

The 2008/09

CORE FILES
Argument
Summaries

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Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase alternative energy incentives in the United States.

2008-09 Core Files Argument Summaries

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Biofuels Affirmative

Biofuels are alternatives to gasoline made from plants. Plants gather energy from the sun as they grow. For thousands of years, people have harnessed this energy by eating plants or by burning them to create heat. Recent technology makes it possible to convert the energy stored by plants into a liquid fuel that could power cars in the same way that gasoline does.

Inherency

Although the federal government already provides some subsidies for ethanol and other biofuels, these fuels cannot yet compete with gasoline on large scale. The Affirmative argues that this is for two reasons. First, the nation's transportation infrastructure is built around gasoline, and the initial expense of converting everything to accommodate biofuels is slowing progress. Cars are built to run on gasoline, filling stations are built to pump gasoline, etc. New vehicles and new pumps will be needed before biofuels become a viable alternative to oil, and understandably, automobile manufacturers and filling station owners are reluctant to pay these costs themselves.

Second, the price of oil is artificially low. When a driver fills up her tank, the price she pays for her gasoline does not reflect the cost of securing access to oil in the Middle East nor the damage done by her car's emissions as it burns the gasoline. Instead, these costs are passed on to the country and even the world as a whole in the form of air pollution, global warming, taxes to support the world's most expensive military, and deadly wars.

Oil Dependence Harms

Gasoline is made from oil, much of which the US imports from the Middle East and other unstable regions of the world. The argument here is that the US is addicted to oil, unable to function without it. Like a drug addict, the US will do anything, even commit terrible acts of violence, to get its fix.

The US is not the only country that badly wants oil, and as supplies start to run low, conflict over oil becomes more common and more destructive. Many people argue that the US supports dictatorships and goes to war in places like Iraq in order to maintain its supply of oil, and that these problems will only get worse as competition for oil increases. Unless an alternative is found, the US and other oil-addicted countries will eventually resort to nuclear war, destroying the entire planet with their thirst for oil.

Rural Economy Harms

Although poverty in American cities tends to get more attention, rural parts of the US actually have some of the highest rates of poverty. As a result of mechanization and competition from overseas, many jobs in manufacturing, mining, and agriculture have disappeared or decreased in value. Rural economies that depended on these industries have fallen on hard times.

The US agricultural sector is an important part of the US and world economies. There are very few commodities that the US exports these days, but food is one of them. This trade is mutually beneficial, helping to offset the cost of importing so many other products to the US and giving foreign exporters access to US markets. If the current trend continues, however, and US agriculture loses much of its profitability, this would have disastrous consequences for the world economy.

Plan and Solvency

The plan seeks to overcome the barriers to greater use of biofuels in transportation. First, it sets a minimum price for oil. This guarantees that gasoline will never become so cheap that nobody will buy biofuels.

Second, it provides \$500 million to pay for research and development of less expensive, more efficient biofuels than the ones that exist now.

Third, it requires car manufacturers to make every model of car they build available in a version that can run on biofuels.

Finally, it offers tax credits as an incentive for filling stations to build pumps for biofuels.

Together, these actions will make it profitable to manufacture and sell biofuels. Plenty of people would like to use biofuels but don't want to pay even more for fuel than they do now. If biofuels were cost-competitive with gasoline, a whole biofuels industry would be possible in the United States. The country would need to import much less oil than it does now. Instead of sending money overseas into the hands of dictators, that money would be spent purchasing crops and refining them into biofuels in rural parts of the US that badly need a new industry to revitalize their economies.

Biofuels Negative

The Negative argues that neither of the problems the Affirmative identifies (oil dependence and rural poverty) is nearly as bad as claimed. The Negative also identifies potentially huge drawbacks to biofuels, including a tradeoff with

farmland used to grow food and severe damage to the environment caused by agricultural runoff.

Oil Dependence Harms

There are many reasons why oil scarcity may not cause the problems predicted by the Affirmative. Fundamentally, the amount of oil in the ground is nowhere near depleted. The real limit on oil supplies is how much can be extracted at a reasonable cost.

The Negative contends that as oil grows scarcer and prices rise, war is not an inevitable result. Instead, people will conserve and use less oil in order to save money. Also, companies will invest in technology and methods that will enable them to tap new supplies of oil. The high prices provide the economic motivation needed to make these investments. Historically, there have been concerns about oil shortages before, but technology and human ingenuity have come through.

Rural Economy Harms

Here, the Negative argues that rural America is experiencing an economic turnaround and is not in the kind of trouble the Affirmative describes. Also, even if US agricultural production is no longer the economic engine it once was, that is not a significant danger to rural economies, much less to the world economy.

Solvency

The Negative has two strong turns to the Solvency, arguing that biofuels will cause more harm than good. The first has to do with global food prices. At the moment, corn is the crop most commonly used to produce biofuels, a variant called ethanol. But the US is also the world's largest exporter of corn, providing 70% of the world's supply. Many very poor people around the world depend on corn imported from the United States for their survival. If the US starts consuming more of its corn domestically in the biofuels industry, then it will export much less corn, and the corn it does export will be much more expensive. There are potentially billions of people who would die as a result of higher global prices for corn and other staple foods (all of whose prices are affected by corn), which the plan would cause.

The other turn has to do with the chemicals used to grow corn and other biofuels. By encouraging more large-scale agricultural production of such crops in the Midwest, the plan would lead to more of these chemicals running off of fields into the Mississippi River and eventually the Gulf of Mexico. These chemicals deplete the oxygen in the Gulf, causing "dead zones" where nothing can live. These dead zones destroy habitats in one of the most biodiverse regions of the world,

potentially leading to the extinction of thousands of species. Such a large-scale disruption of an important ecosystem would have unknown and potentially disastrous effects on many other species, including humans.

Cap and Trade Affirmative

Inherency

The United States is currently highly dependent on burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas for energy. In fact, we are the number one consumer of fossil fuels in the world. The supporters of the coal and oil industries in Washington D.C. have made sure that no serious action has been taken to reduce fossil fuel consumption or boost alternative energies. While there is currently some legislation in front of Congress – the Warner-Lieberman Bill – it may not pass and it is very weak legislation. Most experts believe that emissions from fossil fuels must be reduced more than the legislation requires. Further, the legislation makes it very easy for the energy industry to meet the deadlines, not really creating strong incentives for them to develop alternatives.

Global Warming Harms

The first Harms scenario concerns Global Warming. Fossil fuel consumption produces carbon dioxide (CO₂) as a byproduct. CO₂ goes up and remains in the atmosphere where it traps heat close to the earth. Thousands of scientists, using computer models as well as observing changes already occurring in nature, believe the earth is headed toward an unprecedented event of global warming. Rapid climate change will cause flooding (from melted polar ice), droughts (from the heat), and the spread of disease. These impacts will devastate food supplies and cause billions of people to be affected. Some experts believe that the survival of humanity is at stake.

Soft Power Harms

The second Harms scenario concerns the concept of American leadership. Because the United States has refused to do its part in controlling fossil fuel consumption, and we have not signed important international agreements like the Kyoto Accord, we have lost our role as a world leader. While the U.S. undoubtedly remains the #1 superpower in terms of military power, it has fallen behind in our ability to influence other nations based on being a role model. That second kind of power – to get people to do what you want based on the kind of leader you are – is often referred to as “soft power,” which is held in contrast to the “hard power” of military might. Without more soft power, America will not be able to solve

important problems, such as nuclear proliferation, terrorism and the spread of infectious disease.

Plan and Solvency

The plan has the United States set aggressive targets toward reducing fossil fuel consumption, thereby providing incentives for the development of alternative energy. The cap on fossil fuels provides incentives for alternatives. The plan uses a system called "cap and trade" which would set up the limit on the amount of fossil fuel emissions, and which would be tightened over time. The government would sell "allowances" in that amount, and companies would have to buy those allowances in order to emit fossil fuel gasses. The cost of buying these allowances would create incentives for them to develop alternative energy. These allowances can be traded from one company to another, which creates efficiency. The United States successfully used a cap-and-trade system to address the problem of acid rain a few years ago. The target goal of reducing fossil fuel emissions by 80% by the year 2050 is an important level to prevent the worst harms of rapid climate change. Once the U.S. adopts strong domestic legislation, we would increase our leadership role in this area and in other areas. Countries like China and India could be convinced to enter international climate regimes. This would boost American leadership and soft power.

