

Most the post-debate commentary focuses on the “horse race” perspective — which candidate lost or gained ground? But substance matters, too. Romney made it absolutely clear that he’s in favor of pumping as much carbon in the atmosphere as possible. Among other things, he staunchly defended tax loopholes favoring the oil industry and [attacked](#) financial aid to renewable energy. Here are some of his key other comments:

- “And, by the way, I like coal. I’m going to make sure we can continue to burn clean coal. People in the coal industry feel like it’s getting crushed by your policies. I want to get America and North America energy independent so we can create those jobs.”
- “On government land, your administration has cut the number of permits and licenses in half. If I’m president, I’ll double them, and also get the oil from offshore and Alaska. And I’ll bring that pipeline in from Canada.”
- “Get us energy independent, North American energy independent. That creates about 4 million jobs.”

As I’ve [posted](#) previously, the claim of 4 million jobs assumes very optimistic figures for future production. Even a *Wall Street Journal* writer said it was unclear whether those figures were prescient or just “another starry-eyed fantasy.” And in [another post](#), I’ve explained that the jobs figure is based on applying Paul Krugman’s Keynesian economic model, which Romney rejects. So the job claim could conceivably be right — but only if everything else that Romney has ever said about the economy is wrong.

The more fundamental question, of course, is what these policies would do to global climate and how they would harm future generations. If our descendants could vote, that’s the issue they’d care the most about.