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## NJ STAR LEDGER SUGGESTS ACTIVISTS ACCEPT FRACKING FOR THE SAKE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Sierra Club, like most environmental groups, vehemently opposes fracking for natural gas and building pipelines to send it to market.

But the NJ Star Ledger suggests it's time for them to take a fresh look. PSEG announced last week that it will close two enormous coal plants, one near Trenton and the other in Jersey City. By switching to natural gas, carbon emissions will drop by about half.

Why did PSEG make this decision? Mainly because it's now cheaper to run a power plant on natural gas, thanks to the abundant supplies produced by fracking.

Power companies across the country are making the same decision, with coal burning dropping by 9 percent this year alone. This transition has actually dropped power plants behind transportation as the largest source of carbon emissions for the first time in 1979 - a significant step in the greatest environmental challenge we face.

No doubt, fracking presents two big risks. The process calls for pumping chemicals into the ground to force out the natural gas, and that puts water supplies at risk. And leaks of methane, a gas that is an even more potent risk to the climate than carbon, can undercut the gains of this switch.

But those risks can be managed with vigorous regulation. The Obama administration has found only a few isolated cases of water contamination, and believes the methane leaks are not big enough to outweigh the clear advantages of switching to natural gas. It is studying ways to further reduce both risks with more strict oversight.

The fight against climate change is a desperate one that we are losing. Even if all nations honor the ambitious pledges made during the Paris talks in 2015, scientists say it will be only a start, and that much more must be done to avert catastrophe.

Yes, the ultimate challenge is to wean ourselves off fossil fuels entirely. And a hefty carbon tax is the best way to start. But Washington isn't close to doing that.

But even when our elected officials do wake up, as they eventually must, a carbon tax would not suddenly end our reliance on all fossil fuels. It would take years, probably decades.

We need to bring a fanatic realism to this fight, and that means taking every step we can to reduce carbon emissions now. Including fracking.

NJ Star Ledger (10-9-16)

*We at RT have always believed that clean fuel brings with it clear environmental benefits for all of New Jersey's citizens. Environmental groups reacting against any type of energy delivery keeps us stuck with the dirty air of the past. We thank The Star Ledger for this excellent Editorial!*

*Justin Lauterbach, Q.E.P.  
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