Cap and Trade Negative

Inherency

It is possible for the Negative to defend the status quo in this instance. Even though the Federal Government has done virtually nothing with regard to global warming, many States, such as California, and regions, such as New England, have adopted tough energy policies promoting alternative energy. The U.S. has taken a leadership role in developing renewable energy technologies and investment in wind and solar. States have adopted Renewable Portfolio Standards that require large amounts of alternative energy usage. High oil prices have driven private investment in alternative energy, even without government leadership – the high cost of oil has made other alternatives seem profitable.

Global Warming Scenario

Many scientists dispute certain aspects of the global warming scenario. Many believe that the earth is not warming to the level projected by the alarmists. Others feel that even if the earth is warming, it is not due to human activities, but instead due to natural factors such as an increase in the amount of heat being emitted by the sun. It is also possible that humans will be able to adapt to the

change in climate, especially since the change will be very gradual and foreseen well into the future.

Much of this debate will center of the qualifications and possible bias of the scientists who are on the Negative side – they are often referred to as global warming “skeptics.” The Affirmative will claim skeptics are biased because they receive money from fossil fuel industries. The Negative can respond to this by proving their sources are backed by scientific studies, and that the Affirmative sources – mostly strong environmentalists – have exaggerated the risks of environmental crises in the past. The Negative can also point to the role the media plays in exaggerating the threat of climate change – disasters make for selling news.

The Negative can defend the resiliency of the earth. The vast diversity of species and habitats on the planet prove that earth has been resilient to large global changes. Over thousands of years the number of species has increased, and despite certain regional environmental issues, such as deforestation in the Amazon, overall the health of the earth is strong. The Negative will be able to point to many recent scientific observations that directly refute the claims by the Affirmative.

The Negative can dispute the impact of global warming as well. Many scientists believe that ocean impacts are exaggerated, that storms are not caused by warming, that diseases won’t spread more in a warmer world, and that higher temperatures may, in fact, be beneficial for global agriculture production. As the world warms, more areas will be able to grow food. As the world warms, fewer people die from the cold and cold-induced illnesses such as the flu.

Soft Power Scenario

The Negative can defend the status quo in the area of soft power. The U.S. already leads the world in terms of renewable energy development. The next U.S. President will likely improve America’s relationship with the rest of the world. And the bottom line is that hard power still matters the most in terms of getting what we want, and in that area the U.S. is unmatched.

To the extent that the U.S. has lost its “role model” image, it is not primarily due to energy policy, but instead due to our invasion of Iraq and the subsequent exposure of American torture and detention centers like in Guantanamo Bay. So the Affirmative plan of domestic energy cannot reverse the Negative perception of America in other areas.

At a more academic level, the theory of “soft power” has been called into question. Some researchers point out that there is very little proven connection between

having “soft power” and influencing the world. Others point to the fact that the stronger one country becomes in terms of influence, the more other nations tend to resist their dominance, and will actually do the opposite of what they want.

Solvency

The Negative can directly attack the solvency of the cap-and-trade system. It has been used recently in Europe without having much effect on fossil fuel combustion levels. The system can be gamed, especially by strong business interests and their ability to lobby for allowances. In the end, many easy solutions are adopted that do not really seriously reduce CO2 levels.

Finally, the Negative can argue that cap-and-trade policies hurt the poor the most. Any system that is based on ability to pay does discriminate vs. those with the least ability to pay. Companies would pass along the cost of their permits to their consumers in the form of higher energy prices. Those higher prices have the most impact on the poor.

Renewable Portfolio Standard Affirmative

Inherency

The United States Congress has tried to increase alternative energy (geothermal, solar, wind, etc) multiple times in the past few years. Since 2002, a national renewable portfolio standard has failed to gain the necessary votes to become law on three separate occasions. There have been other attempts to improve the amount of alternative energy aside from a national renewable portfolio standard, including each of the past three energy bills. There are currently 27 states that have a RPS system.

What is a Renewable Portfolio Standard?

A Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is a law requiring electricity companies to create a certain amount of energy from renewable sources. For example, imagine you are an electricity company. Many electricity companies create energy from multiple sources – such as coal, nuclear, wind, etc. If the government passed a RPS, there would be a target rate for how much energy you would have to produce from renewable sources. This is very much like a co-ed sports team that requires an equal number of boys and girls to play on a team. For a RPS, electricity companies would have to create 20% of its energy from clean sources – such as wind, solar, etc.

This is an example where the government creates a market. Without government intervention, the free market would not allocate the necessary resources to develop alternative energy.

So, why not just create a mandate for a specific amount of wind, geothermal, or solar energy? This is because each of the fifty states is different: along the coast, wind energy is a viable energy; along the great planes, solar energy is viable. A generic standard lets companies meet the renewable standard in the lowest cost and flexible way.

Competitiveness Harm

Internationally, countries compete for dominance in many different ways. Some nations try to build larger militaries; some nations try to use moral leadership; others try to become economically powerful, however, all of these are examples of international competition. The United States has fallen out of the top ranks in the area of renewable energy. Other nations, specifically France and Iceland, have moved ahead of the United States.

There are a few reasons why nations need to be competitive in the area of renewable energy. First, if other nations are able to decrease their costs compared to US companies, then the US economy may become more vulnerable. Moreover, the United States is being locked out of one of the fastest growing part of the global economy: energy credit trading.

Should the United States' economy and technology fall behind then it will be less likely to become involved in international conflicts. Perhaps other nations will overtake US military dominance because its once-powerful technological edge has evaporated. Finally, this part of the Affirmative claims a transition to a multi-polar world (where there are many powerful countries, not just the United States) would be a rocky one. Should a rival nation decide they wanted to supplant the United States as the international leader by force, there is even risk of a war involving nuclear weapons.

Environmental Justice Harm

When coal fired power plants or nuclear power plants are being sited for construction, many times they are located in communities of color. In fact, there is compelling evidence that communities of color are unfairly burdened by the pollution from energy production even when income is controlled for.

In order to combat these dirty forms of energy, a Renewable Portfolio Standard would offset the construction of new harmful energy plants in disadvantaged communities. In fact, if the RPS is successful at making renewable energy a viable

alternative to carbon based energy, then many existing “dirty” energy plants may be shut down.

The strategic advantage of this harm scenario is that the Affirmative can still claim to “solve” the advantage even the Affirmative does not “solve” the rest of their case. Regardless of the effectiveness of renewable energy, the Affirmative will still claim to confront a racist policy – which is a benefit of the plan.

Solvency

Over the past decade, renewable energy has become more competitive against carbon based fuel sources. Due to these new improvements, a government mandate would not be as economically damaging as it would have been in the past.

Renewable Portfolio Standard Negative

Basic Idea

There are prewritten answers covering all three parts (Competitiveness, Environmental Justice, Solvency) of the Affirmative case. You should not view these as the arguments you will win the debate on; they are merely to contain the Affirmative. For example, even if you win there are lots of renewable energy programs in existence, that might not disprove the Affirmative is a good idea. These arguments on case are often called *defensive* arguments – their goal is to make the Affirmative case less of a good idea, but will not be able to win the debate. You will need a combination of *offensive* (disadvantages, turns, or critiques) and *defensive* arguments to win the debate.

Competitiveness Advantage

The Negative case press against the competitiveness advantage focuses around two arguments: that the US has already lost its international supremacy, and that “soft power” is irrelevant.

The Negative will argue that other nations (specifically China) are containing US influence around the world. Their economic boom, combined with extensive military spending, is allowing China to rise past the United States in global affairs.

Many other nations in the world no longer look to the United States for leadership because of its foreign policy over the past few years. The war in Iraq was seen as an affront to the international community and subsequently undermined US moral authority.

Next, the Negative can argue that “soft balancing theory” – or the idea that nations will push back at the United States if the US is seen unfavorable – is historically inaccurate. There is evidence provided in the core files that indicates the theory that nations are influenced by the opinions of other nations.

