

## **The Smile Is So Wide I Can See It From Here...**

Sometimes when I write my column I really have to think about some topic I think would be interesting to all of you. Other times, there are so many things I could write about that it is hard to figure out which one to choose. Given the fire hose that the new administration turned on just a week ago, it is the latter situation that I find myself in. As you can guess, one of the easiest - and most important - things to write about in this new situation is clean energy.

When I did my post-election column in November, I pointed out that one of the things that could not simply be thrown under the bus by a new administration is clean energy. You have all seen the numbers. Wind, Solar, Storage, Microgrids, etc are all looking good. They can't be stopped.

But what I am bothered by right now is that we as a nation could lose out by not seizing upon the upside of clean energy - both in the long run, and in the long reach across oceans and isthmuses.

I have long subscribed to the idea that we as the U.S. ought to be looking at our situation in clean energy, demand response, grid modernization, etc. as equivalent to a several touchdown lead going into the second half against a really good opponent. If we just keep playing hard and don't sit on our lead, we can really do well, and maybe expand our lead.

Are we in the lead? I have mentioned before that back in 2004, DOE asked me to form a group of companies and organizations to represent the U.S. in the first demand response project ever taken on by the International Energy Agency. The project turned out to be mainly one of the other countries learning from us, as they were very far behind the U.S. on DR and related areas.

Jumping to the present, I am presently working for a client on assessing DR in other parts of the world. Guess what - we are still ahead, not only on DR but other aspects of grid modernization.

So what are we doing with our lead? Some days it seems like the new administration is either not thinking about it or just doesn't care.

But countries like China do care. While they are rightly concerned as to whether there a bigger problem could arise - like say an all-out trade war - they must be feeling pretty good about their prospects in technology development and trade related to electricity modernization and clean energy. If the U.S. truly pulls up the gangplank and acts as though the rest of the world doesn't matter, then why shouldn't China have a smile on its face?

Not only is China poised to move to capitalize on clean energy, based on its at-home capacity and its strong presence in Africa and other developing areas, but the country is coming to the realization that climate change needs to be dealt with, and from my vantage point seems to not be willing to engage anymore in a game of chicken with the U.S. to see who blinks first and addresses GHG emissions. And what is one of the prime ways to address emissions? Clean energy! Nice intertwinement, eh?

So does it matter if China is the world leader on clean energy and climate technologies?

From the standpoint of getting more clean energy deployed and addressing GHG emissions, I guess maybe you could say that it doesn't because movement on either of those fronts is absolutely needed no matter how it gets done and who does it. But there is more to it than that. What about the jobs? DOE recently put out a jobs report showing that the number of oil, gas and coal jobs (combined) in the US pales in comparison to the number of energy efficiency and clean energy jobs. Yet we have an administration that is focused on that smaller, declining sub-sector and not the sector that is growing the fastest and has the most job-creating potential.

I just don't get it. We as a nation ought to be thinking in terms positioning ourselves to clean up in home and abroad in grid modernization and clean energy. We as a nation should not be thinking about rolling back the energy clock and calendar. We should be the ones with a smile on our face. Instead we are wearing expressions of concern.

What the?

Best,

Dan