### IMpact

#### Economic decline causes multiple scenarios of nuclear war

Burrows and Harris 9 Mathew J. Burrows counselor in the National Intelligence Council and Jennifer Harris a member of the NIC’s Long Range Analysis Unit “Revisiting the Future: Geopolitical Effects of the Financial Crisis” The Washington Quarterly 32:2 https://csis.org/files/publication/twq09aprilburrowsharris.pdf

Increased Potential for Global Conflict¶ Of course, the report encompasses more than economics and indeed believes the¶ future is likely to be the result of a number of intersecting and interlocking¶ forces. With so many possible permutations of outcomes, each with ample opportunity for unintended consequences, there is a growing sense of insecurity.¶ Even so, history may be more instructive than ever. While we continue to¶ believe that the Great Depression is not likely to be repeated, the lessons to be¶ drawn from that period include the harmful effects on fledgling democracies and¶ multiethnic societies (think Central Europe in 1920s and 1930s) and on¶ the sustainability of multilateral institutions (think League of Nations in the¶ same period). There is no reason to think that this would not be true in the¶ twenty-first as much as in the twentieth century. For that reason, the ways in¶ which the potential for greater conflict could grow would seem to be even more¶ apt in a constantly volatile economic environment as they would be if change¶ would be steadier.¶ In surveying those risks, the report stressed the likelihood that terrorism and¶ nonproliferation will remain priorities even as resource issues move up on the¶ international agenda. Terrorism’s appeal will decline if economic growth¶ continues in the Middle East and youth unemployment is reduced. For those¶ terrorist groups that remain active in 2025, however, the diffusion of¶ technologies and scientific knowledge will place some of the world’s most¶ dangerous capabilities within their reach. Terrorist groups in 2025 will likely be a¶ combination of descendants of long established groupsinheriting¶ organizational structures, command and control processes, and training¶ procedures necessary to conduct sophisticated attacksand newly emergent¶ collections of the angry and disenfranchised that become self-radicalized,¶ particularly in the absence of economic outlets that would become narrower¶ in an economic downturn.¶ The most dangerous casualty of any economically-induced drawdown of U.S.¶ military presence would almost certainly be the Middle East. Although Iran’s¶ acquisition of nuclear weapons is not inevitable, worries about a nuclear-armed¶ Iran could lead states in the region to develop new security arrangements with¶ external powers, acquire additional weapons, and consider pursuing their own¶ nuclear ambitions. It is not clear that the type of stable deterrent relationship¶ that existed between the great powers for most of the Cold War would emerge¶ naturally in the Middle East with a nuclear Iran. Episodes of low intensity¶ conflict and terrorism taking place under a nuclear umbrella could lead to an¶ unintended escalation and broader conflict if clear red lines between those states¶ involved are not well established. The close proximity of potential nuclear rivals¶ combined with underdeveloped surveillance capabilities and mobile¶ dual-capable Iranian missile systems also will produce inherent difficulties in¶ achieving reliable indications and warning of an impending nuclear attack. The¶ lack of strategic depth in neighboring states like Israel, short warning and missile¶ flight times, and uncertainty of Iranian intentions may place more focus on¶ preemption rather than defense, potentially leading to escalating crises.Types of conflict that the world continues¶ to experience, such as over resources, could¶ reemerge, particularly if protectionism grows and¶ there is a resort to neo-mercantilist practices.¶ Perceptions of renewed energy scarcity will drive¶ countries to take actions to assure their future¶ access to energy supplies. In the worst case, this¶ could result in interstate conflicts if government¶ leaders deem assured access to energy resources,¶ for example, to be essential for maintaining domestic stability and the survival of¶ their regime. Even actions short of war, however, will have important geopolitical¶ implications. Maritime security concerns are providing a rationale for naval¶ buildups and modernization efforts, such as China’s and India’s development of¶ blue water naval capabilities. If the fiscal stimulus focus for these countries indeed¶ turns inward, one of the most obvious funding targets may be military. Buildup of¶ regional naval capabilities could lead to increased tensions, rivalries, and¶ counterbalancing moves, but it also will create opportunities for multinational¶ cooperation in protecting critical sea lanes. With water also becoming scarcer in¶ Asia and the Middle East, cooperation to manage changing water resources is¶ likely to be increasingly difficult both within and between states in a more¶ dog-eat-dog world.¶

