



Special Focus: Politics and Post-Pandemic Prosperity

As Covid-19 cases in the United States spiral upward, the immediate future of our economy moves out of focus. States retreat from reopening plans, and many fear that renewed shutdowns will become necessary. Weekly initial jobless claims continued to trend lower, notching 99,000 fewer claims than 1 week ago. However, with 1.3 million people newly out of work ([CNBC](#)) and existing extended unemployment benefits set to expire at the end of the month, our economy may see another pullback in consumption. Despite this, US markets trended higher, with the Dow Jones up 1.0%, the S&P 500 up 1.8%, and the Nasdaq up 4.0% for the week.

Politics, it seems, will determine much of the post-Covid19 economy. Relief packages have supported particular industries while others were forced into late-stage lobbying for concessions. Despite record-setting relief packages, it is clear that more is needed. Why not take the opportunity to thoughtfully consider what post-pandemic prosperity looks like, and what policies will get us there? To that end, House Democrats passed a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure bill last week ([NY Times](#)), and this week, the bipartisan Select Committee on Climate Crisis in the House released their action plan ([House.gov](#)). Many of these efforts are being dismissed outright. Responding to the House infrastructure bill, the Senate Majority Leader called it a “multithousand page cousin of the Green New Deal, masquerading as a highway bill.” ([NY Times](#))

Should we shape our country’s future with continued deference to the carbon economy? The viability of fossil fuels was unfavorable before the pandemic: in two-thirds of the world, solar and wind energy are the cheapest new energy solutions. ([BloombergNEF](#)) We highlight natural gas as no exception to this trend: will investments in new natural gas utilities be good money thrown after bad? As Massachusetts Senator Markey puts it, “The urgent need to address the climate crisis means we can’t make reckless investments now that will have to be paid off for decades... We have to consider clean options, which, fortunately for consumers, are also cost-effective.” ([NY Times](#)) Though the International Energy Agency increased its 2020 forecast for oil demand, the organization noted that the energy sector remains vulnerable to the historic shocks of demand contraction from the coronavirus. ([Reuters](#)) Meanwhile, three major pipeline projects have halted: a judge ordered the Dakota Access Pipeline drained while an environmental study is completed ([NY Times](#)); the Supreme Court let a key ruling stand that prevents a necessary environmental permit from being issued to Keystone XL ([SF Chronicle](#)); and energy companies announced they would cancel the \$8 billion Appalachian Trail Pipeline over continued uncertainty and higher-than-expected costs and delays ([HuffPost](#)). As was reflected in the [Op-Ed](#) by Generation, “We must build back the economy better, together. That means a resilient, healthy, fair and zero-carbon economy. Our ability to meet the challenges of future pandemics, the climate crisis and inequality depends on it.”

The House Select Committee on Climate Change's Action Plan has the goals of one, a clean-energy economy, and two, "a healthy, resilient, and just America." ([House.gov](#)) In other words, they are looking for a carbon transition with environmental and economic justice. Bloomberg reporter Eric Roston hit the nail on the head in his column this week: "racism is a systemic problem impossible to separate from the institutions and networks that perpetuate it. So is climate change, but it isn't talked about that way nearly often enough. The people who write laws and set policy get up every morning and make decisions that wave climate change on through, a fact that rarely factors into scientific reports, policy studies, and popular books on climate." ([Bloomberg](#)) More to the point, systemic racism has placed pollution and environmental disasters at the doorstep of communities of color. We say kudos to those trying to shape policies with more just outcomes.

We are more than 100 days into the pandemic changing almost every aspect of life-as-we-know it, and the burdens still seem heavy: Covid-19 impacts Black and brown communities and low-wage workers disproportionately, support for small-business seems soft next to the resources given to larger companies, and it appears that job loss will be stickier than initially imagined. For those of us fighting for the underserved and the overlooked, life in the pandemic can feel like trial by fire. If that is you, hang in there! Remember that in stressful times, you can make stress work for you ([NY Times](#)) and that tireless toil is best served by rest, restoration and a return to passion. Kudos to Lateefah Simon for all her efforts as BART President to dismantle the legacy of racism, and to the others also celebrated in this [article](#) about Bay Area activism.

Have a wonderful weekend and contact us with any questions or concerns!

Weekend Reads

RBC [Global Insight Weekly July 9, 2020](#)

RBC [Global Insight Monthly July 2020](#)

NY Times [It's 2022. What Does Life Look Like?](#)

The Economist [How Jobs, Bosses, and Firms May Improve After the Crisis](#)

WealthManagement.com [Office Race: Truths About Being a Black Woman in Wealth Mgmt](#)

Wall Street Journal [The Disparate Racial Impact of Requiring a College Degree](#)

Wall Street Journal [How a Lincoln-Douglas Debate Led to Historic Discovery](#)

Medium [The Tesla bombshell almost nobody is talking about](#)

NY Times [Robinhood Has Lured Young Traders, Sometimes With Devastating Results](#)

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