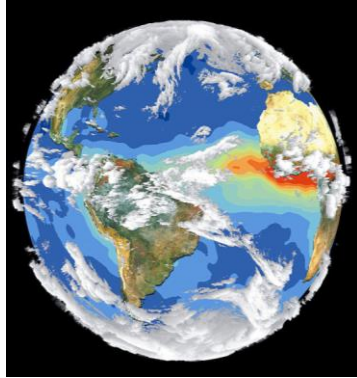




Environmentalism Gone Mad

**How a Sierra Club Activist and Senior EPA Analyst
Discovered a Radical Green Energy Fantasy**

Alan Carlin



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In Summary

I SUPPORTED THE environmental movement in the 1960s and early 1970s in their successful efforts to prevent construction of two dams in the Grand Canyon and in other often largely land use campaigns of the day and by serving as the Chairman of the second largest chapter of the Sierra Club. I continue to support them in many of their efforts to reduce real pollution and other environmental problems where they advocate real solutions to real problems. I supported them because I believed that their objectives would improve both the environment and the economy. As a result of their success in the Grand Canyon and other campaigns and the public environmental enthusiasm of the 1970s, the environmental movement attracted considerable public support and contributed to creating many new laws and environmental regulatory agencies. In a surprisingly short time, many of the major pollution problems were substantially reduced or at least greatly improved in the US.

I am not arguing for abandonment of the pre-Brundtland Report ideals of the environmental movement but rather abandonment of goals that are not supportable on sound economic, scientific, and legal grounds, such as their current climate campaign. What is needed is not an end of the movement to

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improve the environment but rather a major course correction to bring it back to reality.

The radical environmentalists have built a fantasy world to support their claim that the world's climate will change disastrously unless fossil fuel energy use and production is immediately greatly curtailed by government fiat. When someone challenges their ideology, they brand the challenger a "denier." When they proclaim that CO₂ emissions can and must be reduced by 80%, they conveniently forget that the current standard of living in the developed world is based on the use of fossil fuels. As a result of Congress' rejection of their cap and trade "solution" in 2009-10, they and the Obama Administration proposed that EPA should impose many of the provisions of their cap and trade bill through regulatory fiat despite the lack of a scientific, economic, legal, or constitutional basis for doing so. When surface temperature records fail to support global warming, friendly governments "adjust" the data so that they (somewhat) do. When skeptics present data showing that the alarmists' science is invalid, they are attacked for being in the pay of polluters. When less developed countries say that they do not want to reduce fossil fuels use and lose their chance to escape poverty through economic development made possible by using more fossil fuels, they are told that hundreds of billions of dollars will be given to them by the developed nations if they just play along. The president of the US and the Administrator of EPA call emissions of a trace atmospheric gas (CO₂) essential to life on Earth "carbon pollution" even though it was at vastly higher levels during most of Earth's history with no evidence of adverse effects.

When all this unreality is pointed out, the cooperative mass media attack the authors of the heresy, Democratic senators and representatives demand that anyone employing such individuals supply communications from and information on funding received by the heretics, and the President sanctions mass public attacks on elected officials who question his science and energy policies. Living in a world of unreality is a symptom of madness. Radical environmentalism has gone very, very mad.

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The radical energy environmentalists who have come to dominate most environmental organizations in recent years have used their earlier widespread support to promote a “solution” to climate problems that cannot be achieved in the way proposed. This “solution” would actually make the world worse off both economically and environmentally (as discussed in Chapters 9, 10, and 11).

They believe that fossil fuel use must be greatly reduced primarily because of three potential drawbacks from its use—conventional pollution, alleged climate effects, and the fact that fossil fuel resources are not replaced by nature over human life spans. Fortunately, none of these drawbacks pose a major problem to either humans or the environment and can be overcome without remaking Western society to greatly reduce fossil fuel as radical environmentalists insist is necessary.

Conventional air pollution can and is being controlled in many developed countries—and over-controlled in the US. Happily, there is just no credible evidence that increasing human-caused CO₂ emissions are anything but beneficial to humans and the environment, and especially to plants, which can make good use of all they can get. The key hypothesis that alarmists use to make their case for the alleged adverse effects of increasing CO₂ on climate is invalid according to the scientific method. And the non-renewable characteristic of fossil fuels is not a serious drawback if human ingenuity is allowed to operate through relatively free markets and not curtailed by unjustified government regulations. The huge increase in oil and natural gas output as a result of the recent expansion of the use of fracking and horizontal drilling has again shown this to be the case.

