**How to Cut Evidence Handout 2**

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Before everyone had a personal computer, debaters used to photocopy articles out of magazines or newspapers, then use scissors to cut the most important piece of information out of the paper and paste it to an index card. After the arts and crafts were finished, the debater then had to write the source information and a tag line on the card. The cards were filed in boxes that debaters carried with them from tournament to tournament. This is how debate evidence came to be called cards. Today, we still cut evidence, but we do it by cutting and pasting on the computer and printing our “cards” on normal paper. The way we carry it to debate tournaments may have changed, but the method for “cutting” and “tagging” remains the same.

**Raw Material**

In preparation for the topic, Resolved: The United States federal government should adopt a carbon tax, let’s examine a piece of an article produced by the Congressional Budget office:

Neither the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) nor the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation has published an estimate of how much revenue a carbon tax might produce. However, CBO has extensively analyzed policies, known as cap-and-trade programs, that would similarly set a price on CO2 emissions. Those analyses suggest that a carbon tax that covered the bulk of CO2 emissions or the carbon content of most fossil fuel consumed in the United States could generate a substantial amount of revenue. For example, in 2011, CBO estimated that a cap-and-trade program that would have set a price of $20 in 2012 to emit a ton of CO2 (and increased that price by 5.6 percent each year thereafter) would raise a total of nearly $1.2 trillion during its first decade.1 In addition, total U.S. emissions of CO2 would be about 8 percent lower over that period than they would be without the policy, CBO estimated.

Source: Dinan, Terry. [Senior Advisor at the Congressional Budget Office] “Effects of a Carbon Tax on the Economy and Environment.” Congressional Budget Office. 2013. Web. Accessed January 2, 2016. (p.1-2)

When preparing a “card,” the idea is to select the most valuable pieces of information and nothing more. Particularly for Public Forum Debate, it is essential that the debater present pertinent information in the most concise way possible. The article above presents two positive impacts of implementing a cap-and-trade type tax: generating a massive revenue for the federal government, and reducing CO2 emissions. The debater will break this article down into two cards in the following manner:

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1. CARD ONE

For example, in 2011, CBO estimated that a cap-and-trade program that would have set a price of $20 in 2012 to emit a ton of CO2 (and increased that price by 5.6 percent each year thereafter) would raise a total of nearly $1.2 trillion during its first decade.

1. CARD TWO

In addition, total U.S. emissions of CO2 would be about 8 percent lower over that period than they would be without the policy, CBO estimated.

**Preparing the Cutting:**

Once the article is cut, a “tag” must be assigned to the information. Tags should be no more than seven words long, and read like bullet points not full sentences. Looking at the first cutting, we can come up with several ways to bullet point what that information says such as:

1. Cap-and-trade would generate $1.2 trillion in revenue

Or

1. Cap-and-trade helps government

For example, in 2011, CBO estimated that a cap-and-trade program that would have set a price of $20 in 2012 to emit a ton of CO2 (and increased that price by 5.6 percent each year thereafter) would raise a total of nearly $1.2 trillion during its first decade.

On the second card we could tag it as follows:

1. Tax reduces emissions

Or

1. Reduces Emissions

In addition, total U.S. emissions of CO2 would be about 8 percent lower over that period than they would be without the policy, CBO estimated.

****Sourcing: ALL CARDS must have complete sourcing!!!****

The complete source text for the evidence must be present. However, when speaking, the debater will not read the full source unless asked for it by an opposing team or judge. Check your district’s rules for what material must be audibly announced. In a district where author and year are required, it is suggested that you add that information at the beginning of the card so that you do not forget to read it when speaking. Your finished cards will look like this:

Cap-and-trade would generate $1.2 trillion in revenue

Dinan, 2016. For example, in 2011, CBO estimated that a cap-and-trade program that would have set a price of $20 in 2012 to emit a ton of CO2 (and increased that price by 5.6 percent each year thereafter) would raise a total of nearly $1.2 trillion during its first decade.

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Reduces emmissions

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\*\*\* Important Note \*\*\* In some districts you may be able to omit speaking certain words from the evidence as long as you do not alter the intent of the card. In the first card above, you might want to omit the “for example” because it is extraneous. The actual card MUST include the full text but you may gray out the material you do not intend to speak aloud as this helps the eye travel to the next spoken word. For example, (The debater reads aloud everything in black while skipping grayed words):

Cap-and-trade would generate $1.2 trillion in revenue

Dinan, 2016. For example, in 2011, CBO estimated that a cap-and-trade program that would have set a price of $20 in 2012 to emit a ton of CO2 (and increased that price by 5.6 percent each year thereafter) would raise a total of nearly $1.2 trillion during its first decade.

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**Organizing Cards:**

****As you create cards, organize them by category (not just Pro and Con or Aff and Neg) so that you have several cards for each category. Cards should be listed in order of the best evidence (most impact) to worst. In the example of the topic using the evidence above, the Pro side might have the following categories into which they compile evidence:****

****Global Warming is Real  
Carbon Tax will save the Environment  
Carbon Tax provides other benefits****