


Editors' Note

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EDITORS' NOTE

At the heart of *Sustainable Development Law & Policy's* mission is the promotion of sound development practices, and at the heart of all sound development practices is a forward thinking energy policy. Very few subjects permeate through other areas of sustainable development as much as the impacts from traditional energy exploration, production, trade, and use.

Climate change is recognized as an international issue necessitating action from the global community. However, energy issues must be examined at the forefront of any effective climate agenda. For example, within the United States, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions resulting from fossil fuel combustion make up approximately 82 percent of our anthropogenic greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions and 25 percent of all global emissions.¹ As the legal community tackles global warming, a reevaluation of energy consumption and production must occur because these activities are the largest contributor of GHG and the resultant climate problem.

In short, our energy dependencies have resulted in the need to increase regulation and decrease consumption. As one of the few industrialized nations left without comprehensive GHG regulations, the United States is loathe to be left out of the race in the development of new, clean, and efficient technologies to sustain our consumptive energy needs. The United States' global competitiveness and international credibility to support sound energy policies has been dim. However, the recent Supreme Court case *Massachusetts v. EPA*² results in a glimmer of hope that change is on the horizon. This decision allows the EPA to regulate carbon dioxide and pushes the federal government towards curbing GHG emissions from automobiles. This also strengthens the position of individual states leading the way with progressive energy regulations and GHG reductions. The future of energy policy in the United States is unknown, but as the greatest contributor of GHG gases, change must occur.

The planet cannot afford an energy policy that does not take into account environmental and climate impacts, just as it cannot afford to have a climate policy that ignores energy impacts. We hope this issue serves as a useful tool for those in the legal community, policy makers, and informed citizens who are working to ensure a sustainable energy future as we face the challenge of powering the 21st century.


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FEATURES:

- 21| WAVE ENERGY: "NEW-WAVE" INTEREST IN AN OLD ALTERNATIVE RESOURCE
by Scott Johnson
- 25| MISLEADINGLY GREEN: TIME TO REPEAL THE ETHANOL TARIFF AND SUBSIDY FOR CORN
by Marcel De Armas
- 30| SWITCHGRASS: A NEW ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE?
by Lisa Novins
- 37| RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES: A PROMISING ENERGY ALTERNATIVE
by Ursula Kazarian
- 40| THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN PERU'S ENERGY NEEDS, INDIGENOUS RIGHTS, AND ECOSYSTEMS
by Desiree Moreno Gutierrez
- 47| THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSUMPTION
by Jaesa McLin
- 52| UPDATE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE RECENT LEBANON-ISRAEL WAR
by Salah Husseini
- 57| THE FOREST AND THE TREES: BIOMASS AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES
by Stephen Medlock
- 63| LITIGATION UPDATE
by Lucy Wiggins
- 65| BOOK REVIEW
by Jon Feldon
- 67| WORLD NEWS
by Cari Shiffman
- 69| BIBLIOGRAPHY
Compiled by Blase Kornacki

¹ Energy Info. Admin., Greenhouse Gases, Climate Change, and Energy, Apr. 2004, available at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/1605/ggcebro/chapter1.html> (last visited Apr. 17, 2007).

² *Massachusetts v. EPA*, No. 05-1120, 2007 WL 957332 (U.S. Apr. 2, 2007).