

Socialist Green New Deal threatens Freedom, Prosperity, and the Environment

Climate Change Weekly #327 (CCW)

Unless your idea of good government and an ideal society is totalitarianism, the Green New Deal (GND) has nothing to recommend it.

As I argued in CCW 313, it would be physically impossible to reach the goals set in Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's (D-NY) and Sen. Ed Markey's (D-MA) socialist GND—a plan to do nothing less than remake the entire economy, sans fossil fuels, while promising full employment, living wages, free health care, and cheap energy from the Heavens for everyone in just over 10 years—and heck, why not throw in the promise of a chicken in every pot (except for vegetarians and vegans, of course), as well?

Even if the GND's goals weren't impossible to obtain within the time allotted, every credible economic analysis I've seen shows its costs would be so high that imposing it would be extremely undesirable. Early estimates indicate the GND would cost nearly \$50 trillion in its first 10 years.

Settling aside the cost of transforming the transportation system and refurbishing the entire stock of housing and commercial structures in the United States, the American Enterprise Institute's Ben Zycher has calculated the cost of decarbonizing the electric power system and meeting GND's social welfare provisions, such as universal health care and free college tuition for everyone, will cost nearly \$9 trillion dollars per year, when the political negotiations are all over.

The American Action Forum calculated GND could cost as much as \$93 trillion dollars, or approximately \$671,010 per household of four, through 2029.

The Heritage Foundation's analysis of GND makes it look positively cheap by comparison. Heritage calculated only the costs of the energy portion of GND, estimating the taxes and regulations limiting carbon dioxide emissions would result in "a peak employment shortfall of over 1.4 million jobs; a total income loss

of more than \$40,000 for a family of four; [and] an aggregate gross domestic product loss of over \$3.9 trillion, by 2024.”

Perhaps recognizing the foolishness of actually attempting to foist this steaming pile of “legislation” on voters, when Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) brought GND up for a vote in the Senate on March 26, not a single senator voted in favor of the bill. Even its authors and cosponsors voted “present” instead of yes.

This ignominious defeat, however, has not stopped more than 100 Democrat or Independent members of the U.S. House and Senate from cosponsoring or publicly endorsing GND, including Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Kristen Gillibrand (R-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)—almost every senator currently vying for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.

Because, for reasons inexplicable to me, GND remains a talking point on the campaign trail and in Congress, my colleague and friend James Taylor, director of the Arthur B. Robinson Center on Climate and Environmental Policy at The Heartland Institute, has written a detailed takedown of the proposal. Although Taylor provides an excellent discussion of GND’s economic costs, the portion of his paper I would like to focus on is the terrible environmental toll GND would impose on wildlife and wildlands in the United States and around the world without increasing governments’ abilities to control the climate.

Taylor writes, “Even if one accepts the dubious and alarming U.N. estimates regarding the temperature impact of CO₂ emissions ... if America were to immediately and completely eliminate all of its CO₂ emissions, it would only mitigate less than two-tenths of a degree C[elsius] of global temperature increase by the end of the century, an amount that’s too small to be measured accurately.”

On the environmental front, Taylor calculates “replacing all existing conventional power plants with wind and solar power would require consuming an amount of land larger than the size of California, ... an unprecedented assault on land conservation and the world’s greatest threat to biodiversity.”

A 2013 Wildlife Society Bulletin documented that although wind turbines produce just 1 percent of U.S. electricity, they already kill at least 1.4 million birds and bats each year, including many endangered and protected species. Taylor writes,

“subsequent analyses found the death toll [of the Green New Deal] is likely 10-20 times greater than the 1.4 million estimate. If accurate, those estimates indicate dramatically increasing wind power could result in the slaughter of more than 100 million birds and bats each year.”

And that’s just the birds and bats. Because habitat loss is the biggest cause of species’ decline, placing industrial wind and solar facilities across the nation would result in the displacement and deaths of millions of animals of other species.

In addition, both wind and solar power require substantial amounts of rare earth elements, the mining, and refining of which produces millions of tons of toxic waste each year. Taylor writes, “An organization called Environmental Progress found solar panels create 300 times more toxic waste per unit of energy produced than nuclear power plants.”

Do you care about the environment? How about the health of the U.S. economy and your own bank account? If so, you should work with The Heartland Institute to bury the Green New Deal, and put politicians who support it into forced retirement.

Source:

<https://www.heartland.org/news-opinion/news/socialist-green-new-deal-threatens-freedom-prosperity-and-the-environment>

[Disclaimer]