



Letters

Winter 2022

Biden's America-Wrecking Climate Agenda

by Steve Milloy, Senior Policy Fellow
As Appearing on RealClearPolitics.com

President Biden is driving fossil fuel-powered America into a wall so that he can replace it with a “green energy”-powered America. The Biden administration emphasizes this as a “transition.” It is not. It’s just a collision that will result in America being totaled.

Since Joe Biden became president, he has done everything in his power to de-power America. On Day 1, he killed the Keystone XL Pipeline, halted new oil and gas drilling on public lands, and rejoined the Paris climate agreement, which commits America to cutting our greenhouse gas emissions but not China’s.

Biden’s Environmental Protection Agency reinstated Obama-era rules to make it more expensive to produce oil and gas, issued rules to make in-

ternal combustion engine-powered cars more expensive, and gave “green” California the unprecedented (and probably unconstitutional) authority to dictate what kind of cars all Americans can drive. Biden has empowered the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission with the authority to block new oil and gas pipelines on the basis of climate concerns, and is continuing to halt new oil and gas drilling on federal lands in defiance of a federal court order.

These and many other anti-fossil fuel actions have raised gasoline prices roughly one dollar per gallon since Biden took office. Then Russia invaded Ukraine, exacerbating an ongoing global energy crisis (worsened by European climate policies). Gasoline prices have increased another 60 cents since the Ukraine invasion, and are not likely to stop rising any time soon.

Normally in response to such an energy crisis, a U.S. president might at least temporarily put aside an unpopular political agenda to ease supply issues and alleviate pain at the pump. Not Joe Biden. He is doing anything but that. Biden first announced during his State of the Union address that he and other allied nations were going to

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CA \$5-7 per Gallon Gas & Energy Costs Will Get More Expensive

by Katie Grimes, Senior Media Fellow
As Appearing in the California Globe



What the country needs isn't 'alternative' energy, or new austerity measures; It's a government that promotes energy development

The first week in December 2018, the United States exported more oil than we imported, for the first time in nearly 70 years. This is known as energy independence. And it happened not because of the previous 50 years of dubious federal “energy programs” heavily regulating oil and gas, while promoting alternative energy, but despite them.

This took place under then-President Donald Trump, who said, “The year 2019 marked the first time in 67 years that American annual gross energy exports exceeded gross energy imports.”

“Then President Donald Trump took office and announced a radical departure from 50 years of received energy ‘wisdom,’” Investors.com explained. “In a speech to the Energy Department months after taking office, he said that for decades leaders peddled the myth of energy scarcity. Most of it is self-imposed, he said. What the country needs, he said, isn't ‘alternative’ energy, or new austerity measures. It's a government that ‘promotes energy development.’”

Which is the exact opposite of what the Biden administration is doing right now, resulting in driving up oil and gas prices to unaffordable levels for many in the nation.

Trump listed actions he was taking to lift federal impediments to energy production during his administration (partial list):

- The United States was the number one producer of oil and natural gas in the world
- Natural gas production reached a record high of 34.9 quads in 2019, following record-high production in both 2018 and 2017
- The United States was a net natural gas exporter for three consecutive years and had an export capacity of nearly 10 billion cubic feet per day
- Withdrew from the unfair, one-sided Paris Climate Agreement
- Canceled the previous administration's Clean Power Plan, and replaced it with the new Affordable Clean Energy rule
- Approved the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines
- Opened up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in Alaska to oil and gas leasing
- Repealed the last administration's Federal Coal Leasing Moratorium, which prohibited coal leasing on Federal lands

And it worked. The Trump administration said the average American family saved \$2,500 a year in lower electric bills and lower prices at the gas pump.

Since last year, my winter gas heating bill jumped nearly 50%, and we keep our daytime temperature below 65 degrees.

What energy independence means to the United States is affordable, reliable oil, natural gas, coal and fuel, which translates into affordable gas prices at the pump, affordable home heating costs, and affordable electricity.

Energy independence isn't complicated: It merely “requires government to get out of the way so that oil companies can get at the vast supplies of good old oil and gas right under U.S. soil,” said Investors.com.

The Institute for Energy Research said we can “thank the oil and

gas industry and its use of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling for that milestone as production in those industries increased a combined 11 percent in 2019. Total U.S. energy production increased by 5.7 percent in 2019 while U.S. energy demand decreased by 0.9 percent.”

