

Opinion

EPA's fibs in its war on coal



Carbon Footprint of the U.N. Climate Conference
Illustration by Greg Groesch/The Washington Times

By Dennis Mitchell and Willie Soon - - Monday, December 29, 2014

Without affordable, reliable energy, life is short and brutal. Visit any place where families struggle to live without cheap electricity, and you will be horrified at the suffering. Without rational stewardship of natural resources, life is on a pathway to destruction. Visit any part of the world where carelessness rules resource utilization, and you will witness a ticking time bomb of misery.

These issues are complex and make it difficult for anyone, expert or not, to see the best path. In contrast, there are plenty of signs that will let you know who is and who isn't being straight with you. How does the average citizen see clearly when, in fact, the experts are so divided on the complex and confusing issues? You gauge it the same way you choose the people and businesses you deal with on a daily basis.

Most disturbing about the war on coal are the levels and persistence of deception. The trendy, hip, cool approach has been to rush into "renewable energy" sources and shut down traditional sources of energy based on a huge deception called "consensus science." The infamous "97 percent of all scientists agree" that has been pounded into our memories by President Obama's

campaign is, in fact, a well-funded and perniciously propagated deception. It's one of many unethical tricks to get folks going along with nonsensical non-science. However, the dirty little secret about "renewables" is there is no magic fix for the nearly insurmountable barriers of storage and distribution of energy. Despite decades of engineering efforts and subsidies, hoped-for success is as elusive as it was during the first giddy green rush.

Here is a list of the falsehoods that just one agency, the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), has been foisting on the American public to help add rainbows to its unicorn-filled coloring book:

The first fib is that the carbon dioxide regulations shutting down U.S. coal-fired power plants will have a measurable effect on carbon dioxide worldwide. In reality, China's carbon dioxide increases alone will neutralize any advantage. According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, each moderate volcanic eruption will negate decades worth of carbon dioxide reductions. The reality is all these radical proposals for carbon dioxide emission cuts cannot and will not lead to any major global temperature change.

The second deception is that new mercury rules, which are tied to U.S. coal-fired power plants, will save 17,000 lives per year. This is a curious claim by the [EPA](#), especially since there is no record of a single documented death from airborne environmental mercury. U.S. power plants release about 42 tons of mercury into the air per year, but volcanoes spew about 10,000 tons per year. If we shut down all coal-electricity generation in the nation, it would barely amount to a 3 percent reduction of mercury in Florida. The Gulf of Mexico, just by being here, contributes about 40 percent of airborne mercury, as it has for several million years. There is zero correlation between airborne mercury and the organic mercury found in some fish.

The [EPA](#) has composed a list of 187 "hazardous air pollutants." On the question of which is responsible for more carbon dioxide and mercury — the United States or Mother Nature — you can decide.

The third tall tale is we can replace all coal-fired power plants with nuclear and renewables by 2030 at virtually no economic impact because of the savings from fuel, health and other environmental issues. One small problem: This claim requires building more than 1,000 nuclear power plants to replace the loss of coal, and the massive economic losses that utilities would face would have to be absorbed by taxpayers. Does anyone really think the [EPA](#) would allow the construction of 1,000 nuclear plants in the next 15 years?

The only jobs created by the [EPA](#)'s unlawful rule-making would be to the [agency](#)'s own employee rolls from about 20,000 to more than 250,000.

Remember, all wind and solar energy must have fossil fuel or nuclear backup because "renewables" have a proven record of unreliable delivery. The U.N. climate conference in Peru this month produced the largest carbon footprint of any U.N. climate conference thus far because it was powered by diesel generators, owing to the organizers' genuine concern about the reliability of solar panels.

Twenty years ago, renewable zealots convinced Congress that 10 years of taxpayer assistance would be plenty to have a viable competitor for traditional energy. Ask Germany and Spain how that national commitment to renewables has worked out over the past 15 years. Spain's economy is in a shambles. Germany is shutting down most of its offshore wind program and building coal-fired power plants as fast as possible to ward off financial disaster.

Tyrannical shoving of immature technologies down the throats of the taxpayer, without regard to the consequences, is outrageous. Energy costs from traditional sources have been artificially, and substantially, raised. These are non-market-based increases in the cost of living, and no one suffers more than the poor. The deception about all of the "free energy" has become nothing less than a war on carbon dioxide, gas of life. There has been no greater deception than the panacea of renewable energy, the holy grail of the [EPA](#) and the climate alarmist community.

• *Dennis Mitchell is a qualified environmental professional and certified public accountant based in Laurel Hill, Florida. Willie Soon is a solar and Earth scientist based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

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