

**POWER ⚡ THE FUTURE**

# **GREEN FAIL**

*How environmental policies are practically implemented, along with their impacts on people's everyday lives.*

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# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A FISTFUL OF [YOUR] DOLLARS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FUNDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL FIFTH COLUMN</b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>GREEN INVESTMENTS KEEP FAILING,</u> WITHOUT OFFSETS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LIVE BY THE SUBSIDY, DIE BY THE SUBSIDY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE RAILROAD TO NOWHERE</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IJJA 2: ELECTRIC BOOGALOO</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THE BAD</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>WHAT THE FRACK IS NEW ENGLAND THINKING?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>GAVIN NEUTRON</b>	<b>8</b>
<b><u>HOW ENVIROS AND GOPHERS UNDERMINE</u> NATIONAL SECURITY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HOW FAST CAN YOU PEDAL?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ALASKA TRIES TO BUILD A ROAD TO SOMEWHERE</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>THE UGLY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b><u>WHEN TWO BIRDS IN THE HAND</u> IS WORTH ONE IN THE BUSH</b>	<b>12</b>
<b><u>WHEN THE WORLD'S ON FIRE,</u> GREENS SAY LET IT BURN</b>	<b>13</b>
<b><u>BIDEN TO WHALES:</u> PRACTICE WHERE YOU BREACH</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>15</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Like it or not, environmental policy is now impacting every aspect of federal policymaking—and, seemingly, every minute aspect of our lives. This has implications for the cost of goods and services for consumers, employment, American economic self-sufficiency and the safeguarding of supply chains, permitting of critical infrastructure, and even national security. Political candidates often talk about their plans for the future in the environmental and climate policy arenas, but rarely are past federal actions meaningfully scrutinized.

Green Fail is an informal series of articles intended to provide examples of how these policies are practically implemented, along with their impacts on people's everyday lives. The examples provided represent ([with apologies to Sergio Leone and Clint Eastwood](#)) how billions of taxpayer dollars are being spent (A Fistful of [Your] Dollars, though A Few Dollars More would also fit here), policies that undermine their creators' purported environmental goals by being ineffectual due to structure or implementation (the Bad), and policies that hypocritically cause environmental damage in the name of conservation (the Ugly). This series is meant to be an easy-to-digest, yet thoroughly researched overview of some of these policy failures with the goal of informing how we can all do better in the future in pursuing pro-growth, commonsense environmental policies and those who implement them to account.

## A FISTFUL OF [YOUR] DOLLARS

### Funding the Environmental Fifth Column

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Ranking Member Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) is doing the Lord's and taxpayers' work [by exposing how millions of dollars](#) in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants provided by the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) are flowing to organizations that are [overtly anti-American](#) and [anti-Semitic](#).

But those are only the worst actors. What about the rest of the "beneficiaries" of the \$3 billion in [Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants](#) authorized by the [party-line](#) Biden-Harris IRA? Surely most of those investments are going to communities that have legacies of pollution impacts, or at least investing in reducing emissions and lowering energy costs for those same populations?

Sadly, that is not the case.

***Rather than making investments meant to address the fundamental problem – too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere – or improving the livelihoods of people in environmental justice communities" while promoting positive environmental outcomes, Democrats in Washington have largely pursued political activism, with the goal of increasing their own power, and by extension, that of the administrative state, at the expense of consumers and taxpayers.***

In so doing, they are not only wasting taxpayer dollars and misleading the public about the nature of the "generational" investment in climate supposedly made by the IRA, they are engaged in a self-reinforcing cycle: prioritizing the training of special interest groups to turn around and lobby the government for more dollars, to collect data to try and undermine employers in these same areas, and to sue or protest to block private sector infrastructure projects.

Beyond the most egregious activist organizations, identified in Senator Capito's work, [here are some of the lesser-known examples](#) of what the EPA is funding with your money in the first round, with another \$2 billion waiting to go out the door:

- \$500,000 to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute for "Building Capacity for Disadvantaged Waterfront Communities to Engage Constructively in Offshore Wind Development." That is a euphemism for educating community activists on how to oppose offshore wind off of New England, which, coincidentally, is another stalled priority of the Biden-Harris Administration.
- \$500,000 for the Hitchcock Center for the Environment to expand "community-based air pollution monitoring... incorporating extreme heat as a related climate risk, and supporting youth engagement and action."

- \$500,000 for the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, which recognizes the “significant need to increase the capacity of communities with environmental justice concerns to empower residents to participate in public discourse on issues affecting them.”
- \$500,000 for the Delaware Valley Citizens Council for Clean Air to advance air monitoring for citizen activism against the Delaware City Refinery, including the use of the “Smelly My City crowdsourcing app.”
- \$150,000 for Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards to enable “coal-impacted counties of Southwest Virginia . . . to engage with policy-making bodies at the local, state, and federal levels and provide meaningful feedback that can inform decision-making processes.”
- \$425,694 for the Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation in Houston Texas states that “this project will cultivate the next generation of environmental justice advocates” starting in their middle school years.
- And a bonus from the [America’s Rescue Plan](#) environmental justice grants: \$75,000 for “Speak for the Trees” in Watertown, MA. The project, “Community Tree Stories,” will “through survey collection storytelling, and community engagement... incubate partnerships and develop shared visions for an urban forest...”

This is but a sampling of the grantees that explicitly state their intent to use taxpayer dollars to train additional activists to block projects and petition policymakers on environmentalist causes. [As the EPA’s Office of Inspector General \(OIG\) noted in congressional testimony](#), the IRA “appropriated a total of approximately \$41.5 billion to the EPA in fiscal year 2022, with approximately 85 percent of these funds available only through fiscal year 2026. . . Unfortunately, unlike the IJA, the IRA fails to provide any funds for EPA OIG oversight. . . To put the OIG’s budgetary constraints in context, in fiscal year 2011, when the EPA’s budget was \$8.68 billion, the OIG was funded at \$54.7 million. . .”

This fifth column of environmental activists, funded by federal taxpayers, will in future years advocate for more BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything) policies and block infrastructure development, even transmission and wind projects advocated for by the likes of the Biden-Harris Administration. And that is the best-case scenario, assuming the funds do not end up in the hands of organizations with still more nefarious policy priorities.