“Joe Biden destroyed that in the first few days of office,” Victoria Taft explained at PJ Media Tuesday. “Biden closed the Keystone Pipeline and threw thousands of people out of work, declared the country would cut emissions by 50% by 2030 forcing the use of more expensive so-called ‘green’ energy, halted drilling in Alaska's plentiful ANWR reserves, and just last week, as Americans were confronted with near \$5.00 a gallon gas, he stopped all drilling on federal reserves. And now Russia has invaded Ukraine in a war that is over energy in large part.”

Biden's policies have only helped the Russians, Saudis, and Iran, who greatly benefit now on the backs of Americans. With Russia invading Ukraine, rather than continuing to purchase oil from the Russians as we are still doing, Biden should be firing up the Keystone Pipeline, encouraging more coal production, and imploring (or ordering) the state of California to resume all of its natural gas production. We need all-of-the-above energy production.

Here in California, our gas prices have surpassed \$5.00 per gallon throughout, and in some parts of the state, gas has *reached \$7.00 per gallon.*

This hurts the working classes and the poor the most, which seems like an oxymoron given that Democrats claim they are the Party which cares about the poor and the working classes. What Democrats are instead doing to those they “care about” is forcing them to make financial choices between paying for gas for their cars and heat for their homes, and other things they need. Between inflation

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Saving the forests by cutting them?

by Greg Walcher, Senior Policy Fellow
As appearing in *The Daily Sentinel*

In February 2022, we considered the Biden Administration's 10-year, \$50 billion strategy for addressing the national forest fire crisis. That would more than double the budget of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), to reduce wildfires and restore health to 20 million acres of national forests in the West. Not all across the West, but in a few specific parts of it.

That is an important distinction, because it reveals much about the timing behind this ambitious plan. If you are concerned that Colorado already has over three million acres of dead trees, vast tinderboxes ready to burst into catastrophic infernos, you should know that there is very little in this plan to reassure you. No, the plan focuses on 20 million specific acres of the "wildland urban interface," areas where urban development has so encroached on forests that wildfires are likely to destroy homes.

There is nothing in this plan for the Gunnison, Uncompahgre or Grand Mesa National Forests. Nothing for the White River, Rio Grande or Routt National Forests. Aside from a small fraction of the San Juan near Pagosa Springs, all of the designated "High Risk Firesheds" (is that even a word?) in Colorado are on the Front Range. They include only the national forests close to Denver, Colorado Springs, Boulder and Fort Collins. For the same reason, the areas designated for "treatment" include most of the forests in California. That reason is simple if you understand it has little to do with restoring healthy forests and everything to do with saving homes and communities.

That is a worthy goal. We are all appalled by massive wildfires that

destroy people's homes and lives. But we must not be under any illusion that protecting homes will restore natural, healthy and sustainable conditions to the 190 million acres in America's 155 national forests. What would it take to accomplish that?

The answer requires understanding just how overgrown and unnatural those forests have become. That understanding is sending shock waves across the environmental movement and through the halls of Washington, thanks to a new study in next month's edition of *Forest Ecology and Management*. It is already fueling debate about how to manage dying forests, because it recommends saving them — by cutting billions of trees.

In fact, the study's remarkable conclusion is that the western forests must be thinned by as much as 80%.

A Bloomberg analysis was headlined, "To save Western U.S. forests, cut them way back, study suggests." The study's authors determined that forests could withstand wildfire, drought and insect infestations better if their density were drastically reduced. There are simply too many trees and other plants in overgrown forests competing for limited water. And trees require water to fend off these threats, as trained foresters have always known. Even the unstoppable destruction of the pine beetles was only unstoppable because of overgrowth. Healthy trees produce a resin that plugs the borers' holes, stopping their spread. But producing that resin requires water, so drought-stressed trees have little defense against the bugs, or against the inevitable fires that follow dry and overgrown forests.

Many westerners have sounded this alarm for years, but the warning fell on deaf ears while

federal forest management fell under the control of anti-logging activists who virtually shut down timber management. Now, high-profile news coverage of death and destruction brought on by unhealthy forests and catastrophic fires have led to a re-examination by agency insiders and academics, including the authors of this study.

