Choose from the following topics for your policy paper; you need to investigate current (and pending) policies, legislation, economic implications, taxation and subsidies, regulations, and environmental issues in addition to the specific questions which may be stated next to the particular topic below. Where applicable, advocate and discuss changes in the policies to increase (or decrease) the potential usage of that technology. Also identify the barriers to adopt new regulations if you believe any are warranted.

a) US Energy Exports: Comprehensively explore whether the U.S. should export natural gas or refined petroleum products.

b) Hydrofracturing for natural gas production: Its environmental impact on water supply and air quality, including possible connection to seismic activity and injection of chemicals as part of fracturing operations.

c) Nuclear Power: Should U.S. nuclear power generation be increased? Are there the appropriate amount of regulations in place and effective regulatory structure? What are the barriers? What types of U.S. policy changes are warranted (or are none needed)?

d) Tax credits to encourage renewable generation: What are the incentives in place for development of renewable generation on the grid? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each, such as the Production Tax Credit (PTC) and Investment Tax Credit (ITC)? How might the regional differences in renewable resources affect the choice of optimal policy instrument selection?

e) The XL pipeline: transporting oil from Canadian oil sands has been a contentious issue with Congress (vs. President) due to regulatory delays on siting of the pipeline. What are the projected economic impacts of the XL pipeline to the different regions? Given existing policies on exports of refined motor fuel, will the construction of the pipeline have a meaningful impact on US retail gasoline prices (cite academic research, not lobbying group data) and why? Are there other related policies that you see that would need to be changed and why?

You selection of the topic should be turned in by October 1st. If you have any questions or clarifications needed about any one of the potential topics, get them answered during September to meet the Oct 1st selection date and so you can have a clear focus for the paper.

In addition to the policy project report (7-10 pages, 2000-3000 words), make one summary slide of your recommendations.

The report grading will be based on report organization, quality of writing, persuasiveness of your arguments, thoroughness of literature review and analysis, presentation of information (use of figures and tables), conclusions/impact of these policies, and references.

All reports should have an abstract, table of contents, main body, conclusions, and references. Sample reports will be posted on the course website.

**Policy Paper Grading Rubric:**

Report Organization ______/5 pts
Quality of Writing ______/10 pts
Presentation of Information ______/15 pts
Persuasiveness of Argument ______/30 pts
Conclusions/Policy Impacts ______/30 pts
Thoroughness of Literature Review ______/5 pts
References ______/5 pts
Comments: