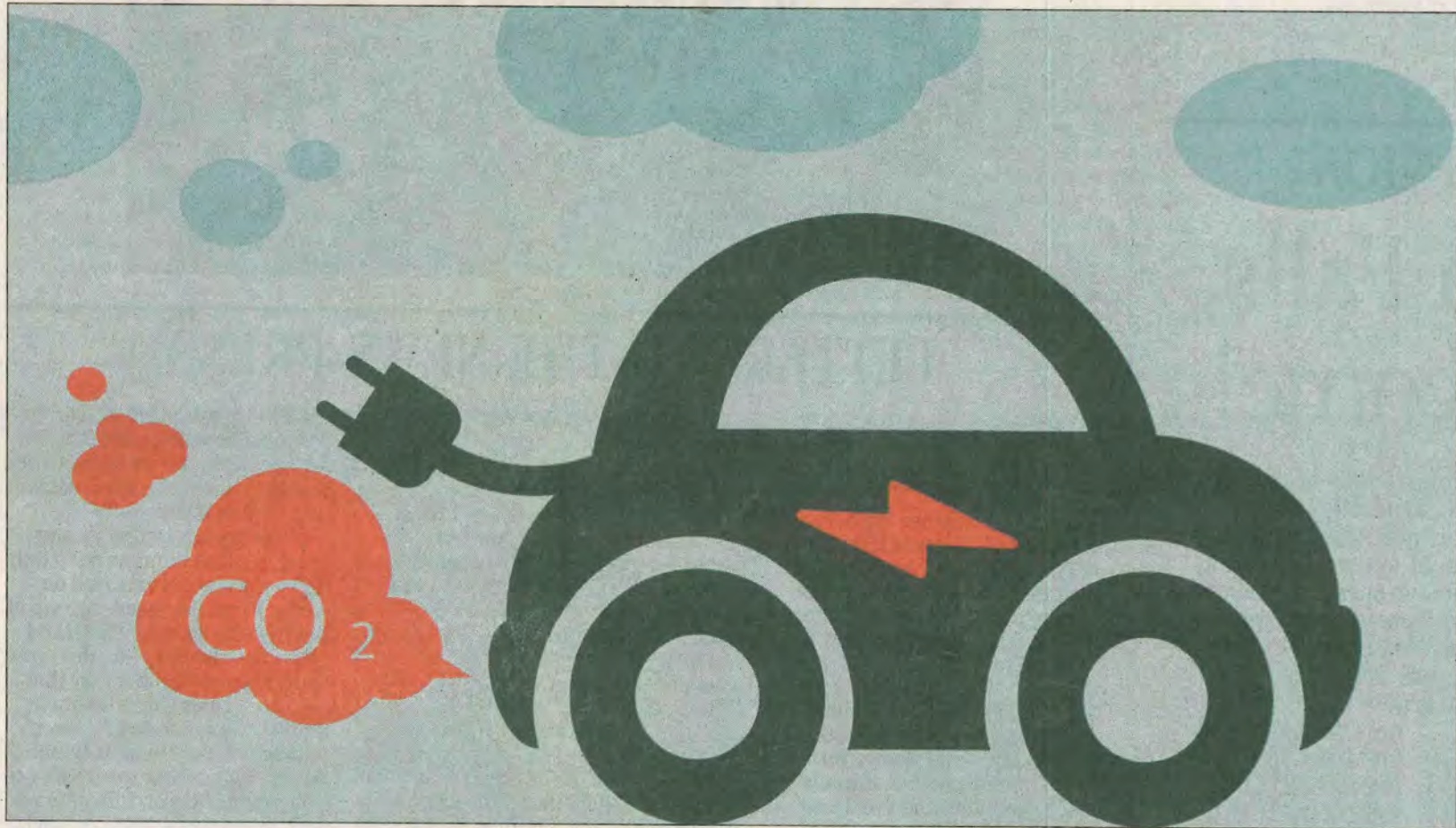


Voices

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Electric cars and climate change

California is proposing to turn the tide against climate change by creating an artificial marketplace for electric cars. Electric cars may have their place in cities with impaired air quality, but are a “wine before their time” in other geographic locations.

The primary justification for California’s electric car subsidy is that electric cars lessen the impacts of “global warming” by lowering CO2 emissions. The concern about rising CO2 emissions is so great that a bill in the California Legislature proposes to ban the sale of gasoline- and diesel-powered cars by the year 2040. The problem with this sort of remedy is that the horse is already out of the barn. Worldwide CO2 levels are increasing, and have been increasing for decades, and the impact that California has on worldwide CO2 emissions is so small that scientists generally agree that if California fell into the ocean tomorrow, and all of California’s CO2 emissions were to disappear, it would not alter the worldwide climate model. So what does California hope to gain by such extreme green energy legislation?

Mike Hoover

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Every day there is an article in some publication or another about climate change, but when was the last time you saw an article discussing the fact that five major periods of global warming and cooling occurred long before humans occupied the earth in significant numbers? There is irrefutable scientific evidence that the most recent warming period began at the end of the last Ice Age, some 11,000 years ago, long before humans had any significant impact on the environment.

Past periods of heating and cooling of the earth’s surface are believed to have been caused by oscillations of the earth orbit, movement of the continents and other natural phenomena. At times during the geologic past, the earth was entirely covered with snow and ice. During past heating cycles, the earth was often much hotter than it is today. Many scientists believe that we would be headed for another cooling cycle (albeit thousands of years from now) if not for the increased CO2 in the atmosphere related to human activities.

During extreme cooling cycles in the geologic past, it was not uncommon for most of the

planet’s species to die off. So climate change has been going on for hundreds of millions of years. That said, there is no doubt that humans have impacted the earth’s climate over the past hundred years, and increased the rate of climate change. But what we need to do is stop arguing about what portion of climate change is driven by human factors and what portion is driven by natural influences, and set about fixing the problem.

The “fix” may be a combination of basic engineering solutions like those utilized to keep lowlands in Holland from flooding, or it may be climate engineering, which is essentially weather modification. While a lot of money and some very smart people are working on the climate change problem, California Gov. Jerry Brown is not one of them. Mr. Brown’s solution is to pass a new tax, masquerading as “cap and trade,” that is intended to fund things like high-speed rail and electric cars. What the governor and a lot of scientists ignore is that India, China and other developing countries have been building coal-fired power plants over the last few decades that negate all the CO2 emis-

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Wrong approach to climate issue

■ **HOOVER**

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sions reductions that the U.S. and the E.U. have been making. So, we are back to engineering solutions; electric cars and wind turbines won't solve the problem.

Gov. Brown travels the world lecturing people about preventing climate change, but what he fails to recognize is that the people in rural Bangladesh, the Philippines and Pakistan just want what the developed world already has — electricity, running water and the internet. And, the people in the developing world don't care if the source for their electricity is a solar panel or coal-fired

power plant, and since there are few subsidies for solar panels in the developing world, at least for the foreseeable future, coal is the cheapest form of power. Most people in the developing world don't care if the sea level rises, or if the houses in Malibu fall in the ocean; they just want electricity.

So, if you really want to address the climate problem, replace all the coal-fired power plants in the developed countries with zero-emissions nuclear plants, and buy a hydrogen-powered car. Hydrogen-powered cars have a range of over 300 miles, lots of horsepower, quick refueling from a box attached to a natural gas outlet in your garage, and zero emissions. What's not to like?