

Abstract Submitted
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CO₂ - The Canary in the Energy Efficiency Coal Mine PETER SOMSSICH, Portsmouth, NH — While much of the discussion surrounding CO₂ is focused on its role as a GHG (green house gas) and its affect on Climate Change, CO₂ can also be viewed as an indicator for reductions in fossil fuel use and increased energy efficiency. Much as the canary in a mine was used to warn miners of unsafe health conditions in a mine, CO₂ can be seen as allowing us to effectively track progress towards energy efficiency and sustainability. Such an effort can best be achieved by either a Carbon Tax or a Cap and Trade system which was highly effective as part of the 1992 Clean Air Act, contributing to a significant reduction of SO₂ and acid rain. A similar attempt has been made using the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to reduce carbon emissions. The mechanisms of how this treaty was intended to work will be explained, and examples will be given, both in the USA and Europe, of how the protocol was used to reduce energy consumption and energy dependence, while also reducing CO₂ emissions. Regardless of how strong an impact CO₂ reduction may have for Climate Change issues, a reduction of CO₂ is guaranteed to produce energy benefits, monetary benefits and can even enhance national security. For all of these reasons, we need the CO₂ canary.

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