Environmental Justice

The Negative can try to contain this advantage by stating that even if the Affirmative solves for all the harm related to energy, it is a very small part of overall environmental injustice. Other harms, such as pesticides and air toxins would remain even if the Affirmative would be completely successful. Moreover, even if the Affirmative remedies some environmental racism, it does not do anything to the racist policy makers who try to create environmental injustice. Therefore, these environmentally racist policies will not create equality; they will just force policy makers to pass other unjust laws.

Nuclear Power Affirmative

Nuclear power draws on the same science that makes nuclear weapons possible. There is tremendous energy stored within the atoms of certain elements. When the nuclei of these atoms are split, in a process called fission, this energy is released. Whereas a nuclear weapon harnesses that energy for destruction, a nuclear power plant uses it to generate electricity.

The raw material from which nuclear energy is taken is an element called uranium. Although uranium does not produce greenhouse gases or other harmful emissions, processed uranium is highly radioactive and extremely dangerous.

Inherency

Technically, even though nuclear power plants are owned and operated by private companies, the federal government is supposed to be responsible for the storage and disposal of nuclear waste. The federal government’s current plan is to store all waste in an underground facility at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. However, concerns about the safety of this facility have delayed its construction for years and show no sign of letting up soon. Thus, power plants must currently store their waste on-site at their own expense. Not only is this dangerous, it also discourages anyone from investing in the construction of new nuclear plants. Investors do not want to get stuck with the liability for this nuclear waste, so they steer clear of the industry and no new nuclear plants get built.

Biodiversity Harms

Demand for electricity in the US is high and growing. Currently, most of that demand is met by power plants that burn coal to produce electricity. The most well-publicized drawback of coal in recent years has been global warming. Although that could easily be argued as a Harm for this case, the argument in the 1AC is different. In addition to greenhouse gases, burning coal also releases sulfur, nitrogen, mercury, and other chemicals into the air. These particles cause asthma and other respiratory illness in humans and acid rain that destroys plant life.

Acid rain and other consequences of air pollution have the potential to destroy the forests that support human life by releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. Thus, continuing to burn coal for electricity carries the danger of human extinction.

Nuclear Terrorism Harms

Nuclear power plants are not designed to be nuclear waste storage facilities, but that is what they have become as a result of the federal government's inaction. Spent nuclear fuel emerges from the plant in the form of extremely hot and radioactive rods. These rods are stored in large holding tanks cooled by water. As more and more waste is produced, the holding tanks are filled beyond capacity. Although the tanks are supposedly built to withstand a terrorist attack, this overfilling greatly increases the danger of a rupture that would release large amounts of radiation of the tank were sabotaged or hit with a hijacked jet.

Plan and Solvency

Although Yucca Mountain is not yet ready to store nuclear waste, the federal government needs to take charge of the waste and store it in interim facilities until a long-term solution is found. Not only would this be safer than the over-capacity on-site storage used now, but it would also create an incentive for the construction of more nuclear power plants. Once investors knew that they would not be responsible for the waste, they would be willing to put up the money to build new plants. This would mean fewer coal-fired plants and less air pollution and acid rain to destroy the world's forests.

Nuclear Power Negative

The Negative's case arguments are largely defensive, meaning that they need to be combined with an offensive off-case argument such as a disadvantage. The Negative argues that neither air pollution from coal-fired power plants nor the danger of nuclear terrorism is as serious as the Affirmative makes it out to be. They also argue that nuclear power will not be able to replace coal in a substantial

way and that interim storage may actually increase the risk of nuclear terrorism or an accidental spill.

Biodiversity Harms

The Negative's central argument here is that coal plants are getting cleaner. New technology makes it possible to reduce emissions and capture the toxic particles before they are released into the air. Thus, future coal plants may not cause the Harms of the Affirmative, in which case there would be less need for nuclear power.

Terrorism Harms

The Negative argues both that terrorists are unlikely to attack a nuclear facility and that even if they did, the storage tanks would not be ruptured. What this means is that there would be very little damage caused by the Affirmative's impact scenario. Although it would still be bad if terrorists were to crash a jet into a nuclear waste storage tank, if no radiation were released as a result, it would not be a catastrophe.

Solvency

There are other barriers to the construction of nuclear plants besides the issue of waste. Rightly or wrongly, many people fear nuclear power and do not want a plant in their community. This makes it extremely difficult to get approval to build a new plant.

Also, unlike other forms of alternative energy, nuclear power is not renewable. There is a limited supply of uranium, and some argue that there is not enough to warrant increased reliance on nuclear power. The US may end up facing the same trouble in another hundred years or so, needing to find a new source of power because it has become dependent on foreign uranium.

The more offensive arguments contend that the plan would actually increase the danger of nuclear terrorism. One big advantage of storing waste on-site is that there is no need to transport it. Moving waste by train to an interim storage facility increases the risk of an accidental or deliberate derailment. Waste could also be spilled or stolen during loading and unloading.

Finally, if the US expands its nuclear power capacity, other countries will likely do so as well. This means there will be more nuclear expertise and more nuclear fuel in circulation, which greatly increases the risk that these two ingredients will fall into the hands of terrorists or other unfriendly powers.

Russian Economy Disadvantage

There are a lot of obvious benefits to finding a reliable, renewable alternative to oil. But there are disadvantages as well, especially for countries whose economies rely heavily on the export of oil, which is a *huge* business. The argument here is that developing an alternative would cause US demand for oil imports to drop sharply and global oil prices to plummet along with them. This would be very bad news for Russia, one of the world's largest exporters of oil. If its economy collapsed, there would be chaos and civil war in Russia, with a significant danger of some unpredictable faction getting its hands on some of the thousands of nuclear weapons still in the country.

Uniqueness

Russia's economy is booming right now because oil prices are at record highs. Even the government currently in power owes a lot of its success to oil: the incoming prime minister, Dmitry Medvedev, is a Russian oil tycoon.

Link

The global energy market is highly fluid, meaning that whatever happens in one country or to one form of energy affects every other energy commodity in every other country in the world. Thus, if the US government takes any action to discourage consumption of oil (such as capping greenhouse gas emissions) or to develop a large-scale alternative to oil (such as biofuels), this would reduce demand for oil worldwide. The US is one of the world's largest consumers of oil, so if it suddenly started consuming less, oil would not be as scarce, other countries would not have to pay as much to import it, and Russia would make a lot less money from exporting it.

Because Russia's economy is so heavily dependent on oil, a dramatic dip in oil prices could cause an economic decline very quickly. This would create instability for the entire country and its government and risk a civil war.

Impact

Russia inherited thousands of nuclear weapons following the demise of the Soviet Union. Though problematic for many reasons, Russia's current government has demonstrated little desire to use or threaten to use these weapons. It is a relatively predictable government with an interest in integrating with the international community and being recognized as a responsible superpower.

The same may not be true of the many small and radical factions that exist within Russia. Should there be a civil war or other governmental crisis, much more dangerous and unpredictable agents may get their hands on nuclear weapons, creating an international crisis and potentially even a global nuclear war.

Russian Economy Disadvantage Affirmative Answers

The Affirmative's strategy here is turn the disadvantage links at several levels, arguing that Russia's economy is not doing so well right now in part because of high oil prices and that in fact these high prices might be contributing to, rather than preventing, violence from Russia.

As with any link turn, the Affirmative must win non-uniqueness. That is, they must prove that the Negative is wrong and the Russian economy is not doing well now. Only then can they claim that the plan will actually improve matters.

The Affirmative can argue that high oil prices have actually overheated Russia's economy. In other words, the energy sector is doing so well that it is causing problems in other parts of the economy. For one thing, those who have oil money can afford to pay high prices for other products. This drives up the prices of food, housing, and other staples for those who do not have access to oil money.

Another issue is that oil revenues allow Russia's government to ignore other problems in the economy. Ordinarily, problems like corruption and inflation disrupt the economy and the government must reform to correct them. However, there is so much money coming in from oil that the government has ignored these other problems. So they persist, continuing to eat away at Russia's economy from the inside out, like termites. One day, the whole thing will collapse, and there will be much worse problems than there would be if the government were forced, by lower oil prices, to address corruption and inflation now.

Finally, the Affirmative argues that high oil prices actually encourage Russian aggression. When Russia makes a lot of money from oil, it has the world wrapped around its finger. Even powerful countries like the US cannot afford to lose access to that oil. Also, Russia has less concern for maintaining good trade relations in other sectors, because it makes so much money from oil. Thus, there are fewer checks on aggression, and the government can threaten its local rivals with impunity.

