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A lesson from Blair on emissions pact

PROponents OF the regional greenhouse gas initiative should have paid closer attention to the struggle facing British Prime Minister Tony Blair ("States to move on cutting emissions," Page A1, Dec. 2).

Blair, once an ardent Kyoto advocate, recently said: "The truth is no country is going to cut its growth or consumption substantially in the light of a long-term environmental problem. To be honest, I don't think people are going, at least in the short term, to start negotiating another major treaty like Kyoto."

Blair's statement comes as data from the European Environmental Agency show that the majority of the European Union's original 15 member states are not on track to meet their emission reduction targets. Economic analyses show that Britain, Germany, Italy, and Spain will face reduction in GDP and increased unemployment if they enforce the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol.

The prospects are no better for US states that fall under the regional initiative's proposal. The economic consulting firm Charles River Associates has analyzed the impact of such regulations on behalf of the American Council for Capital Formation and found that under the regional proposal, household annual consumption in Massachusetts would fall by \$2,637 in 2010 and by \$3,137 in 2020. The Commonwealth would also see a loss of over 22,500 jobs in 2010 and a 1.7 percent reduction in gross state product by 2020. In addition, state budget receipts would decline by \$340 million in 2010.

Governors of other Northeast states should have followed Governor Romney's lead and considered these findings and the harsh economic realities before agreeing to limit power plant emissions.

MARGO THORNING, Senior vice president American Council for Capital Formation, Washington, D.C.