## Green Investments Keep Failing, Without Offsets

It is often said that liberals are judged on their intentions, conservatives by their outcomes. Plenty of study and digital ink is spilled by academics and the media on the purported negative effects of policies like deregulation and tax cuts, but there is little such introspection on liberal policies. Was the Affordable Care Act effective? If not, why double down? If so, why does [healthcare spending continue to exceed broader inflation](#) and why is the public option still a progressive priority? What about the [federal government takeover of student loans](#)? The Federal Trade Commission’s [repeated failed efforts to block mergers for their bigness](#)? So on and so on.

Fortunately, if belatedly, some academics are finally doing a wholesale review of climate policies from around the world. And the report card is not flattering. According to [a study published in the journal Science](#), more than 1,5000 climate policies from 41 countries, only 63 had a measurable effect in reducing greenhouse gas emissions within two years of implementation. The ones that worked hewed towards those that are most unpalatable with electorates around the world: [raising taxes on energy, appliances, or vehicles](#).

That is a damning indictment of the Biden-Harris Administration’s efforts via the IRA, for which the Congressional Budget Office [recently updated](#) its estimated price tag for the tax code [subsidies for clean energy by \\$428 billion](#). Private sector estimates of the tax expenditure bonanza are even higher, with [Goldman Sachs estimating a total of \\$1.2 trillion over ten years](#). That is far more than \$80.7 billion in direct spending in the legislation through grants and preferential loans, much of which will go without scrutiny – such as [the \\$27 billion in “green bank” funds](#) that EPA is rushing before the election to get off its books to grantees, which will then subgrant to actual project sponsors – making oversight and the prevention of waste, fraud, and abuse nearly impossible. That is an estimated \$500 billion chasing climate policies that independent analyses say do not work.

Well, as environmentalists are fond of saying: think globally but act locally. So, what are some steps you can take to reduce your carbon footprint? Whatever steps you may want to take, maybe don’t fall for the trap of carbon offsets – those curious checkboxes in the late stages of [online checkout on airline tickets or package shipping](#). They do nothing but pad pockets. Whether it is [\\$100 million that did not save an acre of forest in Zimbabwe](#) or reforestation projects leading to [residents being forcibly evicted and having to watch their homes be destroyed in Peru](#), at least 90 percent of rainforest

carbon offsets are worthless. Accountability is difficult to impossible, requiring international networks to verify conservation and reforestation projects around the globe and at the local level, including in warzones and failed or corrupt states that are home to some of Earth's most significant forests. In short, carbon offsets are a Green Ponzi Scheme: Buy an offset, get promised carbon emissions reductions, only to find your pocket empty, activist fraudsters (think: Al Gore) make profits, and the environment is none the better for it.

## **Whether the greenwashing originates with government or corporations, the promises are big and the benefits largely immeasurable.**

The public, regardless of how they feel about climate change one way or the other, will need to vote at the ballot box and with their dollars to get the powers that be to end this charade and quit wasting our hard-earned dollars on this needless virtue signaling.

### **Live by the Subsidy, Die by the Subsidy**

Among Vice President Harris's vacuous policy bromides is reducing housing prices through a combination of [building 3 million new affordable homes within four years](#) and [offering first-time homebuyers a \\$25,000 tax credit](#). As we have seen with federally subsidized student loans, and as basic economy theory would suggest, the latter proposal will likely result in only still higher starter home prices as the market absorbs that tax credit.

With regards to building affordable housing, [there are more than a few headwinds](#). First of all, the federal government has little ability to [address NIMBY zoning laws](#), particularly those in progressive locales around the country where constraints on new construction are most acute (think: California). Secondly, it is unclear how the federal government could meaningfully induce new home construction, and this would almost certainly require funding from Congress. Thirdly, and most significantly, one can already anticipate the mandates on homebuilders looking to participate: prevailing wage requirements, abiding by the strictest building codes, energy efficiency standards, and renewable energy obligations are likely table stakes for participation in this ill-conceived project.

Kamala Harris being from California, it is fair to ask how their notoriously expensive housing market is faring under the last of these mandates: that new builds have decentralized solar panels.

[Back in 2018](#), the California Energy Commission (CEC) created the mandate that all new single-family and multi-family homes, up to three stories tall, install solar panels. The mandate took effect on January 1, 2020 and was incorporated into statewide building codes. The first experiment of its kind in the country, even the CEC itself anticipated that it would increase the cost of a new home [by \\$8,400 per home, or \\$40 per month tacked on to the average mortgage payment](#), depending on financing terms.

But worry not! At the time, the CEC estimated that the power generated and sold back onto the grid would yield [\\$80 per month in energy savings](#) for the homeowners, reducing the time for the payback of the initial outlays on the panels. This was based on the Net Metering 2.0 (NEM 2.0) standards, setting prices for net metering at prevailing retail prices. [NEM2 was enacted into law in 2013 and fully implemented by 2017](#).

Unfortunately for California homeowners counting on selling excess solar back onto the grid — which poses its own problems for reliability — the California Public Utility Commission, [yielding to economic realities](#) that the generous NEM 2.0 subsidies were making California utilities even more unprofitable and [shifting the burdens of grid maintenance and transmission onto lower-income households](#), initiated NEM 3.0. This is textbook example of regressive public policy, that is, one that takes a proportionately greater amount of money from the poor. [NEM 3.0 slashes the compensation rate for retail solar power owners by more than 75 percent](#). This is already causing [turbulence in California's residential solar industry](#) — the country's largest with [nearly 2 million distributed solar projects generating nearly 17 gigawatts](#) — with demand slowing sharply.

[NEM 3.0 is meant to spur investments in residential battery storage](#) and undo California's longtime and worsening problem of the [dreaded "duck curve"](#) by better matching peak supply with peak demand. [Installing a solar storage system in California costs an average of around \\$14,000](#), though that is highly dependent on local labor costs. And that presumes the customer already has solar panels; a from scratch system for combined solar and storage [averages between \\$18,00 and more than \\$52,000](#) depending on labor costs and the size of the system, before federal tax breaks that cover up to 30 percent of the cost.

Anyone who bought a home under the solar mandate or installed panels on an existing home based on the payback promises of NEM 2.0 likely feel misled after [watching their reimbursements crater under NEM 3.0](#). That is the peril of relying upon taxpayer subsidies, which fickle policymakers can change at anytime. But it still seems particularly insulting to first-time homebuyers

burdened by the costs of complying with a mandate.

The Biden-Harris Administration with its [“solar-for-all” initiative](#) is already spreading this disease around the country. Low-income residents better hope their community is the one picked, and not the adjacent community, lest they have to subsidize the transmission of their neighbors that won the federal grant lottery, just as the non-solar households of California do.