This is what is going on now with the neighboring country of Georgia. Russia uses its energy dominance as a weapon to threaten other countries in Eastern Europe. Lately, tensions with Georgia have been high. Both countries have accused the other of crossing borders illegally and posturing militarily. Because the US and

Georgia are allies, if fighting does break out between Russian and Georgia, the US might have to get involved in a situation that could escalate into nuclear war.

If the plan really does lower oil prices, this could lead to reform of Russia's economy and prevent conflict with Georgia by discouraging Russia from acting so aggressively. Oil revenues would not provide Russia with a shield that enables it to ignore other economic troubles and threaten its neighbors. Thus, the plan might actually prevent nuclear war rather than cause it.

Coal Disadvantage

The US has vast reserves of coal, concentrated largely in the Appalachian mountain regions of West Virginia, Kentucky, and other nearby states. Coal-burning power plants generate most of the electricity used in the United States, and the US also exports coal to other countries around the world.

Coal is found largely in remote, rural parts of the US. Mining companies pay high wages to people willing to live in these isolated areas and endure the dangerous, demanding work necessary to extract coal from the ground. This is all well and good when the coal business is booming: largely unskilled laborers make good money that supports themselves, their families, and the few businesses in town that open to serve miners.

But when the coal industry is not doing well and coal prices are low, mining companies close down shop. They stop opening new mines and they extract less coal from existing ones. Many miners find themselves out of work. Because they live in isolated communities without other industries, they cannot find new employment, certainly not at wages anywhere near what they make mining coal. Thus, a downturn in the coal industry quickly plunges entire mining communities into poverty and unemployment.

This disadvantage argues that the plan will cause such a downturn. By discouraging the use of fossil fuels, which the cap-and-trade and RPS plans do, or encouraging alternative means of generating electricity, such as with nuclear power, the plan decreases demand for coal and consequently the profitability of the coal industry. This leads to layoffs and unemployment, which drives many Appalachian towns into poverty.

Uniqueness

Right now, the US coal industry is booming. The high price of oil, declines in production at mines in other countries, and a demand for coal in growing

economies such as China are leading to high prices, profitable businesses, and more jobs.

Links

The profitability of the US coal industry is closely tied to the consumption of coal by US electric utilities. If the US starts burning less coal to produce electricity, either because of an alternative source such as nuclear power or because of government regulations that discourage the use of fossil fuels, this will hurt the US coal industry and its employees.

Because many towns in Appalachia are built around the mining industry, this would plunge the entire community into poverty. The miners and their families would not have money to purchase goods and services from any other business, so the entire local economy would collapse at once.

Impact

It is obvious that poverty is bad. However, the Negative must win not only that it is bad but that it is worse than the big impacts, like war, that the Affirmative case will claim to solve. The Gilman evidence claims that poverty actually is the greater threat. For one thing, it affects more people than war. For another, it is a certainty. Whereas the Affirmative's elaborate scenarios for war represent only a series of risks, poverty is a certain and ongoing problem. To ignore poverty in favor of some unlikely war is also an act of violence.

Coal Disadvantage Affirmative Answers

The Affirmative argues that coal mining has already devastated Appalachian communities and caused widespread poverty. The plan would actually help to solve rural poverty by decreasing mining.

Even at a time when the coal industry is doing well, Appalachia has some of the highest rates of poverty in the country. This is because previous boom-and-bust cycles in the coal industry have left miners out of work and in debt.

Although the jobs pay well, mining does a lot of damage to the local economy. It is dangerous work, and if a miner is injured or killed on the job, his family will quickly run into trouble.

Modern mining techniques require much less human labor than the industry needed in the past. This means that even demand is high, machines are doing much of the work, and fewer jobs are created.

These same mining techniques destroy forests and other habitats, and the rubble and waste from the mines pollutes rivers and lakes. This causes health problems in mining communities and destroys the beautiful natural environment that would otherwise attract a booming tourism industry.

The environmental damage from mining is also bad for biodiversity, the loss of which will do untold damage to the Earth's ecosystem and possibly even to human survival.

CO2 Good Disadvantage

Just as oxygen is the breath of life for humans and other animals, carbon dioxide (CO2) is a necessary intake for all plants. Ask any person who works in a greenhouse and grows plants for a living and they will tell you that an atmosphere rich in CO2 makes their plants grow faster and larger.

This positive role for CO2 can occur for the entire planet. The higher level of CO2 in the atmosphere can increase the amount of food we grow in the world, since wheat, corn, rice etc. are the key crops for feeding people. Higher CO2 levels might also strengthen forests, which are important, and under assault because of development pressures.

This disadvantage claims that Affirmative plans will reduce this beneficial effect of CO2 on food and forestry. One effect common to plans to increase alternative energy is that they will slow the growth of fossil fuel burning, and therefore the emission of CO2 into the atmosphere.

Uniqueness

Currently the level of CO2 in the atmosphere is increasing due to the burning of fossil fuels. This increase will more than double the amount of CO2 over time. This higher level is needed to increase the amount of food that the world's growing population will need in the coming decades. The Negative should argue that this doubling is necessary, and that slowing the rate of growth of CO2 will not cause enough increase in food production.

Links

In general, any plan that increases alternative energy will have to decrease fossil fuel consumption, and therefore reduce the growth of CO2 in the air. The Negative should add to their link argument by discussing the role the specific plan plays on CO2.

Some plans, like cap-and-trade, will obviously link to this DA, since the entire point of the plan is to reduce CO2 production. Any Affirmative that claims a "Global Warming" advantage will link, almost by definition. The same holds true for the Renewable Portfolio Standards Affirmative.

The nuclear energy Affirmative links because it reduces the amount of coal that is burned for electricity. The Negative can boost their link argument by proving that coal is the primary source for electricity now, and that burning coal emits massive amounts of CO2. The focus here is on the electricity sector, as that is what nuclear energy replaces. The Affirmative might argue that building nuclear plants would emit some CO2, but that effect is just short term, and CO2 is emitted when you build a new coal plant, too.

The biofuels Affirmative links because it uses products like corn and grass to replace oil when it is burned for gasoline and other fuels. Oil has a higher CO2 component when it is burned. There is evidence from supporters of biofuels who will claim that using more of them will help solve the global climate problem, and this will link to the CO2 Good DA.

As a final link booster you can argue that the Affirmative plans will stimulate more investment in other alternative energies, and technological improvements in the current alternatives – so they will reduce CO2 even more than they do now.

Agriculture Link

The evidence from the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change cites the need for more food in the future decades. We know as a civilization that population will continue to grow by billions of people and we are going to have a very difficult time finding food for all of them. The evidence points out that CO2 will increase world food production by 15%, which would provide the crucial margin necessary to feed these new people. This beneficial effect by CO2 is often called the "fertilization effect."

The evidence concludes with analysis from a very qualified source at Michigan State saying that the future increase in CO2 is the one way the earth can compensate for the need for higher levels of agriculture.

Impact

There is little doubt that hundreds of millions of people, perhaps billions, will be severely short of food in the future. The world faces a crisis of starvation. The Robinson evidence documents the existence of these people and points out that

without improvements in their future they will slip from the status of “just getting by” to possibly death.

The Idso evidence compares the impact of the DA to the impact of the Affirmative case that claims a Global Warming Scenario. The Idso’s point out that while Global Warming still just remains as a disputed scenario – maybe it will happen, maybe it won’t; maybe it is caused by humans, maybe it isn’t; maybe the earth will adapt, maybe it won’t – the scenario of massive starvation is virtually certain. That means the risk likes in restricting CO₂, since it impacts on the scenario that is more certain to occur.

CO₂ Good Disadvantage Answers

The Affirmative strategy against this DA is built around attacking across all parts of the argument. First, there is a gigantic increase of CO₂ already built into the system – it’s not that the Affirmative plan can actually decrease CO₂; it only slows the growth rate. There will be enough CO₂ in the atmosphere to boost food production. There is plenty of science that shows the benefits of CO₂ on food production are controversial and likely exaggerated. In a world wracked by the effects of global warming – storms, droughts etc. – the beneficial effects on crop production that we see in the ideal environments of greenhouses, will not be seen in the real world. And what positive effects we might see would only be temporary. CO₂ levels would also encourage weeds that would disrupt food supplies.

