**Earth Science Issue 3, Option 2: A Comeback for Coal**

***ESI 3 is due in the Brightspace assignment folder before class on April 20***

On March 28, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order repealing the Obama era ‘Clean Power Plan’ that aimed, in part, to limit carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants. The new administration has lifted a moratorium on granting new coal leases for federal lands. Despite these steps, some industry watchers argue that the coal industry will continue to struggle to compete with the booming natural gas industry, and a small but rapidly rising renewable energy sector. Others insist that so-called ‘clean coal’ is a critical energy resource needed to meet rising energy demand in the U.S. and abroad.

For all ESI assignments, your response should include **three parts**. The **first part** should be a brief summary of this event/issue (with two creditable sources cited), the **second part** should focus on the **questions** listed below (with at least two creditable sources), and the **third part** should be a personal response describing how your understanding of the science has impacted your perspective of this issue. Note that this last part is not just a statement of your perspective, but a reflection on how knowing the background science affects your perspective.

**Questions:**

(1) What is the status of coal in the US economy?

(2) What factors have driven changes in coal usage, and what have been the effects of recent policy changes?

(3) What is ‘clean coal’? How do proponents argue it will benefit society and the environment? What do critics assert regarding the viability or practicality of ‘clean coal’?

**NOTE: Due to the politically controversial nature of this subject, work hard to find sources that seem to be objective and fact-driven rather than opinion pieces. Do not submit a regurgitated polemic for or against certain policies but rather a well-researched and reasoned treatment of a complex issue.**

**Format for all ESI assignments:**

* 1-2 pages, 12 point, Times New Roman font
* Double spaced, no extra lines between paragraphs, begin on first line of page 1
* Put name, date, and course assignment in the header, single spaced (example above).
* There should be no direct quotations in your response.
* Citations should be in APA format, with parenthetical in-text citations (author, date) and a reference list at the end. Reference list does not count toward your page limit. This website shows how to follow this citation style, which is commonly used in the sciences. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>
* Check out this website to help evaluate whether your sources are credible: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/02/>. Note that groups that have a specific agenda other than education or spreading of science are likely not credible sources of science. News media is fine for summarizing your event, but should not be relied on for scientific information.

**Grading Rubric:**

30 pts - Included everything in the assignment (three parts, answered all questions, formatted correctly, citations/references included, proper length)

30 pts - Content was complete and correct

30 pts - Response is clear and coherent (this means it has to be well written, proofread, etc.)

10 pts - Response was particularly thoughtful and/or creative