

Editor, Times Union

Albany NY

Tom Friedman in his October 21 article, speaks of getting green starting at the top, with green governmental leaders. He illustrates this with a New York City taxi story, using more fuel efficient, less polluting cars.

However Friedman doesn't realize that NY City and our NY State's anti-burn attitudes, that appear to be green, are making our environment worse, wasting precious energy resources, with dire economic results.

Some New York City and State leaders have discouraged waste to energy, WTE facilities, and have adopted the PC "green" policy of "the devil burns and the Lord recycles". This assumes that all waste burning pollutes, and that most waste components can be recycled, both false assumptions. Modern efficient, controlled waste to energy plants, have negligible emissions comparable to those of a few motor vehicles. High energy materials like plastics can only be recycled by about 20% and contain much energy, which is wasted when such wastes are landfilled. A ton of waste, which is renewable, has the energy of a barrel of oil, which is worth about \$90. Thus using waste as fuel, can reduce our dependence on imported fuels, and improve our economy.

New York City pays about \$57 for 250 KWH of electricity, while Baltimore pays about \$22 for the same quantity. New York City exports about 4 million tons of municipal wastes per year at a cost of about \$130 per ton to distant PA and VA landfills, while Baltimore generates energy from wastes and pays about \$38 per ton for waste disposal. NYC uses about 600 trucks per day, and uses over 5 million gallons of fuel oil a year for long range waste transport, wasting over an estimated half billion dollars per year of taxpayer funds, and polluting our air with toxic diesel emissions. These wasteful practices also increase global warming since waste to energy facilities generally have only about 5% of greenhouse gas emissions compared to landfills.

I just returned from a gasification conference in CA where General Electric and other firms spoke about clean coal conversion, converting coal and biomass to fuel gases and synthetic fuels, such as alcohols and gasoline. They are building such plants around the world and in other states; not in NY, which is not favorable to such technologies.

We can be green and use the best pollution control technologies, and use alternate waste fuels to reduce our dependence on imported fuel, and improve our NYS economy. However we must use the best science and technologies to solve our environmental and energy problems. Truly green leaders hopefully will do this to benefit our society.

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