

As we head into the summer driving season and gasoline prices are again creeping up, the administration has announced plans to explore opening up more off-shore areas for exploration and drilling. On the one hand this can be lauded as a positive step.

On the other hand, it is too little, much too late to have any meaningful or long-term effect on what Americans pay at the pump any time soon, if at all.

Indeed, if increasing domestic energy production was really a priority, the administration would direct the EPA to remove its many roadblocks and barriers to energy production. In fact, abolishing the EPA altogether would do much to improve our country's economy.

Instead of protecting the environment as they are supposed to do, most of what they do simply chills the economy.

Polluters should be directly liable in court to any and all parties they harm, rather than bureaucrats at the EPA.

Of course, last week's announcement was couched in terms of removing barriers and red tape. However, the fact that we had these barriers in the first place is yet another reminder of how the energy market is hampered and controlled by bureaucrats and central planners in Washington, rather than the demands of the people and the decisions of private investors.

Consider how extremely negative our government's reaction has been to other governments around the world that have nationalized their oil and energy industries, such as Venezuela and Iran. We deposed a democratically elected leader in Iran in 1953 for this very reason.

Yet the level of involvement of our government and bureaucrats in energy is nearly absolute.

Of course, the only thing worse than our government dictating energy decisions to its own citizens is our government dictating energy decisions to the citizens of other countries.

Along with the waste of prohibitions that leave our own natural resources untapped is the waste our government perpetrates with subsidies to alternative fuel sources. There is certainly profit to be made in perfecting cheaper, cleaner fuel sources, but government subsidy programs interfere with finding realistic long-term solutions. Subsidies divert resources towards certain politically-favored fuel types while ignoring others. If the market were left alone, private investors would put their own capital into the most promising alternative fuels.

Instead, due to government incentives, resources are concentrated into politically chosen endeavors that could very well end up being dead ends.

Meanwhile, precious time and money is wasted.

The government has the opposite of the Midas touch. This has been observed over and over by the reduced quality and rising prices in every private industry in which it entangles itself.

Yet somehow people still seem willing, even eager, to relinquish to government control the most important and sensitive portions of our economy and society.

Education, healthcare, and energy are all unfortunate examples of industries that are in my opinion, far too important to be left to government control when it is the market that has the golden touch.