

Green New Deal: Impossible

When coming up with a beast of a plan on energy, you would think the logical first step would have been to talk to people who know something about... energy. Creators of the Green New Dream didn't do that. They apparently didn't even Google "How energy works."

Truly, the most difficult part of exposing GND as astonishingly stupid is the size of the stupid. From start to finish the energy ideas in this ambitious plan defy reality.

The U.S. currently gets about 80 percent of its energy from fossil fuels. Promoters of GND imagine we can take that percentage down to zero in only a decade, transitioning fossil fuels to wind and solar. This idea is so embarrassingly preposterous that the GND prophets hastily changed their resolution to simply "zero emissions." This idea is equally as ludicrous, but apparently, it sounds better. The also belatedly inserted the phrase "as much as technically feasible" all over the resolution because it isn't anywhere near feasible!

Let's begin with electricity. Green New Dealers ignore an unsolvable problem. Even if we could build countless gigantic wind turbines and solar panels as far as the eye can see we would still need enormous amounts of natural gas, coal and nuclear to keep the electricity flowing when the wind isn't blowing, and the sun isn't shining.

There is no economic way to store huge amounts of electricity in giant batteries. Elon Musk tried a pilot project in Australia and it's been a colossal failure. Industrial wind facilities have not appreciably lowered our use of natural gas because it's needed during the large amount of time when wind isn't producing electricity.

And think of all the factories that would have to be built to make the wind turbines and solar panels, not to mention the tens of thousands of miles of new high voltage transmission lines and support structures. Where would all these factories be built and how would we find and train the millions of technical experts needed? Of course, all of this construction would require gigantic amounts of oil, natural gas and coal to do the job, but we'll need to ignore that reality too because apparently, that's what we do now do in the alternative universe of Green New Dealing.

We'll also have to ignore the fact that wind turbines, solar panels, and electric batteries require lots of rare earth metals, which, by the way, are also used in such things as military equipment, computers, and smartphones. Guess which nation owns more than 90 percent of the world's rare earth mines. That's right, China. As the U.S. has ceased being dependent on the Middle East for oil, GND would make America almost completely dependent on China for energy, technology, and military readiness.

Then there's transportation, nearly all of which is petroleum based. The Green New Deal envisions that we'll ditch all of our cars, trucks, trains, ships, and planes and make everything electric. We won't even want airplanes because of new high-speed rail. Seriously, they are saying that. Yes, electric cars are a thing, but not much of one. In spite of being heavily subsidized, electrics are still only a tiny portion of the car and truck market. The vehicles themselves are mostly made of oil and natural gas products and require large batteries filled with China's rare-earth metals.

One of the many realities Green New Dealers willfully ignore is the full scope of what oil and natural gas do for us. Yes, oil is the basis for virtually all transportation and natural gas generates electricity and is used for cooking and heating. But oil and natural gas are also the feedstocks for most products we all use every day. They include plastics, fertilizers, lubricants, fabrics, rubber, asphalt, chemicals, medicines, paint, adhesives, food packaging and the list goes on and on.

For many of these products, there simply are no viable alternatives. And for the alternatives that are available, the vast majority of them would cost a lot more to make with feedstocks.

If the Green New Deal were a serious idea, all of these issues would be addressed. But the energy portion of GND is pure fantasy, so that's not going to happen.

For the Clear Energy Alliance, I'm Mark Mathis. Power On.

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