

More buckets of icy cold energy reality

Democrats, Green New Dealers and UN gabfest attendees need to get ‘woke’ on eco-energy

Paul Driessen

The full-court press is on for climate chaos disaster and renewable energy salvation. CNN recently hosted a seven-hour climate event for Democrat presidential aspirants. Every day brings more gloom-and-doom stories about absurd, often taxpayer-funded pseudo-scientific reports on yet another natural event or supposed calamity that alarmists insist is due to fossil fuels that provide 80% of US and global energy.

MSNBC just hosted another two-day Democrat presidential candidates climate forum at Georgetown University – where I spoke at a [contrarian program](#). Meanwhile, a big Climate March took place in New York City, while protesters tried to [block Washington, DC streets](#). They were all kicking off the UN’s “Global Climate Week” in NYC, featuring a Youth Climate Summit and UN General Assembly event where world leaders will demand “global action” to supposedly stop [the supposed climate crisis](#).

Their standard solution is biofuel, solar, wind and battery power. My recent article dumped [buckets of icy cold reality](#) on several of those claims. They obviously need to be doused with a few more icy buckets.

To reiterate: Wind and sunshine are free, renewable, sustainable and eco-friendly. However, the lands and raw materials required for technologies to *harness* this widely dispersed, intermittent, weather-dependent energy to benefit humanity absolutely are not. In fact, their environmental impacts are monumental.

The Democrat candidates and their supporters want to replace coal and gas backup power plants with batteries, to ensure we have (much more expensive) electricity even when intermittent, weather-dependent wind and sunshine refuse to cooperate with our need for 24/7/365 power for our electricity-based homes, schools, hospitals, factories, businesses, computers, social media and civilization.

So let’s suppose we blanket the United States with enough industrial-scale [wind and solar facilities](#) to replace the 3.9 billion megawatt-hours Americans used in 2018 – *and* we manufacture and install enough king-sized batteries to store sufficient electricity for seven straight windless or sunless days.

We would need something on the order of *one billion* 100-kilowatt-hour, 1,000-pound lithium and cobalt-based battery packs – similar to what Tesla uses in its electric vehicles. (This does not include the extra battery storage required to charge up the cars, trucks and buses we are supposed to replace with EVs.)

All these batteries would support the millions and millions of Green New Deal solar panels and wind turbines we would have to build and install. They would require prodigious amounts of iron, copper, rare earth metals, concrete and other raw materials. And every one of these batteries, turbines and panels would have to be replaced far more often than coal, gas, nuclear or hydroelectric power plants.

Indeed, what are we going to do with all those worn-out and broken-down [turbines, panels](#) and batteries? The International Renewable Energy Agency has said disposing of just the worn out solar panels that the UN wants erected around the world by 2050, under the Paris Climate Treaty’s solar energy goals, could result in [two times the tonnage](#) of the United States’ total plastic waste in 2017!

So another icy cold reality is this: All this “free, renewable, sustainable, eco-friendly, ethical” energy would require the [biggest expansion in mining the world has ever seen](#). But when was the last time any environmentalist or Democrat supported opening a single US mine? They detest mining.

Which brings us to the dirtiest pseudo-renewable, pseudo-sustainable energy secret of all – the one these folks absolutely do not want to talk about: *slave and child labor*.

Because of rabid environmentalist opposition, the United States and Europe no longer permit much mining within their borders. They just import minerals – many of them from China and Russia. And the same groups that extol the virtues of wind, solar and battery power are equally opposed to Western mining companies extracting rare earth, lithium, cadmium, cobalt and other minerals almost anywhere on Planet Earth – even under rigorous Western labor, safety, environmental and reclamation rules.

That means those materials are mined and processed in places like [Baotou, Inner Mongolia](#), and the Democratic Republic of Congo, mostly under Chinese control. They are dug out and processed by fathers, mothers and children – under horrific, unsafe, inhuman conditions that few of us can even imagine ... under almost nonexistent labor, wage, health, safety and pollution standards.

Those renewable energy, high-tech slaves get a few pennies or dollars a day – while risking cave-ins and being exposed constantly to filthy, toxic, radioactive mud, dust, water and air. The mining and industrial areas become vast toxic wastelands, where nothing grows, and no people or wildlife can live.

For cobalt alone – say UNICEF and Amnesty International – over [40,000 Congolese children](#), as young as four years old, slave away in mines, from sunrise to sundown, six or even seven days a week. That’s today. Imagine how many will be needed to serve the “ethical green energy utopia.”

Green New Dealers demand sustainable, ethical, human rights-based coffee, sneakers, T-shirts, [handbags](#) and diamonds. Absolutely no child labor, sweat shop, or toxic, polluted workplace conditions allowed. But they have little or nothing to say about the Chinese, Russian and other companies that run the horrid operations that provide their wind turbines, solar panels, smart grids – and batteries for their [cell phones](#), [Teslas](#), laptops and backup electrical power.

I’ve never seen them make ethical wind turbines, solar panels and batteries an issue. They’ve never protested outside a Chinese, Russian or Congolese embassy, or corporate headquarters in Beijing, Moscow or Kinshasa. They probably don’t want to get shot or sent to gulags.

And just a few weeks ago, California legislators [voted down Assembly Bill 735](#). The bill simply said California would certify that “zero emission” electric vehicles sold in the state must be free of any materials or components that involve child labor. The issue is complicated, the legislators said. It would be too hard to enforce. It would imperil state climate goals. And besides, lots of other industries also use child labor ... they “explained.”

As Milton Friedman said, there is no free lunch. Wind, solar, biofuel and battery power are not free, clean, green, renewable or sustainable. America must not let delusion, dishonesty and ideology drive public policies that will determine our future jobs, prosperity, living standards, freedoms and civilization.

What Green New Dealers are talking about has nothing to do with stopping dangerous manmade climate change – or with *real* sustainability, resource conservation or environmental protection. It has everything to do with increasingly socialist, largely taxpayer-financed activists, politicians, regulators and [crony capitalists](#) controlling people’s lives; dictating our energy use, economic growth, job opportunities and living standards; and [getting richer, more powerful](#) and more privileged in the process.

Meanwhile poor, minority and working class families – pay the price. And destitute families in hungry, impoverished, electricity-deprived nations pay the highest price. China, India, Indonesia and Africa are not about to give up their determined efforts to take their rightful, God-given places among Earth’s healthy and prosperous people. They are not going to stop using fossil fuels to reach their goals.

They are not going to let anyone – including the UN, EU, US Democrats and other eco-imperialists – tell them they can never enjoy those blessings. Or they will be “allowed” to [improve their health](#) and living standards [only at the margins](#), only to levels achievable with wind, solar and cow dung power.

That’s why, even as the United States reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 12% between 2000 and 2017 – India’s plant-fertilizing CO2 emissions [soared by 140%](#) and China’s skyrocketed 194% – further greening Planet Earth. In 2019 alone, [China alone will add more](#) coal-fired generating capacity than what all existing US coal-fired power plants generate.

While all these countries continue using more and more fossil fuels to improve their economies, health and living standards – why in heaven’s name would the United States want to join Green New Dealers and other crazies in an environment-destroying ban-fossil-fuels economic suicide pact?

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