Finally, some Affirmatives can claim to not link to this disadvantage as long as they do not claim advantages related to CO₂ production. For example, there is ample evidence saying the biofuels do not really decrease CO₂ emissions, and due to the need to raise and process the crops, may actually increase CO₂. The same arguments can be made in terms of the nuclear energy industry.

Business Confidence Disadvantage

Basic Idea

People need to have confidence in the economy if they are going to invest. When the economy slows down, people tend to save more. Businesses act the same way. If there is a sharp downturn in the economy, or businesses *think* there will be rough economic times ahead, they will most likely invest less, spend less, and hire fewer workers.

Link

The generic link is centered on the Affirmative disrupting business practices. Firms will plan their expenditures months in advance. The Affirmative, which would be the first major regulation in the past few years, would spook investors away from investing in the market. If the government were to suddenly start regulating electricity companies, what else might they decide to regulate? This creates a chilling effect on the economy and results in an overall economic slowdown.

There are other links included in the file. Each of the four core file Affirmatives could potentially harm the US economy. For example, each of them would increase the cost of energy – a central engine of economic growth. You should become familiar with each of the separate link arguments; an advanced debater might elect to run these arguments on the case to turn economics-based advantages.

Impact

People and nations take desperate measures to secure their economic position in the world. During times of economic duress it is easy to scapegoat parts of the world for hard times. It is also easy to throw support behind radical social groups that promise an escape from hard times. The evidence provided in the disadvantage outlines an apocalyptic scenario where nations fight for scarce resources due to a severe economic decline.

Business Confidence Disadvantage Affirmative Answers

Basic Idea

The strategy prescribed in the core files is a “link turn” strategy. This involves proving the Affirmative will *prevent* instead of *cause* whatever bad thing their opponents predict.

A link turn strategy requires the Affirmative to win two arguments: uniqueness and link. To win the debate about uniqueness, the Affirmative will have to prove the economy is slowing down now and the US is headed to a recession. Next, the Affirmative will have to prove they can jumpstart the economy to avoid that looming economic downturn.

Uniqueness

The Affirmative has two basic claims why the economy is crashing now. First, there is rising oil prices, and second, falling stock prices. If you have been watching the news or reading a newspaper, you’ve noticed concern about the economy due to unemployment, inflation, and other economic indicators. The

Affirmative will use these poor economic forecasts as proof that a recession is coming now.

Link

Most Affirmatives on this topic will be able to claim an economics advantage in the first Affirmative constructive. The rising cost of energy from oil and coal is severely undermining the economy. The Affirmative can claim their plan creates an alternative to oil and hopefully drive down the price of energy. This is because the current spike in oil prices is due to there being more *demand* than *supply*. By mandating more alternative energy, it helps increase the supply of cheap energy.

You may be asking yourself, but isn't this a long-term solution? The Renewable Portfolio Standard Affirmative won't reach full potential for another 12 years. It would take awhile for all cars to become biodiesel based, and nuclear power plants don't just spring up overnight.

This is where the debaters must prove their mettle. Both arguments are (probably) true. What is *more important* for the economy is where the debate occurs. Ask yourself: Why would it be more important to provide a long term solution, even if that long term solution might do some immediate harm?

The answer you come up with might win you the debate.

Carbon Tax Counterplan

This Counterplan enables the Negative to solve the Affirmative advantages by using a different and superior policy mechanism than the Affirmative plan. That alternative mechanism is called a "Carbon Tax." A Carbon Tax policy sets up a penalty for burning fossil fuels such as coal and oil. For example, there would be a higher tax paid by people who used gasoline in their car or lawn mowers. There would be a higher tax paid on energy when an industry uses it to fuel their machinery.

Text

Affirmative plans such as RPS and Cap-and-Trade, as well as other plans that set targets, mandate certain numerical goals be achieved. For example, the Cap-and-Trade Affirmative plan mandates that we achieve an 80% reduction in CO2 levels. The way the Counterplan would work would be that the tax would be set high enough that it would achieve the same amount of reduction – in this example, 80%.

Non-Topicality

This Counterplan is definitely topical. The Negative will have to argue that topical Counterplans are OK. If the role of the judge is to find the best policy option in the debate, then if the Negative team comes up with the best policy, they should win the debate. The Negative argues that the role of the debate is to test the specific example of the resolution that the Affirmative proposes. The Negative does not have to defeat the entire resolution, only the Affirmative's example. Most of the real world policy debates in the alternative energy area occur around what is the best way to achieve incentives, not whether or not we should have them. The "cap-and-trade vs. carbon tax" debate is literally at the very center of the real world debate.

Competition

The Counterplan solves the Affirmative advantage but does so in a superior way. Carbon taxes are more effective, cheaper, predictable, and less vulnerable to corruption. In a stand-alone comparison with cap-and-trade it is difficult to come up with any reasons not to choose the tax.

The toughest issue for the Negative on competition is whether it might be best to "do both" the plan and the Counterplan. If the Affirmative can win that the best world would be to do them both, then the Counterplan has not provided a reason to reject the Affirmative, and the Negative should lose. That's why the Negative strategy should focus on "net benefits" for why it would be best to do just the COUNTERPLAN alone, not along with the Affirmative. Adding the Affirmative into the mix would only worsen the situation.

The "net benefits" that best get at that are economic based, like Business Confidence or U.S. Competitiveness. The Counterplan alone boosts the economy and adding the cap-and-trade in there would only worsen the economy.

Solvency

There is much evidence from economists that describe how the Counterplan is a superior solvency mechanism than quantity targets, for a wide variety of reasons. A tax can be set to change behavior much better than a set of rules that people try to circumvent all the time. It would be easy to offset the higher tax burden on people by giving them tax cuts in other areas (income, social security, property) so that the overall effect of the Counterplan is "revenue neutral."

Carbon Tax Counterplan Affirmative Answers

The best Affirmative answer to the Counterplan is to argue that the best policy in the real world would be to do both the plan and the Counterplan, so the Counterplan is not competitive with the Affirmative plan. If you set quantity targets to achieve certainty, but also used taxes as a mechanism to achieve them, then you would gain the best of both worlds.

Also, you can attack the Counterplan on a theoretical level, since it is topical. The Negative has the responsibility to refute the resolution they cannot choose to agree with it. The function of the resolution is to constrain both the Affirmative and Negative by dividing ground. The Affirmative cannot encroach on the Negative side so the Negative should not be able to encroach on the Affirmative side. There is plenty of ground for the Negative without using topical Counterplans. This concern of fairness is more important than the search for the best policy, as it is a prior consideration.

Another line of attack on the Counterplan is to say that quantity targets are more certain than taxes. If you set a quota of an 80% reduction, you know you are going to get an 80% reduction. The Counterplan has to guess at what tax level would generate an 80% level of savings, and it might only achieve 60%, for example. Economic circumstances may change after the tax level is set.

Corruption is another reason to prefer the plan, because the overall target is still maintained. As we have seen with the tax code, special interests get their tax breaks written into the law. So once the tax policy has been written, more and more exemptions will be written into it, leading to ineffectiveness.

Carbon taxes will not stimulate alternative energy production as much as cap-and-trade policies unless they use the tax revenues to subsidize alternatives, the way the Affirmative plan does with the revenue it raises by selling allowances. The Counterplan adopts offsetting tax cuts and does not require the revenue be spent on alternative energy.

States Counterplan

Basic Idea

There are many different ways to reduce energy consumption. As you have already noticed, there are four different Affirmatives in the core files that can all claim similar harms. The idea of a Counterplan is to propose a different solution that can "solve" – or remedy- the Affirmative's harms.

Imagine you and a friend are discussing your class schedule. Your friend proposes that you take a history class because the teacher will help you with your writing. You offer a *Counterplan* to take a writing class because it will help you with your writing as well.

Now, the basic question is: Why not do both? If you want to improve your writing, perhaps you can take both a history class and a writing class. This question is the central idea of *competition*. A Counterplan must force choice; it must pose a reason *not* to do the Affirmative.