One can foresee a similar issue emerging if pie-in-the-sky promises of affordable housing starts are yoked to Harris’s green energy agenda.

## **Federal money always comes with strings, and federal subsidies may leave those beneficiaries holding the bag when policies inevitably change.**

### **The Railroad to Nowhere**

They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. If so, the railroad to hell must be quite impressive indeed. If the good intentions in California’s High-Speed Rail project don’t secure a smooth, efficient ride into Hades, then the money being wasted certainly could.

California’s experiment with high-speed rail is now a [nearly three-decade-long saga](#) with no end in sight. The notion of a California high-speed rail corridor was first seriously considered in 1981, but was only formalized with the establishment of the California High-Speed Rail Authority in 1996. In 2008, California voters approved a [\\$10 billion public financing mechanism via ballot proposition](#). Groundbreaking on Phase 1, connecting Los Angeles to San Francisco through the Central Valley across nearly 500 miles took place in 2015. It promised a state-of-the-art, 220-mile-per-hour railway that would cut the trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco to [just two-and-a-half hours](#). A promised Phase 2, extending the line south to San Diego and north to Sacramento – another 776 miles – waits in the wings.

How much progress has been made in the decade since the golden shovels broke Golden State soil? Not much.

When Californians went to the ballot box, the promise by proposition sponsors and the Rail Authority was that Phase 1 would be operational by 2020, for the low, low cost of “just” \$34 billion. Delays and cost overruns from NIMBYism to permitting to supply chain and labor issues ballooned those costs. In 2022, the updated estimate for Phase 1 [came to \\$105 billion](#), nearly three times what was marketed to voters when they first authorized

subsidies for the project. Three months later, that figure was again updated to \$113 billion. In 2023, it was revised upwards yet again by Governor Newsom’s administration to [\\$128 billion](#), putting the project [more than \\$100 billion in the red](#). The Newsom Administration also reduced some of the service area. How the state will fund the funding deficit is unclear. If completed at the current \$128 billion estimate, Phase 1 will cost \$250 million per mile. And that is a big “if.”

For the \$23 billion spent so far, what have Californians (and you, the federal taxpayer, [who contributed more than \\$3 billion of that](#)) gotten? Also, not much.

The Rail Authority [proudly proclaims](#) that there are 25 active construction sites in the Central Valley. Fully 422 miles of the project have been cleared through the environmental review process (though litigation is always a looming threat). That is less a show of strength than an indictment of Californian and federal environmental permitting processes. In terms of actual construction, approximately 57 miles of guideway (the path and elevated platforms that will hold the trains, but not the rail infrastructure, switch gear, or other components to actually operate a train) have been constructed.

But Californians shouldn’t despair. They’re not alone in their misery. A [\\$13 billion maglev train to connect Washington, DC to Baltimore, MD](#) has also gone off the tracks — or was never really placed on the tracks, because there are no tracks. Despite only going 40 miles, and with 70 percent of that underground, it has run into the usual delays and NIMBY attacks. Constituents on the route have also called for additional stations, which of course defeats the purpose of an express train. If this project does not go over budget, it will cost a mere \$325 million per mile, somehow worse than the California debacle, which is saying something.

There’s also trouble in paradise. The [Skyline autonomous metro project in Hawaii](#), meant to connect the Oahu suburbs to Honolulu was first approved by voters in 2008. The 20-mile elevated train was to cost \$5 billion. It has already ballooned to more than \$10 billion for the entire project, which was shortened in length by a mile. This is not a high-speed project but it wins the prize for highest cost-per-mile at \$500 million. Hawaiians do have some Pyrrhic bragging rights here though: despite construction mishaps and safety concerns, the first leg opened in June 2023. Only 40 percent still to go.

These projects reveal the folly of centralized transportation planning being applied to a mature economy with a robust existing road and rail infrastructure, a broken permitting system, and a litigious activist community, often in league with NIMBYists. All

of the forecasts for completion dates and budgets come to naught when expensive rail projects have to be built through existing residential and commercial areas to actually make sense. The question is when policymakers will actually realize this and get our transportation infrastructure priorities back on track.

## IIJA 2: Electric Boogaloo

### **When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.**

Congressional Democrats and the Biden-Harris Administration have seen electrification as the solution to all of America's ills. Need to reduce the carbon emissions of our building stock? [Electrify their heating and cooling!](#) Don't like people cooking over gas? [Tighten efficiency standards](#) to effectuate an indirect ban on natural gas appliances (though the final rule was watered down; [the proposal would have banned](#) all products made by [at least one American manufacturer](#)). And of course, our entire transportation fleet [must be electrified, even if no one can afford the cars](#), they [rely on Chinese supply chains](#), and there are practical concerns over what the weight of electric vehicles (EVs) will mean for [public safety](#) and the [maintenance of infrastructure](#). Oh, and EVs don't [pay into the Highway Trust Fund](#) because they do not consume taxed gasoline. Other than that, mass electrification is just great.

In the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), as part of a grand bargain for Biden-Harris Democrats getting out of the way of states just trying to [fix the damn roads](#), liberals secured the establishment of the [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(NEVI\)](#) formula and the [Charging and Fueling Infrastructure \(CFI\)](#) discretionary grant programs.<sup>1</sup>

That some electric charging funding was allocated by formula is an example of Washington imposing its priorities on the states. For rural states, by and large, [the priority is on maintenance, improving safety, and expanding roadways](#) to serve areas where local populations may be growing. Electric chargers don't rate highly on that list, [nor are rural constituents clamoring for them](#). Similarly, as we shall discuss below, these rural state and local governments are not going to expend much in the way of money and personnel resources in applying for grants to fund them.

Add in a [progressive wish list](#) that added red tape and complexity to building out chargers — [prioritizing union labor for production and installation](#), arbitrary limits on the [types of charger technologies](#) that can be funded (necessitating an [about face](#) when the market settled on another standard), ["equity" in providing electric chargers](#) to low-income and public housing populations despite the [average sales price of an EV](#) being equivalent to the [median household income of the "lower-middle" class](#), and domestic content requirements (so severe they [required a waiver](#)) for a supply chain that currently does not exist in America — and you have a recipe for failure.

And fail it has. More than two years after the establishment of the five-year \$5 billion NEVI and \$2.5 billion CFI programs, on December 15, 2023, the Biden-Harris-Buttigieg Department of Transportation [announced](#) the first eight charging stations. Nearly half the Union, [22 states](#), saw such little value in the NEVI program, that they have not solicited bids to utilize the funds to construct stations. [Wyoming had to fight with the feds](#) over the wisdom of putting chargers in the middle of nowhere, especially given the low penetration of electric vehicles in that state.

The program was also supposed to [create strategic electric vehicle charging corridors](#) and allow the stations to share data. Perhaps prioritizing the buildout of broadband in underserved areas would be a better priority than electric charging stations that communicate over the internet. Oh wait, [the IIJA had more than \\$42 billion](#) for that worthier cause. To date, it has connected not a single person to the internet and [an FCC Commissioner reports no construction projects are likely to begin until 2025 at the earliest](#), due to similar union labor and "equity" strictures facing NEVI and CFI.

At least technological breakthroughs in satellite internet afford consumer choice and an alternative to expensive publicly funded construction projects for rural broadband deployment. By contrast, Biden-Harris Administration is using mandates and tax incentives to change the types of cars Americans are allowed to drive, with the goal of half of new car sales being EVs by 2030. Assuming demand for vehicles remains around the 2023 level of [15.5 million vehicles](#), the current number of [61,000 public charging stations](#) is far short of the task. To meet that demand goal, they may want to pick up the pace at a buildout of more than an average of four stations per year — and at a far lower cost. Keep that in mind the next time you're (not) in a line for gas.

<sup>1</sup>For those unfamiliar with the difference between formula and discretionary programs in the transportation space, the former are funds doled out via formula that states can largely use as they see fit on priority infrastructure programs while the latter are grants allocated at the discretion of the Department of Transportation based on evaluation criteria. Conservatives tend to favor the former with as few requirements as possible, as it allows state and local governments to invest in their own priorities. Discretionary grants (surprise, surprise!) mainly flow to states of the same party as the occupant of the White House or to political swing states, and their allocation is often opaque and based on subjective criteria.

## THE BAD

### What the Frack is New England Thinking?

New York Governor Kathy Hochul's Administration (née Cuomo Administration) is moving forward [on natural gas hookup and appliance bans](#) that will do nothing to bend the temperature curve of global warming, but will certainly increase the cost of living for New Yorkers. They're moving forward despite similar bans in more uniformly progressive jurisdictions like Berkeley, California [being overturned](#), by the notoriously liberal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, no less.

[What Albany does to its own constituents](#) is one thing. But New York's zeal for getting off American natural gas is having a negative impact on both Appalachian communities seeking economic development and New Englanders craving more affordable and cleaner sources of energy. The result is a slow-moving trainwreck for the economies of multiple regions, America's energy dominance, and, counterintuitively, the climate.

New York has [time](#) and [time again worked](#) to block interstate pipelines that would carry responsibly sourced natural gas from states like Pennsylvania and West Virginia first to its own consumers, and then on into New England. The lack of offtake capacity [has driven down the value of Appalachian natural gas](#), hurting communities already reeling from the downturn in the coal sector and taking away a means of driving a lower-emitting energy and manufacturing renaissance in the region that offers a real alternative to [50 failed years](#) of the War on Poverty and federal wealth transfers.

In return, consumers in New England pay some of the [highest electric and natural gas prices in the country](#). Residents of these states, as well as upstate New York, therefore rely upon higher-emitting sources like [fuel oil](#) and [wood heaters](#) during cold northeastern winters. Instead of a smooth energy transition to their favored sources, the NIMBYs of the region are also balking at renewable alternatives, from [offshore wind](#) to the [transmission lines](#) needed to bring down Canadian hydropower.

Perversely, this has left New England to [compete for oil and gas resources with Europe](#), rather than the rest of the United States, with predictably higher prices and emissions. The dreaded [Jones Act limits](#) the supply of ships and crews, which effectively prevents American natural gas being shipped in, which means that New England is bidding on foreign energy sources. Never mind that pipelines are the safest, cheapest, and least emitting way to move natural gas — New York has

decided that Bostonians should bid for gas from the Middle East and Africa against the United Kingdom and continental Europe. In a word, says Kathy Hochul, let them eat cake. In at least one instance, during the "bomb cyclone" deep freeze of the winter of 2018, that required [the importation of Russian liquefied natural gas](#) from a US-sanctioned company to keep the lights on and the heat running in Boston — the first time America had ever imported Russian energy cargo.

Despite this reality, the states of New England [continue to make climate pledges](#) with no practical means of meeting them, [are following California's lead](#) on vehicle and other climate regulations, and are becoming more reliant upon imported energy, [when greater access to Appalachian gas would reduce both prices and emissions](#). Such are the costs of New York and New England's foolish climate activism.

### Gavin Neutron



What happens when anti-nuclear greens run up against the largest source of carbon-free energy? A California flip-flop for the ages, with California Governor Gavin Newsom on both sides of the debate (sort of like [his expensive dinner at the exclusive French Laundry restaurant while imposing COVID restrictions on state residents](#)). Oh, and billions of dollars in federal taxpayer subsidies to undo the damage and keep the lights on in the Golden State.

Coordination between supposed climate warrior politicians and anti-nuclear activists have shuttered nuclear plants in progressive states that must square those decisions with their own long-term climate goals. In 2017 in New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo worked with Riverkeeper activists [to close the Indian Point Nuclear Plant](#). In 2016, Massachusetts Senator and father of the Green New Deal Ed Markey [cheered the announced closure](#) of the Pilgrim Nuclear Plant in the Bay State (paradoxically, he has since also [opposed its](#)

[decommissioning](#)). Not content with that “triumph,” he has also crowed about closures of plants in [Vermont](#) and [New Hampshire](#), as environmentalists continued their futile “war on climate” and persistent flouting of common sense.

But perhaps nowhere is the climate hypocrisy of progressive politicians on starkest display than in California. In 2016, then-Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom advanced closure of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant from his perch on the State Lands Commission. The passage of enabling legislation by Sacramento then statutorily required Diablo’s closure. Despite the facility providing [some 17 percent of all of California’s zero-carbon electricity](#), the accelerated closure by 2025 was seen as still long enough to provide a runway for the energy transition. This was intended to avoid a repeat of the San Onofre Nuclear Generation Station — [the closure of which](#), predictably, led to an electricity supply crunch and an increase of reliance on fossil and increased carbon emissions.

So, Newsom and his environmental allies happily claimed a scalp. As with many progressive dreams, reality did not abide the philosopher-kings’ plans. With the plant’s closure looming and California’s ballyhooed energy transition stalling and driving up costs, now Governor Newsom fully reversed course. In 2022, he called on the California state legislature to undo what he had advocated just six years prior. In fact, he also asked for financial support to keep the plant operational.