In the last few years the radical environmentalists’ efforts have gone well beyond opposition to carefully selected energy use projects in the US which have particularly adverse environmental effects to active efforts to reduce emissions from whole classes of energy facilities, particularly coal-fueled power plants, and more recently natural gas production and the building of pipelines and

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natural gas export terminals. Their methods now include using civil disobedience, and some affiliated groups oppose capitalism as a system despite its obvious success where it has been used.

The anti-fossil fuel objectives of the radical environmental movement are promoted by a climate-industrial complex (CIC) composed of the principal groups that would benefit from bringing this about. The CIC is a very large enterprise with scientific, propaganda, governmental, and other arms funded mainly by taxpayers, wealthy radical environmentalists, and suppliers of renewable energy systems.

Despite widespread CIC propaganda to the contrary, the CIC is far better funded than the skeptics, who lack any funding by government and lack the tight internal coordination that characterizes the radical environmentalists' activities. The CIC funding by wealthy radical environmentalists is very tightly controlled by multiple interlocking foundations, which serve the purpose of hiding its sources and providing wealthy radical environmentalists with tax deductions for their contributions even though substantial resources appear to be going towards influencing legislation and election campaigns.

Although great progress has been made in solving the more visible conventional US pollution problems, more remains to be done in selected, usually less visible, areas such as non-point water pollution control. Instead of concentrating on these real pollution problems, the radical energy environmentalists have jumped far ahead of the science, which refutes their catastrophic anthropogenic global warming (CAGW) hypothesis, and advocate remaking energy supply system at immense cost by drastically reducing CO₂ emissions. The Obama Administration with a little help from the radical environmentalists, has now attempted to rewrite the Clean Air Act through imaginative but illegal interpretations of it which would allow EPA to require states to implement CO₂ reductions by fuel switching in the electric power sector or by enacting legislative changes outside plant fences that would reduce CO₂ emissions using a number of the approaches rejected by Congress in 2009-10. The

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Administration is also reportedly trying to circumvent the Constitutional requirements for Senate ratification of a new global climate treaty.

The CIC initially claimed that their “solution” of reducing CO₂ emissions would reduce global warming, then when there was no significant warming, prevent climate change, and when there was nothing more than normal climate change (climate has been changing for much of Earth’s history and will undoubtedly continue to do so), to reduce extreme weather. One advantage of their latest objective from their viewpoint is that they can try to point to every unusual storm as “proof” of the need to reduce CO₂ emissions, despite the lack of any objective basis for this.

Unless the President and EPA are stopped by the courts or Congress, much worse than what EPA has so far proposed to reduce CO₂ emissions from power plants is very likely to follow because EPA has opened up a legal hornet’s nest which will allow radical environmental organizations to achieve a stranglehold on the US economy by forcing EPA to restrict the use of fossil fuel energy to any extent they desire. The President has already promised China further US CO₂ emissions reductions beyond those proposed by EPA by 2025. Whether this increment, if it should occur, would be taken entirely from the electric generation system or other areas is uncertain. Their next target appears to be the oil and gas industry, with proposed Federal regulations on methane emissions from oil and gas production.

So in response to unvalidated and much too warm computer models (discussed in Chapter 9) and more recently unsupported assertions as to the effects of increasing CO₂ on extreme weather events (as discussed in Chapter 6), the CIC and the Obama Administration have acted in ways that would give radical energy environmental groups effective control of energy generation and use, the meaning of the Clean Air Act, and some of the Senate’s treaty approval rights through unilateral and in many cases unconstitutional Executive Branch decisions (as discussed in Chapters 6 and 8). The real danger is that freedom of speech and

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the rule of law will be seriously compromised, not the alleged adverse (but actually positive) effects of increasing CO₂ levels that are being used to argue for rebuilding the Western energy supply system at huge expense in dollars and greatly decreased reliability.

Although I continue to support economically, scientifically, and legally justified pollution control, the CIC's radical energy-related efforts will have the effect of reducing economic growth and development and hurting the financially less well-off worldwide rather than reducing measurable, scientifically verifiable, and damaging pollution. In the unlikely event that their prescriptions actually resulted in less global warming, this would harm the environment, the economy, and the human population by slightly increasing the major real climate risk—a new Little or full Ice Age.

