Sure, the economy is still hurting, and unemployment levels are unbearable and inequitable. But in terms of the desire to reduce climate disruption, are we better off now than we were before the recession hit? I am far from the first person to ask this question, but evidence pointing in a certain direction continues to build.

Earlier in the month, the Associated Press reported on a government study indicating that the "U.S. births fell in 2008, probably because of the recession." There is little doubt that trimming U.S. population growth is one of the biggest favors we could do for the planet. How about electricity sales? The U.S. Information Agency reports that "total U.S. retail sales of electricity were 3,733 million MWh in 2008, a 0.8 percent decrease from 2007 to 2008. Nationally, this decline can be attributed to a slowing economy." The same agency reports that electricity sales in 2009 were down to 3,575 million MWh, a reduction of an additional 4%. In the meantime, crude oil and petroleum imports in recent years look like this:

Credit this one to the double-whammy of high crude high prices followed by the recession.

So what do we do about it — throw another monkey wrench into the gears of the economy? Shut down educational institutions such as ours to reduce the potential for innovations leading to economic growth? Not good options. But the energy curves are trending in the right direction now. This is the time to be doubly aggressive about energy efficiency, mass transit, fuel efficiency, and other strategies to make certain that the slopes don't get a chance to turn back toward the north.