### A2 Congress blocks

#### Obama and congressional races are linked

Witt 9/10 (Ryan, National Political Buzz Examiner, Polls show Obama’s real bump is in job approval numbers, http://www.examiner.com/article/obama-s-real-bump-job-approval-numbers)

The job approval numbers have larger ramifications outside of the presidential race. Republicans want to make this election on referendum on President Obama, even in the House and Senate races. The congressional job approval rating is at a dismal 13.8 percent, with another 79.2 percent disapproving. Republicans, who control the House, have attempted to defend themselves by arguing they were justified in their obstruction of Obama's policies, but that only works if over the half of the population disapproves of the job the President is doing.

### UQ

#### Obama winning – swing state polls and voters like his policies so far

Bowen 9/20 (Robert Bowen¶ Economic Policy writer for the Examiner¶ Currently a businessman, Robert Bowen served in the Colorado legislature in the 1980s as a moderate Democrat. He was also appointed by three different governors to serve on various boards and commissions, “New Fox News poll released Thursday shows Obama winning 3 key swing states” 2012, http://www.examiner.com/article/new-fox-news-poll-released-thursday-shows-obama-winning-3-key-swing-states)

Despite two re-set buttons, Mitt Romney’s campaign continues to back slide. The latest bad news comes from the Fox News poll for the crucial states of Ohio, Florida, and Virginia. The poll was released Thursday, and it is not good news for Romney. The results were confirmed by 3 other polls this week.¶ According to Fox News, Obama tops Romney by seven percentage points among likely voters in both Ohio (49-42 percent) and Virginia (50-43 percent). In Florida, the president holds a five-point edge (49-44 percent). Obama’s lead is just outside the poll’s margin of sampling error in Ohio and Virginia, and within the margin of sampling error in Florida.¶ .¶ The poll shows that majorities of voters are unhappy with how things are going in the country, yet in all three states more say they trust Obama than Romney to improve the economy. It was not asked in this poll, but in others, more voters still blame Bush and Republicans for the bad economy than Obama.¶ Likewise, in each state more voters believe the Obama administration’s policies have helped rather than hurt the economy although the margins are small. They favor Obama by two points in Florida, three points in Ohio, and five points in Virginia.

#### Obama will win – job approval

Trende 9/19 (Sean, Senior Elections Analyst for RealClearPolitics, 2012, State of the Race, Part 1: Why Obama Wins, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/ 2012/09/19/state\_of\_the\_race\_part\_1\_why\_obama\_wins\_115499.html)

1) Job approval. I wrote that “presidents rarely win many votes of those who disapprove of their performance in office. In other words, Obama probably needs to be pretty close to 50 percent approval on Election Day to secure re-election.” At the time, the president’s job approval was 46.8 percent.¶ Today, the president’s job approval stands at 49.2 percent. If this is true on Election Day, he’ll have a good chance of winning.¶ To be sure, we’re on the tail end of a convention bounce, and six of the nine polls in the RCP Average include some data from the weekend immediately following the Democratic convention -- the height of the bounce. So the tendency will probably be for this to come back to Earth some.¶ But there’s no denying that the president’s job approval has recovered since January overall. That month, he averaged 45.9 percent in the polls. In August, before the Democratic convention, that average was still 48.6 percent. Even if his bounce recedes to that level, he’d still be in pretty good position on Election Day.

### Teflon

#### Obama gets the blame - attempts to deflect to other policymakers fail

Nicholas and Hook 10 (Peter and Janet, Tribune Washington Bureau, July 30, "Obama the Velcro president", http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jul/30/nation/la-na-velcro-presidency-20100730)jn

Those towering goals remain a long way off. And most people would have preferred to see Obama focus more narrowly on the "good jobs" part of the promise. A recent Gallup poll showed that 53% of the population rated unemployment and the economy as the nation's most important problem. By contrast, only 7% cited healthcare — a single-minded focus of the White House for a full year. At every turn, Obama makes the argument that he has improved lives in concrete ways. Without the steps he took, he says, the economy would be in worse shape and more people would be out of work. There's evidence to support that. Two economists, Mark Zandi and Alan Blinder, reported recently that without the stimulus and other measures, gross domestic product would be about 6.5% lower. Yet, Americans aren't apt to cheer when something bad doesn't materialize. Unemployment has been rising — from 7.7% when Obama took office, to 9.5%. Last month, more than 2 million homes in the U.S. were in various stages of foreclosure — up from 1.7 million when Obama was sworn in. "Folks just aren't in a mood to hand out gold stars when unemployment is hovering around 10%," said Paul Begala, a Democratic pundit. Insulating the president from bad news has proved impossible. Other White Houses have tried doing so with more success. Reagan's Cabinet officials often took the blame, shielding the boss. But the Obama administration is about one man. Obama is the White House's chief spokesman, policy pitchman, fundraiser and negotiator. No Cabinet secretary has emerged as an adequate surrogate. Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner is seen as a tepid public speaker; Energy Secretary Steven Chu is prone to long, wonky digressions and has rarely gone before the cameras during an oil spill crisis that he is working to end. So, more falls to Obama, reinforcing the Velcro effect: Everything sticks to him. He has opined on virtually everything in the hundreds of public statements he has made: nuclear arms treaties, basketball star LeBron James' career plans; Chelsea Clinton's wedding. Few audiences are off-limits. On Wednesday, he taped a spot on ABC’s “The View,” drawing a rebuke from Democratic Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell, who deemed the appearance unworthy of the presidency during tough times. “Stylistically, he creates some of those problems,” Eddie Mahe, a Republican political strategist, said in an interview. “His favorite pronoun is ‘I.’ When you position yourself as being all things to all people, the ultimate controller and decision maker with the capacity to fix anything, you set yourself up to be blamed when it doesn’t get fixed or things happen.” A new White House strategy is to forgo talk of big policy changes that are easy to ridicule. Instead, aides want to market policies as more digestible pieces. So, rather than tout the healthcare package as a whole, advisors will talk about smaller parts that may be more appealing and understandable – such as barring insurers from denying coverage based on preexisting conditions. But at this stage, it may be late in the game to downsize either the president or his agenda. Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-Il.) said: “The man came in promising change. He has a higher profile than some presidents because of his youth, his race and the way he came to the White House with the message he brought in. It’s naïve to believe he can step back and have some Cabinet secretary be the face of the oil spill. The buck stops with his office.”

#### The president receives all the credit or blame whether they deserve it or not—Clinton proves.

Thomasson 1 (B.A. from Indiana University, Dan, 9-7-01, “Don't count Bush out on economy”, The Times Mail, http://www.tmnews.com/stories/2001/09/07/archive.251309.tms?printf=1)

There is only one certainty in American presidential politics. The incumbent will receive the blame or credit for whatever happens on his watchwhether or not he deserves either. That is particularly true of the economy, and if the economy is good, Americans will respond with their votes, even, as one veteran observer predicted, if the president is a suspected ax murderer. The best modern example of this political truth was Clinton, who survived scandal and impeachment largely because of unprecedented economic growth for which he had little if any responsibility. In fact, he had no more idea how to explain the historically high growth than Alan Greenspan who now admits he doesn't understand why suddenly the sky is falling, if it truly is.

### Links

#### SMRs unpopular – opposition due to fear of waste, contamination and terror targets.

Smith 10 (Rebecca, Contributor, “Small Reactors Generate Big Hopes”, The Wall Street Journal, 2-18-10, ¶ <http://www.generatorsystems.com/pdf/Small%20Reactors%20Generate%20Big%20Hopes%20WSJ%2002-18-2010.pdf>, accessed 8-1-12, RSR)

"We see significant benefits from the new, modular technology," said Donald Moul, vice president of nuclear support for First Energy, an Ohio-based utility company. He said First Energy, which operates four reactors at three sites in Ohio and Pennsylvania, has made no decision to build any new reactor and noted there's "a lot of heavy lifting to do to get this reactor certified" by the NRC for U.S. use. Indeed, the smaller reactors still could incite major opposition. They face the same unresolved issues of where to put the waste and public fear of contamination, in the event of an accident. They could also raise alarms about creating possible terrorism targets in populated areas. Still, the sudden interest in small reactors illustrates a growing unease with the route that nuclear power has taken for half a century. What many regard as the first commercial reactor built in the U.S., in 1957 at Shippingport, Pa., was only about 60 megawatts in size. By the time construction petered out three decades later, reactors had grown progressively bigger, ending up at about 1,000 megawatts of capacity.

