RFF: Making an Impact

Highlights of Recent Contributions to Informing Natural Resource and Environmental Policy

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Resources for the Future (RFF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that provides rigorous economic research and objective policy analysis to help leaders make informed decisions about complex environmental challenges. RFF maintains a reputation for research excellence and is recognized as a trusted source of relevant, thoughtful, and nonpartisan policy recommendations.

RFF experts regularly help ensure that decisionmakers are asking the right questions about natural resource, energy, and environmental policies. Specifically, they:

- testify before congressional committees,
- brief members of Congress and the executive branch,
- serve on advisory panels for key agencies,
- publish their findings in targeted publications for policymakers, and
- help industry leaders interpret the policy landscape and explore emerging issues.

This unique consultative process provides critical insights to both refine research at RFF and inform discussions with policymakers. Throughout the years, the work of RFF experts has been applied to both specific environmental decisions and wide-ranging policies, strengthening the economy as well as the environment.

Guiding Policy Development

RFF experts regularly brief staff of the White House, federal agencies, and Congress on emerging research findings and convene thought leaders to discuss important policy questions. They also serve on a variety of advisory boards for organizations including the National Science Foundation, the World Bank, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Wildlife Refuge Association, and others. Below is a sample of recent interactions.

Engaging with Policy Leaders

RFF Vice President for Research and Senior Fellow Molly Macauley spoke on the economics of space debris mitigation at the 65th International Astronautical Congress.

Darius Gaskins Senior Fellow Dallas Burtraw met with senior officials from the Office of Science and Innovation in the House of Sweden to provide a description of EPA’s Clean Power Plan and how it fits into the administration’s climate policy agenda.

RFF President Phil Sharp participated in The Atlantic and the Aspen Institute’s sixth annual Washington Ideas Forum, a roundtable gathering of thought leaders for a high-level discussion about the various solutions and new standards that governments, businesses, and communities must adopt to reach long-term sustainability.

RFF Visiting Fellows Arthur Fraas and Randall Lutter discussed the effectiveness of federally mandated information disclosures at the Future of Consumer Rules Symposium held at the University of Virginia School of Law.
Convening Experts and the Public

**Greenhouse Gas Regulations and the Clean Air Act:** RFF, the Energy Foundation, Next 10, and the University of California, Davis hosted a discussion about the Clean Air Act, state-level climate policies, and lessons learned from market-based regulatory emissions programs in California and the northeastern United States.

**A Conversation with Gina McCarthy:** RFF welcomed EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy for a Policy Leadership Forum, where she spoke about the Clean Power Plan, international climate negotiations, and the potential for climate action to contribute to economic growth.

**Making Nature Useless?** RFF’s Center for the Management of Ecological Wealth asked invited panelists to explore the idea of reaching a “peak environmental footprint” by decoupling conservation from its consumption- and prosperity-based motivations.

**Understanding Climate Risk:** Nobel Laureate Mario Molina joined RFF and the American Association for the Advancement of Science to talk about scientific, public, and media perceptions about global warming, as well as the economic and financial risks caused by climate change.

**Carbon Cap and Trade in China:** RFF researchers presented findings from a discussion paper assessing three cap-and-trade pilot programs in China, and invited experts to comment on the prospects of nationalizing market-based emissions regulations in a country whose economy has few market features.

**New Methods for Comparing Levels of Effort:** At the United Nations Climate Conference in Peru, RFF hosted an event with Japan’s Research Institute of Innovative Technology for the Earth, Harvard University, and Duke University, where experts presented a modeling framework for scoring a country’s nationally determined contributions to reducing their emissions.

Selected Media Coverage and Speaking Engagements

Because of RFF’s reputation of objective credibility, RFF experts are often requested to speak on topics of interest to environmental organizations, research institutions, and policy associations, and are frequently quoted in major publications:

*The Washington Post.* “China, US Agree to Limit Greenhouse Gases.” November 12, 2014. RFF President Phil Sharp comments on the climate deal struck between the US and China, noting that international agreements can prevent political inaction that might otherwise be justified by the failures of other countries.

*Bloomberg Businessweek.* “Obama Skirts Hostile Congress on China Climate Deal Goals.” November 12, 2014. RFF Senior Fellow and Co-Director of RFF’s Center for Energy and Climate Economics Raymond Kopp comments on the potential for the Obama administration to use the Clean Air Act to limit emissions from carbon sources such as refineries and steelmakers.

*The Washington Post.* “Falling Oil Prices Fuel Opportunities for Change.” December 4, 2014. In a letter to the editor, RFF Senior Fellow Joel Darmstadter writes that policymakers should recognize that falling oil prices have created an ideal opportunity to increase the federal gas tax.

*The Wall Street Journal.* “3 Things to Keep in Mind about Falling Oil Prices.” December 8, 2014. The Wall Street Journal's Washington Wire highlights a blog post by RFF’s Alan Krupnick on the expected impacts falling oil prices will have on shale oil companies and their production.