

Hijacking Natural Gas #1

Psychologists at Yale University think you need to get your mind right about natural gas. They think the word “natural” is throwing you off. It’s causing you to have a much more positive opinion about this resource than you should. You better listen to them. They know stuff and you don’t.

Yale University has an impressively large program devoted to analyzing what you think about climate change, why you think it... and if you think the wrong things... how to get you to think better. Aren’t you glad the highly-educated people at Yale are so concerned about your inability to think for yourself?

The most recent study by Yale’s Program on Climate Change Communication asks the question, “Should it be called “natural gas” or “methane”? The researchers note that the American public perceives natural gas much more favorably than oil or coal. It’s obvious they don’t like that.

So, they put their analytical minds and research capabilities to the task of explaining the “science” of why your mind is just not right on natural gas. The researchers polled close to 2,000 American adults. They asked these people to rate their positive and negative feelings about one of the four terms – “natural gas,” “natural methane gas,” “methane,” or “methane gas.” The Yale PhDs also asked their subjects to tell them what came to mind after hearing the words “natural gas” and “methane.”

As you might expect, “natural gas” caused people to come up with such positive words as “energy,” “cooking,” “heating,” “clean,” and “fracing”. Conversely, “methane” brought to mind the words, “gas,” “cows,” “greenhouse,” “warming,” “climate,” and “pollution.”

Clearly, the research shows that the word “natural” is a big problem for those people who want to persuade you that using natural gas is bad for humanity. The word “natural” is causing you to think the wrong things... positive things... like heating your home, cooking your food, generating your electricity, or the manufacturing of modern products. It’s hard to get you to hate natural gas when it’s just so darn useful.

But, if there was a way to cancel the term “natural gas” in favor of “methane gas,” that might get you to think about those negative words instead of the positive ones. It seems like the people at Yale are trying to manipulate us, doesn’t it? They’re clever people. But we’ve got some smarts as well. We know how to ask the right questions.

For example, if the people at Yale are so concerned about the human potential to change the climate, why are they so eager to get you to think negatively about natural gas? They must know that the United States is leading the world in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It's happened because of the shale gas revolution.

America has dramatically increased its use of natural gas in electricity generation, which in turn has lowered emissions. And natural gas is abundant, affordable and it burns clean. Does it make sense that the people at Yale would be attacking the one energy resource that has by far done the most to achieve their primary goal?

Here's the question that we should all be asking of the psychologists, statisticians, pollsters and communication specialists at Yale. What's the real motivation behind this "research"? Could it be that Yale is driving an agenda favored by the billionaire-funded foundations and possibly foreign governments that contribute giant sums of money to support their research?

We'll answer that question in Part 2 of "Hijacking 'Natural' Gas."

For the Clear Energy Alliance, I'm Mark Mathis.



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