#### Women oppose nuclear power

Pew Research Center 11 (March 21, “Opposition to Nuclear Power Rises amid Japanese Crisis”, http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1934/support-nuclear-power-japan-gas-prices-offshore-oil-gas-drilling)

There has long been a wide gender gap in views of increased use of nuclear power and these differences persist amid the crisis in Japan. By greater than two-to-one (63% to 26%), women oppose promoting the increased use of nuclear power. A narrow majority of men (53%) favor the increased use of nuclear power, while 42% are opposed.

#### Women’s vote is key to the election

Roberts 12 (3-22-12, Stevie, Election in Women’s Hands, The Picayune Item, http://picayuneitem.com/opinion/x1440948899/Election-in-women-s-hands)

PICAYUNE — **It’s the women, stupid**! Barack Obama cannot win re-election without **piling up a sizable majority among female voters**. Sorry, fellas, but the ladies will pick the next president. **In 2008, 8 million more women voted than men, and women accounted for 53 percent of the electorate**. **Obama barely edged** John **McCain among male voters but trounced him by 13 points among females**. Recent polls reflect a similar trend this year. In the latest Wall Street Journal/NBC poll, Obama trailed Mitt Romney, the likely Republican nominee, by 6 points among men but beat him by 18 points among women. Peter Hart, a Democratic pollster who helped conduct the survey, summarized: “Up until six weeks ago, Democrats suffered from an intensity gap, but this has closed as women — particularly suburban women — have turned against the GOP.” Team **Obama is keenly aware of this shift, and the president now makes a direct appeal to women in almost every public appearance**. At his latest press conference, he said women vote on a “whole range” of issues and added: “I believe that Democrats have a better story to tell to women about how we’re going to solidify the middle class and grow this economy.”

#### The public will fears nuclear power, even when scientists claim it’s safe

Allison 12 (Wade, Wade Allison is Professor Emeritus of Physics at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Keble College. His fields of interest extend from experimental particle physics to medical physics, including radiation, nuclear physics and radiotherapy, April, Public Trust in Nuclear Energy, http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/default.aspx?id=29532&terms=public%20trust)

A list of the pros and cons of nuclear energy is straightforward; we need it, it is safe, but people are frightened of it. The need to replace fossil fuels with another large base-load source is widely understood and the safety of the nuclear solution has been demonstrated many times; even in accidents in which reactors suffer irreparable damage, the impact on human health has been minimal. For example, at Fukushima there has been no death, or even extended hospitalisation, due to radiation, nor is this likely to be responsible for any cancer deaths in 50 years. The reasons for the fear of radiation are instinctive and historical. It is natural to shun what is powerful and unseen, and the legacy of the Cold War with its weapon of nuclear fear has added to that. Although the public accepts moderate to high doses of radiation when used benignly for their own health, non-medical international safety standards are set extremely low to appease popular concerns - these specify levels found in nature or as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA). Yet modern biology and medicine confirm that no harm comes from radiation levels up to 1000 times higher and realistic safety levels could be set as high as relatively safe (AHARS). Indeed the local damage to public health and the social economy caused by ALARA regulations imposed at Chernobyl and Fukushima has been extremely serious and without benefit.

#### Opposition is staunch and bipartisan – would flip multiple votes to Romney

ABC News 11(April20, “Nuclear Power: Po Nuclear Power: Opposition Spikes After Japan Earthquake,” <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/nuclear-power-opposition-grows-japan-earthquake-abc-news/story?id=13412262#.UAnUlWHZATY>, d/a 7-20-12, ads)