Timing being everything, this fight reached fever pitch concurrently with Washington enacting the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). While the bulk of the legislation is an amalgamation of the traditional highway and water infrastructure that Congress regularly passes, in the course of negotiations with the Biden-Harris Administration a “Gang” of bipartisan senators took over the negotiations. As with so many Washington compromises, the result was a lot of pork. Bills that had stalled, pet projects, and earmarks were all on the table. The provisions of the IIJA that have failed to implement or wasted taxpayer money came from these negotiations, reflected in [Division J of the law](#).

Among these was Gang-member and serial [flip-flopper](#) Senator Joe Manchin’s (I-WV) [Civil Nuclear Credit \(CNC\) Program](#) (previously stalled at the Senate Energy Committee, which Manchin chairs), a \$6 billion fund to backstop existing US nuclear reactors from financial insolvency created by environmental opposition to their operations and heavily subsidized renewable energy undercutting their long-term business models.

Lo and behold, the Biden-Harris Administration stepped into save the Vice President’s home state from itself, making the first award under the CNC to none other than Diablo Canyon. More than \$1 billion in federal taxpayer dollars will flow to Avila Beach to keep the plant going, [“saving 1,500 clean energy jobs.”](#) Jobs that might not have needed saving in the first place, but for Newsom’s meddling. Of course, they won’t be saved for long — the extension of operations for Diablo Canyon is [only through 2029 for Unit 1 and 2030 for Unit 2](#). For just approximately \$250 million per year, federal taxpayers can keep California from self-imposed darkness for all of five years.

Predictably, once this gusher of money from Washington came in, Sacramento thought better of having their own constituents subsidize the reversal of their folly, [voting in August to cancel a \\$400 million state loan](#) to assist in subsidizing the facility.

Even without a President Harris federalizing the West Coast policy model, Americans everywhere are paying for California’s energy misadventures.

### How Enviros and Gophers Undermine National Security



Under the Biden-Harris Administration, there are many instances of the left hand not knowing what the farther left hand is doing. But perhaps none is more comical — and disruptive to bipartisan economic and national security priorities — than the Administration’s infighting over a remote area in northern Nevada.

Lithium is essential to the electric transition of everything — [cars](#), [appliances](#), [the broader grid](#) — the Biden-Harris Administration is imposing upon the American economy. Unfortunately, most of it is sourced abroad, and processing and recycling of [lithium is dominated by China](#). It’ll be hard to meet Democratic policy goals baked into existing policies — such as the [domestic content requirements](#) of electric vehicle tax credits (the practical realities of which have led to [loopholes](#) you

could drive a Cybertruck through) without boosting domestic supplies of critical minerals and processing capacity.

The private sector, sensing both market opportunity and federal subsidy, has proposed projects around the country to fill this induced demand. One such project, Rhyolite Ridge located in southwestern Nevada, could be a generational source of lithium – one of only two known reserves in the world of lithium boron. It also has the benefit of being in a remote part of the Nevada desert, away from the NIMBYs crown. Loneer, the project’s sponsor, [predicts enough lithium production to produce the equivalent of 50 million fully electric vehicles](#) over 26 years of production.

The Department of Energy’s Loan Program Office (LPO), the same agency that brought you the \$535 million Solyndra debacle, stepped up to invest. On [January 13, 2023](#), the LPO announced \$700 million in federal taxpayer-subsidized loans to loneer. All systems go, right?

Not quite. Presumably while the LPO and loneer were negotiating, on December 14, 2022 the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it would be listing the Tiehm’s buckwheat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The effective date? [January 17, 2023](#), just four days after the LPO announcement about Rhyolite Ridge. The Tiehm’s buckwheat is a diminutive flowering plant native... you guessed it... to a small patch of desert in southwestern Nevada. Its listing was sent into motion by the perennially litigious Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), [which claimed](#) that the loss of the species was the result of the loss of habitat from drilling operations and mining. Thirty-eight percent of the species’ range overlaps with the Rhyolite Ridge mine site.

CBD claims that the loss of 40 percent of the plants was due to human activity. A five-year study by the University of Nevada-Reno found the real culprits: [gophers and squirrels](#). Other than the researchers themselves, human activity was limited to nonexistent. Nevertheless, the sue-and-settle strategy of CBD has had its intended effect: blocking mining, even if it is mining meant to facilitate the green transition.

Such is the burden of trying domestically to produce minerals vital to America’s economy and national security. In order to move forward with a project that would create 400-500 construction jobs and 250-300 permanent mining jobs, loneer has had to get into [buckwheat farming](#). Local rodents could not be reached for comment.

## How Fast Can You Pedal?



The next Congress will be faced with the need to pass another five-year highway bill and to look over the fiscal cliff created by the gusher of money provided by the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#). This should be an opportunity to look back and see what worked, what didn’t and needs reform, and what efforts should never be repeated.

Let’s look at an example in that third category in particular.

During negotiation of the IIJA, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Tom Carper (D-DE) pushed for performance measures that would reward or punish states for their compliance with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) greenhouse gas reduction targets, [based off legislation introduced by House Democrats in 2020](#). Measures such as congestion pricing — [which the Natural Resources Defense Council defines as “a fee levied on drivers that’s intended to convince enough people to avoid hopping in their car at rush hour”](#) — and facilitating mass transit would be rewarded if linked to reduced carbon emissions. How rural states could possibly achieve these targets was an open question. Since funding could be provided or reduced based on compliance, noncompliant states would actually have fewer resources to implement compliance schemes.

[This provision collapsed](#) after negotiations reduced the number of states to which it would apply. Rather than accept a partial victory, the environmental activists pressing for the provision — wanting to force environmental policies in red states — demanded that Carper jettison the language entirely. [This did not stop the Biden-Harris Administration from trying to implement the program without legislative authorization. That was not received well by Congress.](#)

In its place, Chairman Carper advanced the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) program. [PROTECT](#) is intended to assist states in making infrastructure more resilient to the effects of climate

change. Crucially, there was no “stick,” just “carrots,” and states were free to pursue their own infrastructure priorities. So far, so much more rational.

PROTECT particularly focuses on [evacuation routes](#). This makes sense for a climate-oriented program: if one believes the incidence of catastrophic weather events is trending upwards, prioritizing investments to get people out of harm’s way makes sense. What makes less sense is — if that is the goal — prioritizing bicycle path infrastructure. You read that right: congressional Democrats believe it would be best for folks to flee a hurricane or other disaster on bicycles, if at all possible.

Lest that seem like cherry picking in the program, consider [section 11505 of the IIJA](#), authorizing a “disaster relief mobilization study.” This requires that the Secretary of Transportation, at taxpayer expense, study the value of using bicycles in disaster preparedness and response plans for local communities. The evaluation should focus on such pivotal issues as whether bicycles would benefit first responders in notifying the public of the need to evacuate, reaching those in need of assistance, and carrying commodities like food, water, first aid materials, and electronics into the disaster area. Preparing for disaster requires evaluating whether first responders have “competent bicycle skills,” are steeped in the arts of bicycle maintenance, and other criteria. To date, no study appears to have been completed, even though the two-year completion deadline has passed.

## ***So, next time a hurricane, tornado, or wildfire is bearing down, get a head start on your bicycle to avoid calamity.***

If you are stranded, just wait for a first responder to rescue you on his or her [bicycle built-for-two](#). You never know: the use of pedal power may be a better means of escape during a blackout-inducing disaster than the dead battery in your electric vehicle, or [risking starting it after the disaster recedes](#).

### **Alaska Tries to Build a Road to Somewhere**

Only in America can the completion of major road projects be measured not in years, but in decades.

Boston’s Big Dig was [started in 1982](#) and officially completed on [December 31, 2007](#).

The Appalachian Development Highway System, [first announced by the Johnson Administration in 1965](#), remains incomplete.

Everything being bigger in Alaska, the [Ambler Access Project](#) — first authorized by renowned anti-environmentalist President Jimmy Carter in 1980 — has yet to even have its siting completed.

It is not for lack of trying. [Laws on the books, advocacy by elected officials, local communities and tribal groups, and mine operators](#) in the heart of Alaska have called for the completion of the project over its nearly 45 years of planning. The project has taken on extra urgency, as it will make viable [strategically significant deposits of American critical minerals](#) essential to national security and any green energy transition.

That fact is not good enough for activist environmentalists from the Lower 48, trying to protect a wilderness they will never visit from the people that actually live there in the name of environmental justice. Through litigation and political interference, most recently and significantly from the Biden-Harris Administration, these green warriors have delayed the congressionally-authorized project indefinitely. The only beneficiary of these actions, as Alaska Senator Dan Sullivan notes, [will be the Chinese Communist Party](#).

Enacted in 1980, the [Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act](#) created ten National Park Service’s (NPS) units across more than 100 million acres of the 222 million acres of federal lands in Alaska. These include famous, as well as not-so-well-known, national parks, preserves, wildlife refuges, historic trails, and other NPS units both to preserve ecosystems and provide the American public access to these natural treasures.

To balance the acreage being protected from any sort of development, ANILCA also directed federal agencies to better coordinate with state, local, and tribal entities to support Alaskan economic and infrastructure needs. Specific to Ambler, Congress directed [in section 201 of the Act](#) that “there is a need for access for surface transportation purposes across the Western (Kobuk River) unit of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve (from the Ambler Mining District to the Alaska Pipeline Haul Road) and the Secretary [of Interior] shall permit such access in accordance with the provisions of this subsection.” Commendably, Congress then laid out the specific environmental reviews — including under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) — that the Secretary of Interior needed to undertake.

So far, so clear.

Alaska began its evaluation in earnest in 2009, giving primacy over the initiative to the [Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority \(AIDEA\)](#) in 2013. [Proposals for the federal review](#), including multiple

potential routes, began in 2015 under the Obama Administration. As part of the NEPA process, 18 public meetings and more than 3,000 unique public comments were received. In 2020, the Departments of Interior and Transportation [selected the Northern Alignment](#) route of approximately 210 miles. To implement the road's transit of federal public lands, the Bureau of Land Management and the US Army Corps of Engineers — after 21 public meetings and more than 21,000 public comments of their own — authorized the route. The BLM and the National Park Service then approved a 50-year right-of-way across relevant NPS units. [Activist lawsuits were filed almost immediately](#), over the course of 2020.

In 2022, the Biden-Harris-Haaland Department of Interior used these suits to essentially [sue and settle with itself](#). The Department requested a “voluntary remand” to conduct a [supplemental environmental impact study](#) — another NEPA review. Another 12 public meetings and more than 90,000 comments followed. Most of these comments were astroturfed by the environmental opposition outside of Alaska. [Only 2,080 of these comments were “original,”](#) mostly comprising one sentence and submitted by such esteemed, unverified parties as “Anonymous,” “keep it clean, not polluted,” and “Cray White Guy.” On April 19, 2024, the [Biden-Harris BLM heeded this choir of radicals](#) and announced that it would be [effecting the “no action” alternative](#).

The support of the bipartisan Alaska delegation, tribal communities (including the largest in the area, [Hughes Village](#)), the state, and business groups were [insufficient to sway the Biden-Harris Administration](#). In addition to environmental and subsistence impacts not identified in the decades of prior review, the BLM poured salt on the wound by claiming that the road was unnecessary, [since no mines had been proposed](#). Which is a bit of a chicken-or-egg situation. Companies like [Ambler Metals](#) are indeed looking at mining in the area and Alaska is working to draw more investment, but it is hard to bring that development to a wilderness with no permanent access or other infrastructure. As a result, a generational source of copper, cobalt, gold, and rare earths such as gallium and germanium that are currently dominated by China. [As Senator Sullivan noted](#), President Biden himself hosted a virtual roundtable on [“Securing Critical Minerals for a Future Made in America”](#) on the very same day of the BLM announcement. Don't worry – California Governor Gavin Newsom participated.

Most tragically, economically depressed Alaskan Native communities have lost an opportunity to have greater infrastructure and good-paying jobs in a part of the country that is in dire need and so often overlooked. That this denial of economic opportunity in green supply chain

industries is being imposed upon them by white progressives from the Lower 48 in the name of environmental justice is ironic is of faint solace to these communities.

## THE UGLY

### When Two Birds in the Hand is Worth One in the Bush



Critics of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) rightfully point out it is like the Hotel California: species listed almost never leave. Unless you count extinction.