Lead author Malcolm North, a USFS "research ecologist" and professor at the University of California, calls the need for radical thinning "a fundamentally different approach to growing and managing forests." Prompted by recent disastrous West Coast wildfires, foresters are increasingly leaning toward management based not only on prescribed fires, but also significant mechanical thinning. North added, "We realized there were too many straws in the ground, and that density needed to be way reduced if you're going to make trees resistant to both wildfire and drought."

When the western national forests were created between 1895 and 1908, their average density was between 20-50 trees per acre, with 2-3 foot trunks. Today, those forests average 200-900 trees per acre, less than half that diameter. American Forest Resource Council's Nick Smith writes, "Now is the time for the Forest Service to start making a difference on the ground." Indeed, if we want forests to be as resilient as the historic natural forests were, managers have to make them look more like those forests looked. □

America COMPETES Act: Nancy Pelosi's climate trap

by Steve Milloy, Senior Policy Fellow
As Appearing in the *Washington Times*

The House Republicans have renamed Speaker Nancy Pelosi's "America COMPETES Act" as the "America CONCEDES Act." But COMPETES is worse than that. It should be called the "America BETRAYED Act."

COMPETES, short for "Creating Opportunities for Manufacturing, Pre-Eminence in Technology, and Economic Strength," is being advertised as making America more competitive with China. But COMPETES does nothing of the sort. Instead, the bill makes us perilously dependent on China. And it does this in a backdoor fashion that was missed even by House Republicans.

COMPETES contains a provision stating, "It is the sense of Congress ... that the United States should ... implement the Paris Agreement that significantly advances global climate ambition on mitigation, adaptation, and support."

House Republicans have erroneously concluded that the provision merely urges America to abide by the Paris Agreement. It's an honest mistake. Unless you have followed the climate war over the past 20 years, you might also miss the potential legal and policy significance of that provision.

Former President Barack Obama signed the Paris Climate Accord as an executive agreement (i.e., just administration policy and not legally binding) in 2015 in order to avoid having to submit it to the Senate, which would have rejected it as a legally binding treaty. Then on the basis of his executive authority, former President Donald Trump pulled America out of the Paris Accord in 2017. Finally, on his first day in office, President

Biden recommitted the U.S. to the Paris agreement, once again by executive authority.

Keeping in mind that, per the Constitution, the Senate "makes" treaties by "advice and consent," you can see where the COMPETES language — "it is the sense of Congress" — could be viewed by left-leaning federal judges and courts as close enough for government work to de facto Senate ratification.

You may think that to be a stretch of the law, but when it comes to climate anything is possible. Two examples come to mind.

In the 2007 Supreme Court decision *Massachusetts v. EPA*, the Court held 5-4 that the Clean Air Act authorized the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse gases. It was a shocking decision because EPA regulation of greenhouse gases is nowhere mentioned in the Clean Air Act. And that was no oversight.

Congress never intended for EPA to regulate greenhouse gases. According to the late Michigan Democrat Rep. John Dingell, a co-author of the Clean Air Act, Congress didn't explicitly bar EPA from regulating greenhouse gases because, at the time, Dingell and his co-authors didn't imagine the court would be so "stupid" as to hold otherwise.

Next, under the Constitution, individual states are expressly barred from entering into treaties with foreign countries. But when California's 2013 climate agreement with the Canadian province of Quebec was tested in federal court in 2020, the court left the agreement in place.

The lesson from these cases, is that when it comes to climate and the federal courts, the outcome may be determined essentially by "jump ball." And even if the *Massachusetts v. EPA* decision is overturned this year (the Supreme Court is hearing the case on Feb. 28), such damage to the U.S. economy has been done over the past

15 years.

So it takes a little leap of imagination to see that "sense of Congress" could potentially be held to be de facto "advice and consent" of the Senate. And such "ratification" of the Paris Agreement could provide the Biden with all the authority it imagines it needs to start implementing the Green New Deal agenda without actual Senate ratification or Congress having voted on the details.

Under the Green New Deal agenda, our society would be rapidly decarbonized. The grid would run on wind and solar power, cars would be electric, and plastics and cheeseburgers would be history. Moving past whether this agenda is practically achievable in the first place, the reality is that green technology — like wind turbines, solar panels and electric vehicles — is heavily dependent on Communist China.

As much as 80% the rare earth minerals and metals needed for green technology is either mined or processed in China, according to a recent International Energy Agency report.