Americans by a 2-1 margin oppose building more [nuclear power plants in the United States](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/japan-nuclear-emergency-sparks-worries-united-states/story?id=13133047" \t "external), an 11-point spike in opposition from a few years ago. In the aftermath of Japan's nuclear plant crisis, 64 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll oppose new nuclear plant construction, while 33 percent support it. "Strong" opposition now far outstrips strong support, 47-20 percent. Opposition is up from 53 percent in a 2008 poll, and strong opposition is up even more, by 24 points. The results reflect the significant [challenges facing the nuclear power industry](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/us-nuclear-power-plants-safe/story?id=13256973" \t "external), which had been reaching for greater acceptance on the basis of factors including high oil prices, environmental concerns prompted by the Gulf oil spill a year ago and efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Opposition is not merely a not-in-my-back-yard phenomenon. The[survey](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/nuclear-power-opposition-grows-japan-earthquake-abc-news/story?id=13412262), conducted for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](http://www.langerresearch.com/), finds that 67 percent of Americans oppose construction of a nuclear plant within 50 miles of their home -- not significantly different than the number who oppose it regardless of location. Resistance is bipartisan, with majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents alike opposed to new nuclear plant construction. Still, there are differences among groups; opposition is higher among Democrats (75 percent, vs. 59 percent of Republicans and independents combined), women (73 percent, vs. 53 percent of men) and liberals (74 percent, vs. 60 percent of moderates and conservatives). Support for building more nuclear plants has fluctuated in the past, showing sensitivity to nuclear crises. Starting at 61 percent in the mid-1970s, support fell sharply after the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 and bottomed out at just 19 percent in May 1986 after the Chernobyl crisis (which began 25 years ago next week).

#### Public opposes subsidies for nuclear power

Union of Concerned Scientists 11 (the leading science-based nonprofit working for a healthy environment and a safer world, “NBC-WSJ Poll: Majority of Americans Rank Nuclear Power Subsidies Top Target for Federal Budget Cuts”, March 4th, https://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2011/03/04-13)

WASHINGTON - March 4 - The Wall Street Journal yesterday published the results of a new public opinion poll the newspaper conducted with NBC News that found the most acceptable budget cut out of 14 programs, including Social Security, college loans, Head Start and national defense, is for subsidies for new nuclear reactors. Fifty-seven percent of the survey respondents said cutting nuclear subsidies is either totally or mostly acceptable.¶ The poll comes on the heels of a new report issued last week by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), “Nuclear Power: Still Not Viable Without Subsidies,” which found that more than 30 subsidies have supported the nuclear power industry at every stage of the nuclear fuel cycle, from uranium mining to long-term waste storage, since the industry was born more than 50 years ago. Added together, these subsidies often have exceeded the average market price of the power produced by nuclear plants. In other words, if the government had purchased power on the open market and given it away free, it would have been less costly than subsidizing nuclear power plant construction and

### Change their mind

#### Both campaigns are making energy an issue

Tevent 12 (5/24/12 Telvent is an energy transportation company “Panel sees Energy as Important Issue in Presidential Elections” Oil Spot Blog http://www.telventblogs.com/oilandgas/post.cfm/panel-sees-energy-as-important-issue-in-presidential-elections)

Jim Connaughton, executive vice president and senior policy advisor with Exelon and former chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality for eight years said energy would be a major issue this November, saying it’s currently one of the top five concerns of Americans. Connaughton said both campaigns are focusing on energy, while adding the recently discovered oil and gas resources in the United States is excellent news that offers many benefits for the country.

### Cp

#### RPS Solves for CO2 – makes renewable energy tech cost-effective

Sovacool & Cooper 2008

(Benjamin, Senior Research Fellow at the Network for New Energy Choices & Christopher, the Executive Director of the Network for New Energy Choices Environment and Energy Law and Policy Journal “Congress Got it Wrong: The Case for a National Renewable Portfolio Standard and Implications for Policy”)

