

The Obama climate monarchy

Using the EPA, CEQ and other federal agencies to fundamentally transform America

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ISIS terrorists continue to butcher people, while hacking into a French television network. Iran's quest for nuclear weapons remains on track. In a nation of 320 million people, American businesses hired only 126,000 workers in March, amid a pathetic 62% labor participation rate. Wages and incomes are stagnant.

And yet President Obama remains fixated on one obsession: dangerous manmade climate change. He [blames it](#) for everything from global temperatures that have been stable for 18 years, to hurricanes that have not made US landfall for nearly 9.5 years, and even asthma and allergies. He is determined to use it to impose energy, environmental and economic policies that will "fundamentally transform" our nation.

He launched his war on coal with a promise that companies trying to build new coal-fired power plants would go bankrupt; implemented policies that caused oil and gas production to plunge 6% on federal lands, even as it rose 60% on state and private lands; proclaimed that he will compel the United States to slash its carbon dioxide emissions 28% below 2005 levels by 2025, and 80% by 2050; and wants electricity prices to "necessarily skyrocket." His Environmental Protection Agency has led the charge.

EPA has targeted power plants that emit barely [3% of all mercury](#) in US air and water, saying this will prevent IQ losses of an undetectable "0.00209 points." On top of its recent "Clean Power Plan," EPA is taking over what used to be state roles, demanding that states [meet CO2-reduction](#) mandates by reorganizing the "production, distribution and use of electricity." The agency justifies this latest power grab through a tortured 1,200-page reinterpretation of a 290-word section of the Clean Air Act.

The injuries, abuses and usurpations have become too numerous to count, and involve nearly every federal agency – as the President seeks to make the states and Executive and Judicial Branches irrelevant in his new monarchical "do as I tell you, because I say so, or else" system of government.

Now even the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is getting involved, by dramatically retooling the 1970 National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA requires that federal agencies consider the impacts of their significant decision-making actions on "the quality of the human environment," anytime they issue permits for projects, provide government funding or conduct the projects themselves.

The law has avoided many needless impacts but has also enabled activists to delay or block projects they oppose on ideological grounds. The new [White House/CEQ "guidelines"](#) were issued on Christmas Eve 2014, to minimize public awareness and response. They require that federal agencies henceforth consider potential impacts on climate change, whenever they provide permits, approvals or funding for any federal, state or private sector projects, on the assumption that such projects will always affect Earth's climate.

Problems with the new diktats are far too numerous for a single article, but several demand discussion.

First, CEQ uses US carbon dioxide emissions as proxy for climate change. This assumes CO2 is now the dominant factor in climate and weather events, and all the powerful natural forces that ruled in past centuries, millennia and eons are irrelevant. It presumes any increases in US "greenhouse gases" correlate directly with national and global climate and weather events, and any changes will be harmful. It also considers emissions from China and other countries to be irrelevant to any agency calculations.

Second, CEQ employs the same ["social cost of carbon"](#) analyses that other agencies are using to justify appliance, vehicle and other efficiency and emission standards. This SCC assessment will now examine alleged *international* harm up to 300 years in the future, from *single project* emissions in the *United States*, despite it being impossible to demonstrate any *proximate relationship* between asserted global climate changes and any US project emissions (which are generally minuscule globally).

Moreover, the entire SCC analysis is based on arbitrary, fabricated, exaggerated and manipulated *costs*, with no *benefits* assigned or acknowledged for using hydrocarbons to improve, safeguard and save

countless lives – or for the role that rising atmospheric [carbon dioxide](#) plays in improving crop and other plant growth, thereby feeding more people, greening our planet and bolstering wildlife habitats.

Third, the expensive, time-consuming, useless, impossible exercise is made even more absurd by CEQ's proposed requirement that agencies somehow calculate the adverse global climatic impacts of any federally approved project that could emit up to 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide or its equivalents per year. A single shopping mall, hospital or stretch of busy highway could meet this threshold – triggering endless “paralysis by analysis,” environmentalist litigation, delays and cost overruns.

Fourth, CEQ also wants agencies to somehow evaluate “upstream” and “downstream” emissions. In cases reviewing highway or hospital projects, this would entail examining emissions associated with mining, processing, shipping and using cement, steel, other building materials and heavy equipment *before and during* construction – and then assessing emissions associated with people and goods that might conceivably be transported to or from the facility or along the highway *following* construction.

CEQ likewise wants project proponents to offset these alleged impacts with equally spurious mitigation projects, which will themselves be subjected to still more analyses, contention, litigation and delays.

Fifth, the proposed CEQ guidelines would supposedly evaluate any and all adverse impacts allegedly caused by climate changes supposedly resulting from fossil fuel use and CO2 emissions. But they do not require federal agencies to assess harms resulting *from projects delayed or blocked* because of the new climate directives. Thus agencies would endlessly ponder rising seas and more frequent and/or severe hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and droughts that they might attribute to particular projects.

However, they would not consider the many ways people would be made *less safe* by an analytical process that results in more serious injuries and deaths, when highway improvements, better levees and other flood protections, modern hospitals and other important facilities are delayed or never built.

Nor has CEQ factored in the roles of ideologically motivated anti-development bureaucrats in the federal agencies – or the ways Big Green campaigns and lawsuits are sponsored by wealthy far-left foundations, [Russian money](#) laundered through a Bermuda law firm, and even grants from the government agencies.

Sixth, in many cases, the CEQ rules could actually be counterproductive even to the Administration's purported energy and environmental goals. Its war on coal is intended to replace coal mines and power plants with “more climate-friendly” natural gas. However, CEQ's new guidelines for methane and carbon dioxide could delay or prevent leasing, drilling, fracking, production, pipelining and export of new gas. That would hardly seem a desirable outcome – unless the real purpose is to keep fossil fuels in the ground, increase energy prices, compel a faster transition to unreliable wind and solar power, cause more brownouts and blackouts, destroy jobs, reduce living standards, and keep more people dependent on government welfare and thus likely to vote Democrat.

NEPA is supposed to improve the overall “quality of the human environment,” and thus human health and welfare. That means *all* its components, not merely those the President and his Executive Branch agencies want to focus on, as they seek to use climate change to justify shutting down as much fossil fuel use as possible, in an economy that is still 82% dependent on hydrocarbons.

The CEQ and White House violate the letter, spirit and intent of NEPA when they abuse it to protect us from exaggerated or imaginary climate risks decades from now – by hobbling job creation, families, human health and welfare, and environmental quality tomorrow. That their actions will impact poor, minorities and working classes most of all makes the CEQ proposal even more pernicious.

When will our Congress, courts and state legislatures step up to the plate, do their jobs, and rein in this long Train of Abuses and Usurpations?

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