100 at higher, lower and lowest levels, left, and the global average temperature change expected from each scenario. The charts were included in the 4th National Climate Assessment, released in November 2018.

These price increases don't simply represent more dollars being spent on energy; they force Americans to make trade-offs within the budgets they have. Those choices -- between buying food or buying gas, between paying for medicine or paying the always-surprising electric bill -- make the abstract discussion of our energy transition absolutely real. Millions of Americans who can least afford all of this are getting squeezed by a "heat versus eat" vice.

Now, just as the nation finds itself in a hot summer, the Biden administration is proposing to add to the pressure by pursuing new efficiency standards for furnaces. By most accounts, the proposed ideas will dramatically increase the cost of a new furnace by as much as \$2,200 with the vague promise that homeowners will recover those costs over an extended period of time. A number of furnaces that run on the most affordable energy sources like propane, which remains below \$3.00 per gallon, will be pushed off the market forcing consumers to buy models that run on more expensive electricity. That is what energy inequity looks like in its most innocuous form.



If energy efficiency is the real goal, then the administration has a duty to acknowledge the fact that electricity is among the least efficient ways to convey energy. More than 60% of energy used to make electricity, for example, is lost at the power plant, while pushing electrons through hundreds of miles of copper wire results in additional energy loss.

More likely, efficiency in this case is being used to mask the movement to electrify everything -- a climate policy theory based on the assumption that electrification equals decarbonization. Electrification does not eliminate carbon emissions. Instead, it commits environmental injustice by concentrating carbon and pollution emissions upstream in fossil-fueled electric generation plants that are often located near the most vulnerable communities.

The cost of electrifying everything is pegged at somewhere between \$20 to \$25 trillion over the next 20 years costing at least \$40,000 for every American home. The latest proposed appliance rules are just one way that burden is being pushed onto those who can least afford it while ignoring the carbon emission reality of electric utilities.

Timing, as the saying goes, is everything. Given the burdens energy inflation is imposing on lower income Americans, now is not the time to inflict more pain, especially when there is little, if any, efficiency, or environmental gain.

***Tucker Perkins, President and CEO of the Propane Education and Research Council (PERC).***

Note to readers: if you purchase something through one of our affiliate links we may earn a commission.

---

## **Around the Web**

### **Homeowners Are Trading In Their Doorbell Cams For This**

Happening Today | Sponsored