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The Anti-Energy President

He really meant it when he said prices would "skyrocket."

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Our America today is very different from the America of some years ago. Government spending is greatly increased, as is the regulation of our economy. The growing size and reach of our government is sapping our nation's strength and independence. And our current president's policies have been quite different from our leaders of some years ago.

One of the best examples of these public policy changes is the huge increase in government regulation in how we generate and use energy, with its negative impact on supply, its focus on financing new and inefficient energy industries, and the resulting higher costs.

The policy of the Obama administration has been not to increase the energy supplies that are so critical to our nation's economic health, but to limit them, to increase energy prices, and to make energy more expensive.

Eliminating tax deductions for the oil and gas industries is at the top of the President's list, which would increase the price of gasoline and home heating oil for everyone. But this fits in with the Obama administration's overall inclination to hamper domestic production, whether through slowness in granting new permits or refusal to open new areas for exploration. In fact oil, production on federal lands was flat between 2009 to 2011, while production on nonfederal lands increased almost 7%.

And it is not just petroleum. Mr. Obama's Environmental Protection Agency wants to increase regulation of coal-fueled electricity plants, which produce almost half of our electricity, so as to drive up the price of electricity and force plants to close. None of this should be surprising, for as we know, Obama's energy secretary, Steven Chu, told The Wall Street Journal in 2008 that we must "figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe."

The president admitted that his cap-and-trade energy proposals, had they come to pass, would cause energy prices to "skyrocket" and bankrupt coal companies. In the Mr. Obama's words, coal fired plants can be built, but if they are, "it will bankrupt them because they're going to be charged a huge sum" for emitting the greenhouse gases.

On the other hand, the current administration is throwing money at "green" energy companies, exemplified by the failed \$535 million federal loan guarantee in Solyndra. Alternative energy sources do need to be developed, but it is clear that the federal government is not a wise allocator of taxpayer dollars in this effort. These sources will never be developed to the point of affordability unless the free market is allowed to sort good technologies from bad without the skewing of investment that comes from government trying to pick winners and losers. America

badly needs very different national energy policies that will increase our energy supplies, reduce the cost of energy, and get America positively moving again.

Approving the Keystone pipeline so that more energy comes into America is an important first step. The president has twice rejected congressional efforts to approve it.

We must encourage hydraulic "fracking," of underground reserves in shale. Already there are many fracking gas efforts underway, and the government's latest estimates of the gas available from shale are about 500 trillion cubic feet. We currently use about 24 trillion cubic feet per year, so shale gas can add around 20 years to our supply.

The Obama administration must open up more areas for exploration and production, from drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to reducing the number of prohibited areas offshore. It simply must do what it can to speed up the permit granting process. And it must recognize that now is not the time, if there ever is a good time, to raise taxes on energy producers.

Finally, a look at the George W. Bush's and Mr. Obama's efforts to increase government regulation—not just in energy, but across the economy—shows the difference between the two presidents. In his first three years in office Mr. Bush put into place 28 major regulations. Mr. Obama's three years have seen 106 major regulations. In dollar terms the Bush regulations cost \$8.1 billion and Obama's \$46 billion.

So where America is and what it is doing in energy policies has changed a great deal in the past three years, mostly in a regressive direction. Energy is essential for a strong America, but the current administration seems to be doing all it can to keep us from tapping the reliable energy supplies we have right here in our country—coal, oil, and gas—and from our neighbor to the north. Instead we are being pushed towards other energy sources that are inefficient, expensive and will only provide a fraction of the energy a strong America needs.