The interrelationship between rising capacity factors and installed capacity suggests that, by forcing a greater amount of installed renewable capacity, a national RPS will significantly improve the capacity factors of renewable energy technologies. Recent experience with wind energy seems to confirm this rule. For example, in the 1980s and 1990s, wind turbines reported capacity factors in the low teens. By 2006, when installed wind energy had more than tripled in the United States, wind turbines registered capacity factors in the mid-thirties.41 In a 2006 analysis, the EIA observed that wind turbine capacity factors appeared to be improving over time and concluded that, “capacity factor grows as a function of capacity growth.”43 Solar energy appears to follow this same pattern. In the early 1980s, when just 10 MW of solar photovoltaics (“PV”) had been installed globally, the average capacity factor for solar panels was around 9%.44 By 1995, however, after more than 70 MW had been installed, the average capacity factor of panels jumped to almost 15%.45 In 2000, Researchers from the Institute for Energy Policy and Economics found that “over the last 10 years ‘learning by doing’ has led to a simplification of industrial manufacturing processes”; as a result, costs have fallen considerably and efficiency levels on the order of 18% for cells are expected in the near future at a competitive cost.46 Because the United States does not currently have a national RPS, it also lacks a relatively robust manufacturing base for most renewable energy technologies. Renewable energy developers in the United States largely rely on European or other overseas manufacturers for the requisite materials—and sometimes for expertise and labor, as well—to install renewable energy systems. This reliance on foreign materials and labor increases construction lead-times as well as shipping costs. It also increases the likelihood of unexpected delays and shortages. The fragmented nature of state-based RPS policies actually compounds this problem by creating artificial bottlenecks in the distribution of materials necessary to deploy renewable energy systems. New state mandates can create unexpected surges in demand for renewable energy projects, driving up the price of components and labor. Roger Garratt of Puget Sound Energy (“PSE”) recently suggested that the quick and somewhat unanticipated passage of Washington’s initiative-driven RPS mandate created a seller’s market “by increasing competition for projects and a shortage of turbine supplies” among wind manufacturers.47 A national RPS would instigate market-based solutions to unexpected material bottlenecks in at least three ways. First, by providing a stable investment stream and a predictable regulatory environment, investors would have a greater incentive to establish domestic manufacturing facilities and to rely on local materials and labor. Second, under a national RPS, American developers would no longer suffer unfavorable exchange rates, given the recent weakening of the dollar, when purchasing materials. One wind company, Nordex, even estimated that changes in the exchange rate between Euros and dollars alone cost some American developers as much as $152,000 per project.48 Third, given the certainty of a national market for renewable energy, investors would likely develop better economies of scale in manufacturing in order to ensure that a sufficient number of materials would exist to satisfy the resulting demand for renewable energy projects. Some of these benefits have already been proven by statebased RPS programs. In those states that have already adopted more aggressive RPS statutes, the renewable energy industry has responded by streamlining manufacturing processes and lowering the cost of technology production. The California Energy Commission (“CEC”) estimated that the average levelized cost of wind energy—the total cost over the life of a generator divided by the numbers of kilowatt hours (“kWh”) produced—in California was 3.5 cents per kWh, less than one-eighth the price of producing wind energy just twenty-five years earlier.49 In a similar study, the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (“VCCER”) found that renewable generators fueled by landfill gases and wind offered one of the cheapest forms of electricity—3.0 and 4.0 cents per kWh, respectively—compared to all other generators including advanced coal, natural gas, and nuclear reactors.50

#### RPS solves the Greenhouse effect – it promotes renewables which reduce the primary cause of CO2

Sovacool & Cooper 2008

(Benjamin, Senior Research Fellow at the Network for New Energy Choices & Christopher, the Executive Director of the Network for New Energy Choices Environment and Energy Law and Policy Journal “Congress Got it Wrong: The Case for a National Renewable Portfolio Standard and Implications for Policy”)