The [US Fish and Wildlife Service \(FWS\)](#) currently lists [2,383 species](#) as endangered or threatened. That number has remained static for about 30 years. The 1,390 such species located in the United States are protected by regulatory strictures, such as broad “critical habitat” designations that significantly limit human activity in these ranges — even activities that may have nothing to do with a species' population declines. These limits are the cause of opposition to the Act and related regulations from the construction, agriculture, timber, energy, and manufacturing industries, which must jump through all sorts of hoops to operate in critical habitat areas — such as [state highway departments needing to conduct bat censuses](#) and [pay divers to count mussels](#) at taxpayer expense.

For all of this, since passage of the ESA in 1973, [only 64 species have been delisted due to recovery and another 64 species have “graduated” from endangered to merely threatened](#). In the meantime, 32 have now been determined to be extinct — [including 21 such extinction delistings finalized just last year](#).

So, more than 95 percent of species on the list do not improve enough to remove the limits on human activity on the more than [107.5 million acres of critical habitat in the United States](#). That is bad enough. Perhaps more disappointing is that the law can actually require the decimation of existing wildlife.

Take for example the plight of the barred owl. This summer, [the FWS finalized a plan](#) to support the population of the spotted owl across Washington, Oregon, and California.

How do they plan to do this? By killing 470,000 barred owls — a species that is outcompeting its smaller spotted cousin — over the next 30 years. In an apparent admission that curtailing timbering in the spotted owl's habitat over the past several decades has failed to arrest population declines, the FWS is now calling open season on the barred owl (which, in an example of conservation cognitive dissonance [is itself supposed to be protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act \(MBTA\) under penalty of law](#)). The FWS plan admits that the two species have overlapped since at least the early 1900s, and can even breed "spotted x barred owl hybrids," but that the recent decline in the spotted owl means the expansion of the barred owl's range must be abated.

[So now it is open season on the barred owl](#), and even barred-spotted owl hybrids. This being the federal government, a permit approving an exception to the MBTA must be issued. The FWS helpfully notes that barred owls are best culled by using "recorded calls and shooting birds that respond and approach closely." One can guess that there will be more than a few instances of mistaken identity, with the endangered species suffering yet again at the hands of the ESA's failed attempts to protect it.

Only in Washington can you say with a straight face, ["we had to kill the birds to save them."](#)

## **When the World's on Fire, Greens Say Let It Burn**

With the upward trend in wildfire frequency and scale over the past three decades — and certainly a dramatic increase in reporting on these wildfires by the media — the debate has burned over whether to solely attribute responsibility to climate change, [decades of poor forest management practices](#) driven by environmental activists that have allowed dry fuel to build up, or some combination of the two. Regardless of where one falls in that debate, one thing both sides were taken for granted as agreeing upon: forest fires are bad and should be controlled.

An unlikely source is upending that consensus: employees of the US Forest Service itself.

## ***It may not be surprising that forest rangers are dedicated environmentalists.***

No one picks a career path ostensibly pledged to protecting America's public lands, especially one that often involves working in remote areas far from home, without having a passion for environmentalism.

A similar logic can explain the zeal of employees of other federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): if you're drawn to this kind of government career, you're probably more concerned about environmentalism than finding the balance between conservation and ensuring American prosperity of the sort necessary to fulfill the EPA's mission of "protecting human health and the environment."

But, as with any competition for ideological purity, there can come a breaking point. This is a situation where an auto-da-fe can separate the "true" vanguard of the cause from those that have "merely" dedicated their lives to public service. Such a trial has presented itself recently, as the rank-and-file of the Forest Service — who are protected by a union — [have sued the agency](#) to demand a stop to forest firefighting over concerns about compliance with the Clean Water Act.

An environmental group known as the [Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics \(FSEEE\) claims](#) that every time the Forest Service conducts a flight dropping water containing flame retardant on a wildfire — approximately 57,000 times between 2012 and 2019 alone, the agency should have gone to the EPA to request a section 402 discharge permit. The prevailing theory apparently being that it is better to let the forests — which again, these employees ostensibly want to protect — burn than risk any trace amount of flame retardants ending up in federally protected waters. Now, anyone who has gone through a federal permitting action — particularly with the EPA — knows that the time required to secure a permit is measured in months and years. By the time a permit is in hand, the forests will likely be laid low.

The notion that the EPA would hold Forest Service firefighters criminally liable for fighting fires without a permit may seem absurd. But, this being the Biden-Harris Administration, [the Forest Service is now going through the permitting process](#) just the same. Anything to mollify the environmental activist community, even the ones that are already operating from inside the Administration.

This state of affairs also begs the question of what is worse for the environment and water quality: [dropping a mixture of 85 percent water, 10 percent fertilizer, and 5 percent binders](#) to halt a fire (even if some of that material reaches surface waters [once every 267 drops](#) — a rate of 0.4 percent — according to the Forest Service), or allowing the fire to burn old growth trees, kill wildlife, choke those

same waters with ash, emit carbon, generate pollutants harmful to human health ([that blue states are already seeking exemptions for](#) under Clean Air Act standards), and remove the ability of the forest to absorb atmospheric carbon?

The FSEEE has determined that adopting the latter viewpoint is [the shibboleth](#) dividing those who are loyal to the environmentalist cause and those that merely want to protect forests. Which side are you on?

It may be worth nothing that the FSEEE had no interest in similarly responding to its members' culpability, or that of the broader federal government, for 2022 the [Calf Canyon and Hermits Peak fires](#) — that converge into the largest and costliest wildfire in the history of New Mexico necessitating [a FEMA response](#) — or the [Cerro Pelado fire](#), all caused by negligence and mismanagement by the Forest Service in conducting prescribed burns meant to prevent conflagrations. In this environmentalist funhouse mirror, apparently setting fires is less harmful than putting them out. Ray Bradbury would be proud.

### **Biden to Whales: Practice Where You Breach**

Perhaps no animal has been more identified with the international environmentalist movement than whales. Greenpeace first gained notoriety by sailing [the Rainbow Warrior](#) to block Japanese whaling ships. Love of whales is nearly universal, so it is a safe animal to champion in the eyes of the broader public, even if the tactics are sometimes left wanting.

For the Biden-Harris Administration, however, the value of a whale's life is based on where it is located and whether or not the industry any protections might disrupt is politically favored.