There are two ways a Counterplan can compete: either we cannot do both at the same time, or we should not do both at the same time. In the example of your class schedule, perhaps the two classes are offered at the same time. This would be an example of a *mutually exclusive* Counterplan – a Counterplan that cannot be implemented at the same time as the plan.

What if the classes were offered at different times of the day? Then you would have to prove there is a reason not to take both classes at the same time. There are many reasons why you could opt not to take the history class. The history teacher could be hard grader, perhaps the history class conflicts with your lunchtime, both of these are reasons why you should *only* take the writing class.

Notice that “your friends are in the writing class” is not a reason listed. Why is that? This is because if you were to do both the plan (history) and the Counterplan (writing), you would receive the benefit of being with your friends in the writing class. Any reason why the writing class is a good idea would not be a reason to reject the history class.

The fifty states have the ability to implement new energy regulations. Many states already give money to alternative energy, and many have renewable energy standards. The Negative presents the Counterplan by reading a text (included in the 1NC Shells), and presenting reasons why the Counterplan will force choice with the Affirmative.

For instance, you could introduce a Counterplan against the Cap and Trade Affirmative by reading the 1NC state Counterplan shell. In this debate, the *central* argument would be about if the federal government was necessary for the plan. The Affirmative would claim the federal government was important for solvency, while the Negative would try to prove that the states are a sufficient replacement for the federal government.

Important Questions

You might ask yourself if it is fair for the Negative to get rid of a Counterplan during the debate. Under what conditions can they “kick” the Counterplan? Does the Affirmative have any say in the process? Is there a limit to what the Negative can Counterplan? It would be very hard for the Affirmative to win if the Negative could Counterplan to just “fiat” that everyone becomes an environmentalist. These are important considerations you should think about before running the Counterplan.

Final Words of Advice

The Counterplan is about testing a part of the plan, not the entire plan. For instance, you may want to argue that a Cap and Trade system would harm the economy, but unless you can prove this is because of the federal government passing the plan, then it would also apply to the Counterplan as well.

In the last speech, you should try to only extend arguments that are consistent with the Counterplan. For example, let's say you extended an Economy disadvantage (Cap and Trade harms the US economy) and extended your 50 state Counterplan. The Affirmative could very easily win this debate by saying the Counterplan *no longer forces choice* because the disadvantage would apply to both the Counterplan and the plan.

States Counterplan Affirmative Answers

Basic Idea:

Counterplans are very dangerous arguments for the Affirmative. They have the possibility of taking away almost everything you said in the 1AC. Many Affirmatives are very good ideas when compared to the status quo, but are less of a good idea when compared to alternative policy options.

Affirmatives must be able to recognize what part of the plan the Counterplan leaves out. It would not make much sense for the Negative to read the *entire* Affirmative plan because they would be agreeing with the Affirmative! So, the job of the Affirmative team is to figure out the following: What did the Negative change (about the plan), and why is that important to the success of the Affirmative?

The Fifty States

The state Counterplan changes the Affirmative by removing the federal government. This Counterplan is designed to test why the “federal government” is in the resolution. If the Affirmative can prove there is an important reason why the

United States Federal Government is essential to the plan, they will most likely win the debate.

Sometimes only a few advantages survive the Counterplan. One typical advantage that is not (usually) solved by the fifty state Counterplan is the international soft power advantage. The logic is as follows: the United States will not be able to improve its image abroad if the states are implementing a policy because it will highlight the lack of action at the federal level. Federal policy makers are the ones that will be talking to foreign dignitaries during negotiations, not the governors of the fifty states. Therefore, the US will not be able to gain the international reputation boost if the fifty states implement the plan.

Other advantages may not survive the Counterplan. For example, any advantage that is based on the *successful* implementation of the plan – or solvency – will most likely be solved by the Counterplan. One advantage in the core files that might meet this description is the global warming advantage. Unless there is a technological reason, or other solvency argument, the Counterplan should “solve” these advantages.

Affirmative Strategy

It is important to realistically sum up what the Counterplan can and cannot solve. If you stand up for your speech and claim the Counterplan cannot solve any of the Affirmative – but the judge thinks it solves most of your Affirmative – then you will lose ethos in the debate.

The Affirmative team should put up a fight on all parts of the Affirmative, but in the end will want to narrow the debate down to the few advantages the Counterplan will not solve. The next step is to say why these advantages are more important than the Negative disadvantage. This may set up an entire speech of why Soft Power is more important than the economy or US style federalism. The most important part of this is to realistically talk to your partner and figure out what the Counterplan can and cannot solve.

Environmental Justice Critique

Energy and environmental policies have a profound impact on communities and neighborhoods. For example, a nuclear power plant sited in your community will seriously threaten you. The same thing occurs with a plant that processes biofuels. At a broader level, any public policy that relies on “incentives” is bound to discriminate against people with less money, as they will be easier to manipulate when the policy is all about wealth.

For example, a regulation that says no one can smoke in a certain place affects equally the rich and poor who are there. If instead the policy sets up an incentive system that makes people pay to smoke, then rich people have the money to pay the tax, and therefore can do what they want. So “incentive” systems, because they use the market, will inevitably be biased against people of color, who tend to live in poorer communities.

Thesis

Energy policies that harm communities of color in this way amount to environmental racism. As the Robinson evidence says, the victims of environmental racism in America live in more environmentally hazardous conditions, such as near waste sites or dangerous power plants. As a result they suffer with shorter life spans, greater death rates, poor health in general, poverty, diminished housing, and reduced economic opportunities.

Link

Market based solutions – incentives – encourage pollution in low-income communities. As the Johnson evidence points out, market based solutions will create environmental injustices by encouraging polluters to move to low-income communities. Wealthy communities are more able to pay for clean air and water compared to low-income communities. Poorer areas, in great need of jobs, may be more likely to accept the nearby siting of hazardous plants for the economic benefits. Nuclear and biofuel plants would be placed in low-income areas, and they represent health threats.

Implications

The failure to adopt an environmental justice perspective will lead to human extinction. As long as we keep prioritizing wealth as a way to make policy, instead of looking out for vulnerable communities, we will be following a path that eventually will lead to highly reckless policies. As the Stephens evidence points out because of the huge global issues at stake regarding energy, environmental health and human survival, we will ultimately risk human survival.

Alternative

According to this alternative, individual citizens must criticize government policies that will harm communities of color. As the Lohmann evidence says “such ideas need to be evaluated by people who have experienced the commodification of land, water and air”. This “de-centering” of the policy away strictly from institutions, is crucial if we are going to break out of the environmental injustice

paradigm that threatens all life. So in other words, the role of the Negative debaters is to bring forward the ways in which the Affirmative policy will create policies of environmental racism. If the judge finds those arguments compelling they must reject the current market-based paradigm and vote Negative.

Environmental Justice Critique Affirmative Answers

The main Affirmative argument is that their case identifies impacts that fall disproportionately on the communities the Negative is trying to protect. Climate change, for instance, imposes the heaviest burdens on those communities most unable to adapt to survive. For example, Hurricane Katrina hit poor communities (disproportionately people of color) much more seriously than the affluent. Rich people had an easier time leaving the city prior to the storm, and had an easier time recovering afterward. So the Affirmative can align itself with the criticism by adopting this “de-centered” criticism of current energy policy.

Second, the Affirmative can point to a solvency deficit that occurs with the critique alternative in terms of solving the Affirmative advantage. For example, how does the critique alternative of de-centering solve nuclear proliferation? It may solve the problem identified in its impact evidence – the harms to minority communities – but it fails to address the advantages of the Affirmative’s plan. Combine this with an argument that the case advantage is bigger, or more likely to occur, than the critique impact.

Another argument is that the alternative does not solve the critique impact fully. Just changing the way we analyze this one environmental policy won’t reverse the damage done by global capitalism. It just isn’t enough change. Millions of people have written books, articles, blog posts, etc. critiquing capitalism, so what effect would there be to adding one more voice? And one instance of failing to do the critique alternative will not derail the environmental justice movement.

Finally, the Affirmative can defend the permutation of acting (adopting the Affirmative plan) while also challenging our current paradigm. The Light evidence points out that we need to be pragmatic on gigantic issues of the day. There is great urgency to act on these problems, such as global climate, and we can interrogate the situation along the way. But we should not delay adoption of action while we wait for the formation of a brand new paradigm.

