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Opinion | The Cold Reality of Buffalo

The Editorial Board

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The storm death toll is a reminder that reliable energy saves lives.

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Western New York State was hit with more snow on Tuesday, adding to the winter assault that has already killed 28 in Buffalo in the last week's storm and deep freeze. The deaths underscore that even in this age of global warming anxiety, cold weather kills more people each year than does excessive heat.

As readers of these pages know, that's a point our contributor Bjorn Lomborg has been making for years. He wrote in November that between 2000 and 2019 in the U.S. and Canada, an average of 20,000 people died from heat each year compared to more than 170,000 from cold.

"Despite the climate narrative, almost everywhere cold is much more deadly than heat," Mr. Lomborg tweeted on Monday. "Cheap and reliable energy to keep us warm used to be the hallmark of

prosperous countries; no more because of our climate obsession."

That last point is the crucial one, as we've learned again this December. Winter often means bitter cold, and reliable heating means the difference between life and death. This is something Americans have long taken for granted, but some relatively mild recent winters in North America may have led to public complacency. In the last week the fossil fuels despised by the climate lobby have saved the electrical grid and many lives.

This is simply a statement of fact, not an assertion about climate change. One of the unfortunate trends in media these days is to politicize the weather in service of climate policy. That's especially true of summer heat and hurricanes, though some are trying to blame the recent cold snap on climate change.

We'll stick with calling it winter weather until there's evidence to conclude otherwise. Meantime, Americans need affordable energy to keep from shivering in winter as much or more than for air conditioning in summer.

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