[Dead whales washing up in the northeast?](#)  
[Nothing to see here.](#)

[Two apparently healthy whales spotted from aircraft in the Gulf of Mexico?](#)  
[Time to close the sea.](#)

You may already be picking up on the political opportunism at play with these two very different responses. What distinguishes the two? On the one hand, you have wealthier, Democratic, northeastern states where offshore wind — [the renewable energy of preference for the Biden-Harris Administration](#) — is meeting [stiff opposition from the Hamptons set](#) over viewsheds and [unsightly onshore infrastructure](#). On the other, you have more working class, Republican, Gulf states with operating oil and gas infrastructure. For the former, the environmentalist community will argue there is [no direct link](#) between offshore wind surveying — which [includes sonar for surveying](#) of the sort that impacts whales' navigation and wellbeing — wind-related ship traffic, and construction

activities and whale mortality. At the same time, [they will argue](#) that — even though there are no anomalous whale deaths occurring — oil and gas operations on the other side of the Gulf from a vulnerable species must be shut in, just in case.

Regardless of one's views on particular sources of energy, the result of this hypocrisy is a failure to focus on meaningful conservation efforts to protect threatened and endangered species and the undermining of American energy independence.

Let's look at offshore wind first.

Whales flourish off America's East Coast, [with species generally recovering from the legacy of Atlantic whaling](#). However, from Maine to Florida, there has been a disturbing increase in the number of dead whales washing ashore, particularly the famed humpback. In January 2016, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced an ["Unusual Mortality Event" \(UME\) for humpback whales](#), with 227 dead whales being found in the past nine years. The story is similar for [other marine mammal species](#). Of particular concern, the critically endangered right whale (so-named because it was [once regarded as the "right whale to hunt"](#)), have suffered 41 confirmed mortalities [over a similar UME period since 2017](#). The estimated population of right whales today is around 350, so these are significant losses.

[Most of the deaths are attributed to vessel strikes or entanglement in fishing gear](#). However, the reason for the upward trend documented in the UMEs is unclear. The uptick has correlated with the initial surveying and construction associated with several high-profile offshore wind projects off of the Northern Atlantic coast. The surveying uses sonar technologies that may interfere with whales' navigation or simply harass them. The sinking of pilings to support massive offshore wind turbines increases ship traffic, particularly the loitering of construction support vessels, increases the likelihood of vessel strikes.

Not that you would hear it from [the wind industry](#) or the environmental community. Organizations like the [Sierra Club](#) and the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) are supporters of offshore wind and disagree that these projects are responsible for whale deaths.

Well, let's look at what NOAA itself says about that. In the jargon of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a federally permitted project may be issued a permit to authorize the [incidental "take"](#) (i.e., killing, injury, harassment, etc.) of protected species. [In its ESA biological opinion](#) for the 2.8 gigawatt Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Project (the

successor to the [doomed Orsted Ocean Wind projects, done in](#) by a confluence of permitting delays — including [securing federal approval and insulation from litigation to take right whales](#) — supply chain and labor inflation, and [NIMBY opposition from some of America’s wealthiest and most liberal communities](#)), NOAA lays out how many animals may be maimed or killed by the Atlantic Shores project without being deemed in violation of the permit. Those include eight right whales (approximately 2 percent of the remaining global population), eight humpbacks, and — staggeringly — more than 3,000 bottle nose dolphins. In total, Atlantic Shores is authorized to kill up to 4,925 protected marine mammals, all without violating its federal permit.

Down in the Gulf, things are very different. The Rice’s whale, only confirmed as distinct from the more common Bryde’s whale (which has a global population) [after genetic testing](#) in 2021, is the only baleen whale species endemic to the Gulf of Mexico. Its entire population is approximately 50 individuals and, after a petition, [the species was listed as endangered in 2019](#). The Rice’s whale primarily lives in northeast part of the Gulf of Mexico, where the Florida peninsula meets its pan handle. Notably, most oil and gas activity in the Gulf is in the northwest of the Gulf, off of Louisiana and Texas — away from the Rice’s whale’s feeding grounds.

In July 2023, [NOAA proposed critical habitat designations](#) for the Rice’s whale, centered on the coast near Florida’s Big Bend. Predictably, environmental groups sued and [a US District Court in Maryland](#) found that the critical habitat designation — which would preclude most economic activities in the region — was insufficiently protective by “underestim[at]ing the risk and harms of oil spills.” The Natural Resources Defense Council, which — as a reminder — says that the noise from offshore wind development is a nonissue [that can be addressed later](#) — stated that when it’s oil and gas related, [ocean noise can cause stress, reproductive dysfunction, and a higher rate of disease for marine mammal species](#). Michael Jasny of the organization’s Marine Mammal Protection Project, which sues over nearly every oil and gas lease but not wind leases, says that “Industry noise completely dominates the soundscape of the entire Northern Gulf,” and that this is cause to shut in the source of 15 percent of America’s crude oil production. The Biden-Harris Administration has been playing its part in service of these demands, excluding Rice’s whale habitat by [reducing the most recent lease sale area by more than six million acres](#).

No such courtesy has been extended to the right whales in the neighborhood of offshore wind projects on the Northern Atlantic. Whether it’s the wellbeing of whale or man, the environmental left only cares when it is politically useful to them. They just hope no one is paying attention.

## CONCLUSION

As Green Fail demonstrates, many federal environmental “investments” and regulations, at best, provide little to nothing in terms of demonstrable benefits, environmental or otherwise, from the recent gusher of federal cash and rulemakings out of Washington. At worst, they are killing species, hurting the economy, and proving counterproductive to the green energy revolution and carbon emissions reductions that the environmental Left claim they want. The American people should be better informed about what it is the bureaucrats they employ are doing in the name of environmental protection.

The exercise is not merely academic. Europe has seen voters revolt after the effects of their politicians’ environmental imperatives and vanity projects fell on their faces. The German [Energiewende](#) raised prices, undercut the famed German manufacturing sector’s competitiveness, and led to greater reliance upon Russian energy, to disastrous effect after the invasion of Ukraine. The Netherlands has seen broad agricultural protests over, among other things, [nitrogen regulations](#). Even in France, [the yellow vest protests](#) — sparked by diesel prices — demonstrated that even voters in the most liberal of European countries have had enough of environmental mandates that harm their qualities of life.

In these countries, the populaces were only motivated to pressure their governments after it was too late. Whether it was a pressing energy crisis of Germany or the slow boil of inflationary and tax pressures on consumers, sooner or later voters showed their disdain. Now Europe is facing a potential political overcorrection, with fears of an ascendant Far Right.

If America is to do better, then we must act before there is a crisis or the accretion of so much red tape and regulatory inflation that we have our own rude wake-up call. It is something voters must weigh this November, as well as in future elections. Our preeminent standing in the world depends on the American public and their policymakers getting these policies right.