Finally one could use the Bean evidence to prove that the theory of environmental justice explains the situation backwards. It is not the case, according to this argument, that poorer communities are more vulnerable to the Negative effects of market-based energy policy, rather, if anything, those communities take advantage of those policies as a way to improve their economic circumstances.

Social Ecology Critique

Thesis

The thesis of a social ecology critique is that we need to relate to the environment in a different way. There are many different ways to relate to the environment – some people think that we should see people as equal with animals; some think that people have a moral responsibility to protect the environment at all costs while others believe people should let markets value the environment. Social Ecology is an offshoot of communism that specifically focuses on the way markets value the natural world. To adopt a social ecological view of the environment, people should not view a tree as a resource to make shelter or paper, but an integral part of our existence.

Link

Most Affirmatives will claim the market – though incentives – will be able to alleviate environmental problems. This is the same as saying we only need to make it more expensive to pollute. When the Affirmative “greens up” capitalism, it makes capitalism seem more benign and it covers up the worst excesses of capitalism.

Impact

Capitalism results in environmental destruction because people do not consider the Negative environmental effects from development. For example, during the industrial revolution, the smog from factories began to harm people’s lungs. In an attempt to make factories more environmentally friendly, companies built larger smoke stacks to avoid harming people’s lungs. The result: acid rain.

This is one example why we need to consider the environment in a holistic way, and not make small, market-based, reforms.

Alternative

Social Ecologists think we need to resist all hierarchy, not only environmental destruction. In order to begin breaking down the belief that people are superior to the environment, social ecologists want to withdraw from capitalism and form small communities that have an *ethical* relationship with the environment, not merely a market based one.

Social Ecology Critique Affirmative Answers

To correctly answer a critique, the Affirmative should attempt to attack the argument on all three levels: links, impact, and alternative. If the Affirmative gives up too early against any of those three, then it becomes very difficult to win the debate.

Permutation

The first (and arguably, most important) argument is a Permutation. The Negative has introduced a separate worldview into the debate, called an alternative. The Affirmative will test if it is possible to do both the alternative (social ecology) and the Affirmative (energy policy).

Think of this in terms of a real world example. If you and a friend wanted to go to two separate events tonight, and could not feasibly do both, then those actions would be *mutually exclusive* of each other. But if you could first go to your friend's event, then to yours, then you could *do both* without giving anything up.

A permutation acts to test if the critique is still a reason to reject the Affirmative if the Affirmative combines itself with the new world view, the alternative. The evidence provided indicates that resource management, which the Affirmative addresses by promoting alternative energy, is a central concern of social ecology.

The Affirmative is also provided with a defense of capitalism and development as a form of protecting the environment. The evidence in the core files argues that primitive societies were worse to the environment than modern societies. We can all look back and see the industrial revolution probably was bad for the planet, but because of modernization, we have developed more environmentally friendly technology.

The Affirmative can also claim that radical environmental theories have traditionally led to disastrous consequences. When people start to value the environment above the lives of other humans, it allows us to justify sacrificing people in order to save the planet.

Extra-Topicality Violation

Basic Idea

The Affirmative is constrained to *only* the arguments provided within the resolution. Think of the resolution in terms of a scale where both sides should have equal merit. When the framers of the resolution sit down to decide the topic,

they try to balance the scale so both teams will have an equal opportunity to win any given debate.

If the Affirmative is allowed to add more arguments to their side of the scale, however, the Affirmative misbalances the scale. Think of this in your everyday lives. If your teacher asked you to write a report on why house cats are cooler than dogs, but you decided to write about why *cheetahs* are better than dogs, you have obviously strayed a little from the intended topic. You have proven why a particular type of cat is good, but not the intended ones (cheetahs vs. schnauzers is not exactly a fair fight).

The Violation

Sometimes the Affirmative will create an incentive to do more than just develop alternative energy. Let's use the cap and trade Affirmative as an example. If you are a steel company, there is not much you can do to increase alternative energy production. One possible option, however, is to become more *efficient* using energy. Let's say you can replace a steel press for a more energy efficient one. This would let you decrease your carbon footprint, while not increasing alternative energy.

Why is this bad?

If the Affirmative is allowed to claim advantages (like the cheetah) outside of the intended resolution, then it makes debate very hard on the Negative. Imagine if the Affirmative could claim advantages on *efficiency*. Perhaps now they could run an Affirmative about riding bikes or an Affirmative about upgrading existing power lines. We can expand that analysis and say why it becomes almost limitless the possible combinations of ideas within the resolution and outside the resolution the Negative would have to prepare for.

Extra-Topicality Affirmative Answers

The Affirmative has three ways to attack a topicality violation. First, they can claim they do not violate the topic as outlined by the Negative. Second, the Affirmative can present a different view (or interpretation) of the topic. Finally, they can argue that even if they violate the Negative's topic, it is not so bad they should lose. Usually Affirmative argues all three of these at once to force the Negative to defend all parts of their argument.

Topicality is especially dangerous for the Affirmative team because even if they win every other argument in the debate, if they are proven non-topical, the Affirmative will lose the debate.

One of the best arguments for the Affirmative is that conservation is considered a type of alternative energy. Under this argument, the Affirmative just has to move away from traditional fossil-fuel energy to be topical. The Negative, in all reality, will have the same arguments if the Affirmative promotes a new form of energy or decreases fossil fuel energy – so the scale is not becoming unbalanced.

Also, the Affirmative can claim that energy conservation is an inevitable part of the resolution. If the Affirmative increases incentives for wind energy, doesn't that also create an incentive to conserve coal-based energy?

Finally, the Affirmative can claim that extra topicality is not as terrible as the Negative makes it out to be. Perhaps giving the Affirmative a slight advantage is important. This would be based in the idea that the scale is not balanced to begin with and therefore giving the Affirmative some wiggle room is not a terrible idea.

"Incentives" Topicality Violation

The resolution says "Resolved: the U.S. Federal Government should substantially increase alternative energy incentives in the United States." Incentives are policies that provide compensations like tax credits, rebates or subsidy payments for the production of alternative energy. Incentives would put the decision to produce entirely in the hands of producers. They are not required to produce it they just have the incentive to produce it. That's the difference between a regulation requiring alternative energy, and a plan that merely gives incentives for it.

Definition

The evidence from Swain is in the context of energy policy and explains that incentives are things that reduce the cost of producing alternative energies. She provides many examples from other nations who have adopted an "incentives" policy. So the Swain evidence should be considered a highly-preferred 'field context' definition.

Violation

The Affirmative plan is a requirement to produce alternative energy, not the creation of incentives. Ask yourself...does the energy producer have freedom to decide whatever they want, based on the pro's and con's? The evidence from the Renewable Energy Policy Network in the shell applies to the RPS Affirmative and contrasts "mandatory quantities" policies such as RPS with "incentives" that "constitute another category of policies".

While the Affirmative can argue that even a mandate is really just an incentive because people have the incentive to avoid the criminal punishment from ignoring the mandates, this interpretation would basically make the term "incentive" in the resolution meaningless, since all policies would be incentives. The Monthly Energy Review evidence makes this point.

There are separate violations pages for each of the Affirmative plans.

The Cap and Trade Affirmative is not an increase in incentives. It is a mandatory limit on the amount of non-alternative energy that can be produced. The "cap" part is not topical and the "trade" part is just an enforcement regime for the "cap."

The Nuclear Energy plan does not increase incentives. It does not provide an incentive for construction of nuclear energy, it provides an incentive for the disposal of nuclear waste. The plan does not net increase alternative energy. Nuclear reactors might be built to replace solar or wind energies. If the result of the plan was that people invested in nuclear instead of solar and wind, then it would not increase incentives for alternatives.

The Biofuels plan goes beyond incentives. The price floor in the plan, of \$50 per barrel for oil is no real incentive as long as the market price of oil stays above that, which it will for the foreseeable future. The Affirmative would have to prove the price of oil would drop below that for it to be an incentive. The market guarantee in the plan is a mandate, not an incentive. There is evidence from Oregon that contrasts a market guarantee from an incentives policy. Research and development is not an incentive for current production of alternative energy, only something that facilitates possible future production, someday.