So like many radical political movements, the environmentalists have become fanatics, in this case left-wing fanatics. Like most such groups, they have now exceeded the limits imposed by US laws and the Constitution and have resorted to trying to rewrite laws and even the Constitution's separation of powers, undermining the cooperative federalism with the states which is the basis of most Federal environmental laws, and trying to circumvent the Constitution's treaty approval requirements. What started out as an obsession with reducing fossil fuel energy production and use has ended up creating what is likely to be lengthy legal and political battles over the meaning of the Clean Air Act and the Constitution. Even if these climate proposals represented good economics and science, which they do not, I believe that they need to be defeated in order to reduce the increasing threat posed by an imperial Presidency. The laws should be written and treaties approved by Congress, not an increasingly all-powerful Chief Executive intent on imposing his/her will over that of elected representatives in Congress.

The public does not appear to be generally aware of what the Obama Administration is trying to do in its climate/energy policies in terms of what John Boehner has called "aggressive unilateralism" but I would characterize as dictatorial behavior. They need to be

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since this represents a serious threat to American democracy and the rule of law. The public is somewhat more aware of Obama's related efforts in health insurance and immigration, where he is trying to impose his policies by attempting to override laws passed by Congress and the framework imposed by the Constitution. If the Obama Administration is allowed to get away with all this, future presidents may follow their example. The longer it takes for the public to push back against Obama's imperial executive orders, the more extreme he is likely to become to take advantage of what he apparently believes are loopholes in the Constitution that allow him to rule directly without interference by Congress or the laws it enacts. It is important that the Constitution be upheld even in the face of alleged global environmental threats; in this case the threats are bogus anyway. Yet the mainstream press has almost never even discussed the problem. They need to.

The CIC includes sympathetic Western governments, much of the Western climate science establishment, the liberal mass media, left-of-center politicians, and producers of "CO₂ emission-reducing" products in addition to most environmental organizations. Using a sophisticated, massive, and sometimes even government-financed propaganda campaign akin to that portrayed in the novel *1984*, the CIC has proposed to vastly reduce energy use, which is one of the major requirements for economic development and growth, and emissions of a trace gas necessary to life on our planet, carbon dioxide. They claim that their agenda is based on science and sometimes even that science "demands" it. The evidence they have offered for these claims ignores the scientific method, the basis for determining what is and is not valid science. As discussed in Chapter 9, their "science" would have been shown to be invalid if the scientific method had been applied, but it has not. Even if significant reductions in CO₂ emissions could actually be achieved in the Western developed world, they would have little if any effects on climate, particularly since emissions in less developed countries are increasing rapidly.

In Perspective

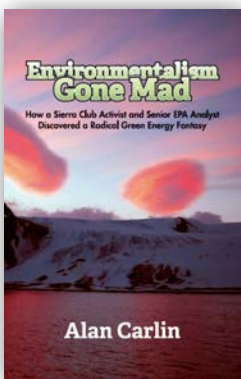
This has been a personal account of how I learned all this, why the mainstream press has managed to get virtually everything wrong and still does, how the US Environmental Protection Agency attempted to hide the truth, and how the Obama Administration now proposes a tsunami of regulations to impose on the American economy to solve a non-problem that it cannot solve in the way it proposes, the science that makes this the case, and what I learned along the way about American government, politics, journalism, and environmentalism. These proposed government-imposed restrictions on energy production and use are not only not worth their huge cost, which would amount to a rate increase on anyone who uses fossil fuel-generated electric power and other selected targets, but would actually damage the environment.

Human use of the energy resources of the Earth was not planned or researched ahead of time; it was rather the “natural” and wonderful outcome of the operation of the free market over several hundred years. It turns out, however, that environmentally responsible use of energy is a source of hope and promise, not doom and gloom or a pretext to abandon a market-driven economy or limited government involvement with the economy. It is these last two policies which have brought the developed world the vast improvement in living standards it now enjoys and has made possible the improvements in the human and natural environment found in the developed world.

I believe I have been consistent—favoring economic growth and development as well as environmental protection. The radical environmental movement claims it is saving the world with policies that will not improve the environment in any perceptible way but will rather slow or even stop economic growth and development. In the less developed world this means continued poverty, disease, hunger, and deprivation. In the developed world it means lower growth in income and welfare, particularly among the less well to do. Making unmeasurable and likely imaginary reductions in global

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warming, “climate change,” or extreme weather events is seemingly more important than making real reductions in poverty and malnutrition. It is the environmental movement that has changed, and no longer deserves my support or anyone else’s as long as they support their current radical energy goals.



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