In addition to avoiding free riders, minimizing gaming between states, and mitigating the risk of litigation, a national RPS would diversify the country’s electricity portfolio with cleaner, less polluting technologies. Indeed, examinations of fuel generation in several states confirm that RPS policies displace more polluting generators, such as those powered by oil, natural gas, coal, and uranium. The New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (“NYSERDA”) looked at load profiles for 2001 and concluded that 65% of the energy displaced by wind turbines in New York would have otherwise come from natural gas facilities; 15% from coal-fired plants; 10% from oil-based generation; and 10% from out of state imports of electricity.209 A more recent study conducted in Virginia found that the electricity mandated by a state RPS would otherwise be generated with a mix of 87% coal; 9% natural gas; and 4% oil.210 A 20% RPS by 2020 in Michigan would displace the need for more than 640 MW of power that would have otherwise come from both nuclear and coal facilities.211 Utilities in Ontario, Canada are deploying renewable energy systems in an attempt to entirely displace coalfired electricity generation in the region.212 By offsetting the generation of conventional and nuclear power plants, a national RPS avoids many of the environmental and social costs associated with the mining, processing, transportation, combustion and clean-up of fossil and nuclear fuels. Perhaps the most important and least discussed advantage to a federal RPS is its ability to displace water-intensive electricity generation. The nation’s oil, coal, natural gas, and nuclear facilities consume about 3.3 billion gallons of water each day213 and accounted for almost 40% of all freshwater withdrawals.214 With electricity demand expected to grow by approximately 50% in the next 25 years, continued reliance upon fossil fuel-fired and nuclear generators could spark a water scarcity crisis.215 In 2006, the Department of Energy warned that if new power plants continue to be built with evaporative cooling systems, consumption of water for electricity production could more than double by 2030 to 7.3 billion gallons per day.216 This staggering amount is equal to the entire country’s water consumption in 1995.217 By promoting wind, solar, and other renewable resources that do not consume or withdraw water, a national RPS can help conserve this essential yet dwindling resource. In one of the most comprehensive assessments of renewable energy and water consumption, the American Wind Energy Association estimated that wind power uses less than 1/600 as much water per unit of electricity produced as does nuclear; 1/500 as much as coal; and 1/250 as much as natural gas.218 Conventional electricity generation is by far the largest source of air pollutants that harm human health and contribute to global warming. In 2003, for example, fossil fuel use—for all energy sectors, not just electricity—was responsible for 99% of the country’s carbon dioxide (“CO2”) emissions, 93% of its SOx emissions, and 96% of its NOx emissions.219 Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health estimated that the air pollution from conventional energy sources kills between 50,000 and 70,000 Americans every year.220 These researchers found that the emissions from just nine power plants in Illinois directly contributed to an annual risk of 300 premature deaths, 14,000 asthma attacks, and more than 400,000 daily incidents of upper respiratory symptoms among the 33 million people living within 250 miles of the plants.221 The International Atomic Energy Agency estimates that when direct and indirect carbon emissions are included, coal plants are about five times more carbon intensive than solar and more than 140 times more carbon intensive than wind technologies.223 Natural gas fares little better, at three times as carbon intensive as solar and twenty times as carbon intensive as wind.224 The Common Purpose Institute estimates that renewable energy technologies could offset as much as 0.49 tons of CO2 emissions per every MWh of generation.225 According to data compiled by the Union of Concerned Scientists, a 20% RPS would reduce CO2 emissions by 434 million metric tons by 2020— a reduction of 15% below “business as usual” levels, or the equivalent to taking nearly 71 million automobiles off the road.226 In addition to the environmental damage caused by fossil fuel combustion, the production of fossil fuels and uranium— including drilling, mining, processing and transportation— produce a substantial amount of pollution and toxic waste.227 In the United States, there are more than 150 refineries; 4,000 offshore platforms; 410 underground gas storage fields; 160,000 miles of oil pipelines; and 1.4 million miles of natural gas pipelines.228 Additionally, nuclear waste is spread across 121 storage facilities in 39 states.229 Each can degrade their surrounding environment and negatively affect the health and safety of Americans.

#### RPS would spur improvements in energy infrastructure and transmission

Fershee 2008

(Joshua, Professor of Law, University of North Dakota School of Law; “Changing Resources, Changing Market: The Impact of a National Renewable Portfolio Standard on the U.S. Energy Industry” Jan 2008)

Risk is a part of all major policy changes, and the downside in this situation is far lower than in many other cases. If nothing else, a national RPS would further highlight the lack of necessary transmission in the United States. It is likely that the local nature of renewable energy generation would provide an awareness of infrastructure issues at a more local level than exists today, and that could help address the NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) problem that has long plagued transmission projects.209 Although it is unlikely anyone would welcome transmission lines in their backyard, local jobs created from both renewable generation and transmission projects may make siting more palatable than it has been in the recent past.

#### Romney would cut subsidies, loans and research for solar/clean energy

Leber 12 May 29, 2012 Rebecca Leber research assistant for the ThinkProgress war room. She graduated from the University of Rochester and holds a B.A. in political science and English with a minor in economics. “Romney Campaigns Against Green Jobs While Solar Industry Is ‘Flourishing’ In His Home State” <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/05/29/491284/romney-campaigns-against-green-jobs-while-solar-is-flourishing-in-his-home-state/>

Even while solar grows quickly in Massachusetts, helping grow new businesses, Romney’s plan would reduce investments in clean energy. He would strike subsidies, loans, and research for the clean energy industry — all while endorsing a House GOP budget that maintains subsidies for oil and coal giants.¶ Despite a year of investigation finding no evidence of political misconduct, the GOP has hammered away at Solyndra. American Crossroads is up with its own ad today on Solyndra, following an earlier fact-challenged ad from its affiliate Crossroads GPS.