Given that COMPETES contains no provisions requiring that green tech components be sourced elsewhere other than Communist China and the Biden administration has offered no serious plan for producing the needed materials in America or at least by reliable allies, COMPETES could essentially doom America to dependence on Communist China, our major geopolitical opponent, to satisfy the Paris Climate Accord obligations and the Green New Deal agenda.

Republicans should run away from COMPETES as fast and as far as possible. If they can't bring themselves to do that, they should jettison any provisions or general approval of anything climate, especially the Paris Climate Accord. They should go one step further and ensure that any mandates for any green technology be premised on the U.S. having an extant supply chain that does not depend on China for necessary materials. ■

Closer than you might think

by Greg Walcher, Senior Policy Fellow
As appearing in *The Daily Sentinel*



Russia's invasion of Ukraine has more pundits than ever talking about the role energy plays in world affairs. Many of TV's most venerated talking heads seem to have discovered, for the first time, that much of Europe depends on Russian oil and gas, and that alternate suppliers, such as the United States, could change that.

Some of us have been saying for years that the world could be a much safer place if the U.S. and its European allies were energy independent, no longer beholden to Russia or the Middle East for their economic security. The new Russian atrocities, though, have heightened Americans' awareness, with many now realizing that world peace, not just economics, is inexorably linked to energy.

The danger is not just to Ukraine, although that historically oppressed nation is once again on the front lines. The entire region faces the same problem. European Union (EU) countries get 40% of their natural gas, and just over 25% of their oil from Russia. Oil and gas exports provide more than a third of Russia's national budget. About 70% of Russia's natural gas and half its oil go to Europe, the EU being Russia's largest trading partner, according to the European Commission.

Europe is vulnerable, but Russian domination is not inevitable. A growing majority of Americans, concerned about the threat of

their own dependence on foreign oil, support significant increases in domestic production.

The Trump Administration opened more lands for energy production and achieved energy independence for America fairly quickly. The U.S. not only became a net exporter of oil and gas, but quickly became the world's largest producer of both — an astonishing achievement, considering that exporting U.S. oil was illegal for decades. By 2021, the U.S. produced 18 million barrels/day, compared to Saudi Arabia's 10.8 million and Russia's 10.5 million.

When Congress finally lifted the ban on oil exports in 2015, U.S. crude oil exports totaled about 500,000 barrels per day, mostly to Canada. Since then, U.S. exports have increased dramatically, surpassing 3 million barrels per day by 2019, and almost all of the increase was headed to Europe and Asia. U.S. exports to Europe reached 1.5 million barrels per day.

By 2020, the U.S. was well on its way to supplanting some of the world's most dangerous regimes as a supplier of energy to its allies. World politics would be transformed if no nation depended on Russia, Iran or Saudi Arabia for oil. That goal was within sight until 2021, when the new Biden Administration began re-implementing anti-fossil fuel policies that have drastically curtailed domestic production and exports. Prioritizing the goal of climate change prevention, official U.S. policy now opposes energy production on public lands, and several planned liquid natural gas export terminals were canceled. Environmental goals trumped both energy independence and world peace.

In truth, weaning Europe from dependence on Russian oil is not insurmountable. We are clos-

er than you might think. Eurostat data shows that virtually every EU country has reduced its dependence on Russian oil since 2018, especially Hungary, Poland, Germany, Netherlands, France and Italy. Poland has also drastically curtailed its dependence on Russian gas, from 100% in 1990 to 50% by 2020. So, while the EU still gets a fourth of all its oil from Russia, it now gets over 10% from the U.S., even despite significant curtailment of energy production under Biden. Thus, it wouldn't take much to reverse the economic calamity facing Europe.

Importantly, EU countries have ramped up their own production, now generating almost 40% of their energy domestically, from coal, lignite and renewables. Germany has put the new Russian gas pipeline on hold, at least temporarily, and may postpone the planned decommissioning of its three largest nuclear power plants.

A close friend and colleague, also an extraordinarily astute observer of world affairs, says two simple changes in U.S. policy would instantly change the equation: re-opening public lands to responsible energy production and allowing completion of the Keystone Pipeline. His view is that "Putin would fold" in the face of even the potential of the U.S. supplanting Russia as a major EU supplier. That will not happen as long as the current administration is so closely tied to the anti-oil environmental industry. But administrations and priorities change.

