Letters, We've Got Letters...

Evan Koblentz

Op-Ed: To quote Paul Shaffer, "we've got lots and lots of letters" about The Efficiency Zone [1] and my recent editorial [2] in our print edition of *ECN*. Here are some highlights, surnames edited to protect their identities.

"Just read your editorial, The Great Motivator. Very good and true. We need renewable energy, or else. But watch your legislators. They are to a person, totally owned by the energy companies. So things like California happen. Big tax incentives to put solar panels on your homes. Buried deep down in the fine print was one hella gotcha. You had to sign up for alternative rate scheduling. End result? Your power bill would more than double. Wiping out any savings for the solar panels. Can't let the poor energy companies lose money you know. As long as this type of protectionism continues, renewable energy is just a dream. A bad dream at that. - Al P."

"I generally get a kick out of the whole idea of the 'Green revolution'. It’s all such a joke. In the next hundred million years does anyone believe for a second that what we do with the relatively pitiful amount of energy we manipulate will significantly change the fate of planet earth? Granted, in the short term we could make life a little rough for human kind if we make a big mess, but long term the Earth will continue to go around the sun like always, with or without us. All the proposed 'solutions' are little more than Band-Aids. If we were serious about solving our energy problems we’d put on a full court press to develop fusion reactors and run the portable devices of the world (cars etc.) on batteries that get charged with nearly free electricity. Tiny quantities of sea water would provide an unlimited, completely clean energy supply for all eternity. Short of that, we’re just playing games. If you’re serious about saving the planet, lobby Congress to fund Fusion research in a big way. - Craig V."

"Saw your editorial in ECN. Note that at 11.4 cents per kWh, 1 watt 24/7 = $1 per year! So every extra watt a product uses, on average, costs the customer another $1/ year (presently...) Many places have hWh prices higher than that... I made two changes in my shop this spring to cut down lighting power... a 5 CFL fixture made where a 2 x 48 inch 80 watt one was operating.... Individual toggle switches above the CFLs [and also] an experimental 12 CFL fixture (I had a 12 socket scrap fixture) - this one is controlled by an RF wireless keypad. In practice I leave on 1 CFL and add more as needed for working light where before I had to turn on a minimum of 80 watts or 150 watts. I seldom need more than 3 CFLs at once. There's a main switch on both fixtures (wall switch). See photos attached... not high tech... no fancy electronic dimmers etc. but a straightforward design to use less watts and light yet of good quality (dimmered light sometimes is not so good!) Best regards, - Premena"

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