Standards

The resolution should be interpreted in a way that each word provides a meaningful limit to what the Affirmative can do. That's why they are included in the wording. If the Affirmative adopts a plan that makes the word "incentives" meaningless they violate that standard.

The resolution should be interpreted to provide a division between Affirmative and Negative ground. The Affirmative should be limited to the ground of incentives and the Negative should have the ground of command and control. If the Affirmative has elements of command and control in their plan they violate the ground set out for the Negative.

The resolution should be interpreted in a way so the Negative can predict what the Affirmative plan will do. This facilitates clash and encourages research. If the

Affirmative adopts parts of their plan that are beyond incentives they make it unpredictable for the Negative.

Voting Issue

The judge must uphold the fundamental fairness of the activity as a precondition for encouraging participation. Limits and ground are essential for fairness.

The primary focus of the debate is the education of its participants. Without predictability, clash, preparation and limits on the Affirmative there would be much less education.

The judge should uphold the fairness and educational functions of debate as an activity.

“Incentives” Topicality Answers

There is no bright line between mandates and incentives. Mandates usually are enforced by incentives and without some quantity guidelines (explicit or implied) then incentives alone are irrelevant. The word “incentive” can be Negative or positive – so an incentive can be the punishment of not going along with a mandate. The ground loss by the Negative in this area is not important. They still have plenty of other strategies like alternative energy is bad, and possibly Counterplans. Other words provide meaningful limits to the resolution even if the word “incentives” does not. Most real world policies combine mandates and incentives, so the Negative interpretation limits the Affirmative ground too much, taking it far away from real world policy proposals.

Alternative Energy Topicality Violation

This violation is specifically for use against the Nuclear Power case, which unlike the others does not focus on a renewable form of energy. Though relatively abundant, uranium, from which nuclear power is derived, is a natural resource in limited supply. This violation argues that there is an important distinction between renewable vs non-renewable sources of energy and that Affirmatives ought to deal only with the former, making nuclear power non-topical.

Interpretation

The resolution uses the term “alternative energy”, leaving open the question, “alternative to what?” Negative authors say it should be an alternative to the major forms of energy employed today: oil, coal, natural gas, and nuclear. All

these sources of energy deplete natural resources and cause environmental harm of some kind.

This interpretation says that the judge ought to interpret "alternative energy" to mean "renewable energy", a source such as wind, solar, or water that avoids the problems of today's most popular energy sources. Nuclear power explicitly does not fit this interpretation.

Violation

As explained above, nuclear power is not a renewable form of energy. The Negative's evidence says this explicitly. Using this violation against other forms of energy that are arguable not renewable might require some further explanation.

Standards

It is not enough simply to have a piece of evidence that says "nuclear is not alternative energy." The Affirmative will have evidence that says just the opposite. The Negative's task is to explain why their interpretation of the term "alternative energy" is the better one.

The Negative's first argument is that allowing non-renewable forms of energy gives the Affirmative too many options for the Negative to research and prepare to debate. Arguably, even many fossil fuels could be considered "alternative energy" because they are different from the forms of coal, oil, or gas used today.

The best and most common arguments against renewable forms of energy are completely different from the arguments against non-renewable forms. The Negative argues that they have enough work to do preparing arguments against renewable energy. Allowing the Affirmative to advocate non-renewable energy would open a whole new can of worms for which the Negative will not be prepared.

Finally, the Negative argues that the educational value of this topic is in learning about new kinds of energy that can address the big problems caused by the world's dependence on oil, coal, gas, and nuclear power. If the Affirmative finds a way to defend an already-popular form of energy, then they sidestep this education. Debaters, who are future world leaders, should be exploring long-term solutions to the world's problems, not finding ways to dig the hole deeper.

Voting Issue

Many judges will prefer to settle the debate on "substantive issues" like Harms, Solvency, and Disadvantages. However, the Negative argues that it is unfair to

look to these other issues if the Affirmative is not topical. This is because Topicality is what determines a level playing field on which to debate these other issues. If the Affirmative is not topical, then the Negative may not have a fair chance to win on Harms. Thus, the judge must vote on Topicality first.

Alternative Energy Topicality Violation Affirmative Answers

The Affirmative argues that “alternative energy” means alternatives to fossil fuels, not necessarily renewable energy. Nuclear power fits this definition, because although it is not renewable, it relies on uranium rather than on a natural resource, such as oil, coal, and gas, that derives from the remains of carbon-based life forms. Thus, although nuclear has some environmental problems of its own, it does not emit greenhouse gases or harmful chemicals into the air. This distinguishes it from fossil fuels in an important way.

This interpretation provides limits very similar to those of the Negative. In particular, by excluding fossil fuels, it prevents the “problem cases” such as Clean Coal or Oil Shale cited by the Negative, while still allowing nuclear power as an Affirmative case area.

The Affirmative also introduces a new standard, Bright Line, for choosing between competing interpretations of the resolution. The argument is that it is easier to determine what is or is not a fossil fuel than to determine what is or is not renewable. The Negative requires the judge to make a judgment call of her own, which violates the spirit of debate. The round should be decided by the arguments of the debaters, not the judge’s arbitrary interpretation of what a word means.

Increase Topicality Violation

This violation argues that the Affirmative can not create a new alternative energy incentive. That means that they cannot create an incentive for ocean thermal energy if the federal government does not already offer such incentives. And even if the federal government does offer these incentives, the Affirmative cannot create a new kind of incentive for ocean thermal energy. They may only increase the size of an already-existing incentive.

Interpretation

According to the Negative, the word “increase” implies that the thing being increased must already exist. If a boss gives her employee a raise, she increases his salary. But if she hires a new employee, she does not increase his salary, because he didn’t have a salary to increase.

Thus, because the resolution says “increase”, the Affirmative can only expand or spend more money on existing alternative energy incentives.

Violation

This violation can be used against many cases. It is the 1NC’s job to explain how it applies to Affirmative’s specific case. This can be set up in cross-examination by asking about Inherency and whether incentives like the one the Affirmative is proposing already exist.

Standards

The Negative argues that allowing the Affirmative to create new incentives would give them too many options and make it impossible for the Negative to prepare. After all, there are an infinite number of incentives that the government does *not* currently offer. The Negative can’t possibly prepare for all of them. If the Affirmative is limited to dealing with existing incentives, this creates a finite number of possible cases for which the Negative can research and prepare.

It also guarantees that there will be literature arguing both sides of the case. Anything that the government actually does will have both its defenders and its critics. But just because the Affirmative finds evidence for some obscure new proposal doesn’t mean there will necessarily be any Negative authors writing against it. This makes the debate unfair to the Negative and destroys education for everyone.

Voting Issue

Many judges will prefer to settle the debate on “substantive issues” like Harms, Solvency, and Disadvantages. However, the Negative argues that it is unfair to look to these other issues if the Affirmative is not topical. This is because Topicality is what determines a level playing field on which to debate these other issues. If the Affirmative is not topical, then the Negative may not have a fair chance to win on Harms. Thus, the judge must vote on Topicality first.

Increase Topicality Violation Affirmative Answers

The Affirmative’s interpretation is that increase refers to “alternative energy incentives” in general and not to specific incentives that the government already offers. In other words, the US federal government already has incentives to encourage alternative energy. The plan, whether it funds an existing incentive or creates a new one, would be an increase to the incentives already offered. It

would be like if Pepsi decided to increase its advertising. That could mean running a commercial they already have more often or during more programs, or it could mean creating a brand new commercial.

Arguably, the wording of the resolution supports this interpretation. If the Negative were correct that "increase" refers to specific incentives, then the fact that "incentives" is plural in the resolution would mean that the Affirmative was supposed to increase more than one incentive. That's not impossible, but it would be a very strange requirement. In all likelihood, if the framers intended the Negative's interpretation, they would have included the phrase "one or more" as they have in previous resolutions.

Whereas the Negative mostly argues that their interpretation makes for the best debates, the Affirmative claims that that's irrelevant and the important thing is to interpret the resolution as accurately as possible. Just because something is better for debate doesn't necessarily make it a valid or preferable interpretation of the resolution. A debate about civil liberties and terrorism might be very fair and educational, but it would clearly have nothing to do with the resolution.