It is debatable whether European security is any of America's business or whether climate change is a higher priority. But either way, we are already closer to energy independence, and world peace, than most people think. □

Biden's Wrecking America (Cont.)

release 60 million barrels of oil from national strategic petroleum reserves around the world, including 30 million from the United States.

While that sounds like a lot, it isn't. Given that the world burns about 100 million barrels of oil per day, it's hard to see how a 15-hour supply of oil is going to accomplish anything other than fooling people who don't know any better.

Instead of encouraging the American oil and gas industry to produce more gasoline – remember that the U.S. essentially controlled global oil prices under President Trump's "America First" policies – Biden has gone hat in hand to despotic regimes in Iran and Venezuela, and to the unreliable governments of Saudi Arabia and the United

Arab Emirates asking them to produce more oil.

Faced with the problematic politics of skyrocketing gas prices in a midterm election year, the president is desperately lashing out. He has falsely accused the U.S. oil industry of profiteering. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki has incorrectly blamed the oil industry for failing to utilize existing leases on federal lands to produce more oil. Biden is even trying to point the finger at Vladimir Putin by promoting the Twitter hashtag #PutinPriceHike.

The reason for not embracing the normal and reasonable solution to the current situation – allowing the U.S. oil and gas industry to produce as much as possible, as soon as possible – is that the Biden administration intends to use the gasoline crisis to advance its elitist

climate agenda.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, for example, are touting electric cars (average price \$56,000) as the solution to rising gas prices. Biden's green supporters are advocating more wind and solar as the solution to the ongoing energy crisis because, well, "never waste a crisis." Adding insult to injury, John Kerry said he hoped, despite the invasion of Ukraine, that Putin would keep his eye on the climate ball.

The result? Americans are made to suffer unnecessarily and national security is imperiled, all for an agenda that is junk science-fueled and impractical, regardless of how you feel about United Nations' "climate science." This is not rational policy. It is intentional nation-wrecking. □

CA Rising Energy Costs (Cont.)

and energy and gas costs, most people are feeling a severe economic pinch – like a 40% increase in household costs between food and fuel increases.

"For many parts of the world, fossil fuels are still vital and will be for the next few decades, because they are the only means to lift people out of the smoke and darkness of energy poverty," Bjorn Lomborg first wrote in 2013, and still reiterates. "This is not just about powering stoves and refrigerators to improve billions of lives but about powering agriculture and industry that will improve lives."

California has ample petroleum resources. Powering California reports the state has accessible oil and natural gas resources that range from surface deposits of crude oil in places like the La Brea Tar Pits and along the Ventura and Santa Barbara coastline to oil and gas formations over 14,000 feet deep.

When Trump was President, California produced more than 200 million cubic feet of natural gas in 2017 used for heating and cooking in homes and businesses and to generate electricity.

Institute for Energy Research said: Despite the major push for renewable energy by environmentalists, fossil fuels still produce the majority of the energy that we consume today. Renewable energy's share of the 2019 U.S. energy

consumption market has only grown by 4 percentage points in 62 years, despite costing the taxpayer billions of dollars in subsidies.

As the Globe reported in 2020, California is rich in natural resources which once powered the state: natural gas deposits in the Monterey Shale formation; geothermal energy, abundant rivers and waterways such as the San Joaquin River Delta and hydroelectric dams; the Pacific coastline; 85 million acres of wildlands with 17 million of those used as commercial timberland; mines and mineral resources, vast farming and agricultural lands, and hunting and fishing.

But California politicians and political appointed agency officials, under pressure from radical environmental organizations and lobbyists, decided to ignore the energy producing natural resources, and instead move to an all-electric grid, and the only approved "renewable energy:" solar and wind energy.

Remember when all of the public transit buses in California touted "Clean Natural Gas?"

Michael Shellenberger, best-selling author of "Apocalypse Never," explains: "California's bet on renewables, & its shunning of natural gas & nuclear, is directly responsible for the state's blackouts and high electricity prices," and warned about the Biden-Harris plan.

Adding to our exceedingly high electricity and heating costs, our gas costs only appear to be going up, unless the Biden administration decides to stop acting like a member of the EU.

Lomborg adds, "The developed world needs a smarter approach toward cleaner fuels. The United States has been showing the way. Hydraulic fracturing has produced an abundance of inexpensive natural gas, leading to a shift away from coal in electricity production. Because burning natural gas emits half the carbon dioxide of coal." □

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