



Written by [John Stossel](#) on April 19, 2023

Save the Planet, Invest in Fossil Fuels

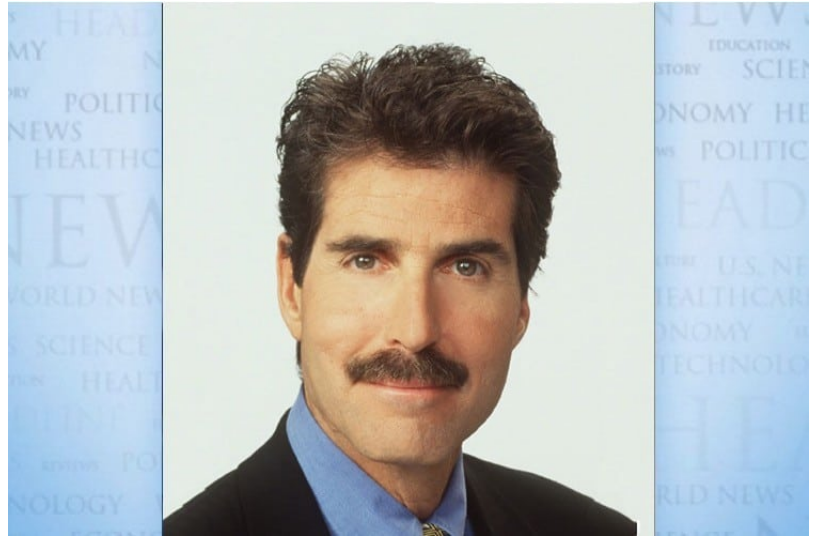
Earth Day is Saturday! Hooray?

“Saving humanity from the climate crisis,” says EarthDay.org, requires us to “push away from the dirty fossil fuel economy.”

Sounds logical.

But my latest video explains why doing that is cruel to poor people.

“Three billion people in the world still use less electricity than a typical refrigerator,” explains Alex Epstein, author of “The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels.” If they’re going to have “their first well-paying jobs ... their first consistent supply of clean water ... a modern life ... that’s going to depend on fossil fuels.”



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But the greens say we have a better replacement: wind and solar power.

So I push back at Epstein: “Solar is getting cheaper all the time. It’s already cheaper than fossil fuels.” “When we look at solar and wind around the world,” he answers, “it always correlates to rising prices and declining reliability. Why? Because solar and wind are intermittent. At any time, they can go near zero.”

That means wind turbines and solar farms don’t replace fossil fuel plants. You have to build them *in addition* to fossil fuel plants.

“We spent trillions of dollars in subsidies and mandates putting solar panels and wind turbines everywhere,” Epstein points out, “Yet we’re still having shortages of fossil fuels.”

Germany invested heavily in solar and wind power. Elites around the world praised German politicians for creating record renewable power. But that didn’t work so well when the winds slowed and clouds appeared.

Germans now pay much more for electricity, triple what Americans pay.

Germany has even turned to *coal* for energy. Coal! Coal is the filthiest fuel. Yet Germany now imports coal from Russia and America.

OK, say the activists, even if renewables have problems, soon we’ll have better batteries so we can bank wind and solar energy and store it until it’s needed!

Batteries are “getting continually better and cheaper,” I say to Epstein.

Backing up all solar and wind with batteries would cost “multiples of global GDP,” responds Epstein. “This is a total fantasy.”

“You say unaffordable,” I push back, “but who’s to determine what that is?”

“The general narrative is we’re destroying the planet with fossil fuels, so who cares how much energy



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costs?” Epstein says. “The truth is, the planet is only livable because of low-cost, reliable energy from fossil fuels.”

Before fossil fuels, “Life expectancy was below 30. Income was basically nonexistent. The population was stagnant because people had such a high death rate. The basic reason is that nature is not a very livable place for human beings.”

By contrast, thanks to cheap fossil fuels, “We make it unnaturally safe by producing all forms of climate protection. We produce drought relief ... sturdy buildings. We produce heat when it’s cold, we produce cold when it’s hot. We have this amazing, productive ability. That’s the only reason we experience the planet as livable.”

Unfortunately, because of today’s foolish hysteria over fossil fuels, energy prices will climb. “When you threaten an industry, you scare investors and producers. Massive threats to industry have definitely cut down production.”

America’s affluent protesters can afford the higher prices. But poor people will suffer. Allowing billions of the world’s poor to live a modern life requires energy from gas, oil and even coal.

The United Nations now puts pressure on countries to stop using fossil fuels. Governments in poor countries, eager for UN handouts, often listen.

“Their whole population is going to suffer,” warns Epstein. “People who have by far the least in the world [are] most subject to today’s international pressure against fossil fuels.”

If we want more of the poorest people to have decent lives, we need to invest in both fossil fuels and nuclear power.

Every Tuesday at JohnStossel.com, Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom. He is the author of Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media.

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