



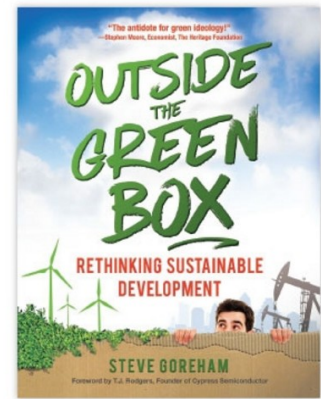
Written by [John Larabell](#) on November 6, 2017

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Clean Without the “Green”

Outside the Green Box: Rethinking Sustainable Development, by Steve Goreham, New Lenox, Illinois: New Lenox Books, 2017, 245 pages, paperback.

Sustainable development. Going green. Carbon credits. Businesses in Western, developed nations have all been hit with the pressure to be more environmentally conscious in order to “save the planet.” But how reasonable are those actions, and are they really doing any good?



In *Outside the Green Box: Rethinking Sustainable Development*, Steve Goreham attempts to set the record straight when it comes to businesses attempting to “go green.”

Goreham begins by informing readers how environmental policies have scared businesses into submission to their costly dictates. Businesses are now expected to “go green” or be sued, boycotted, or have their reputations otherwise tarnished by elaborate media campaigns. Many companies, especially large ones that make big targets for environmental groups, find it easier to just roll over; “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” seems to be the rule of the day. Big businesses, even the quintessential villains such as oil companies, are now investing in “green energy,” buying “carbon offsets,” making efforts to reduce their “carbon footprint,” and on and on.

Nonsense, claims Goreham; much of this sustainability craze is good for nothing other than public relations. In chapters three through six, Goreham debunks what he terms the “Four Horsemen of the Environmental Apocalypse”: overpopulation, worsening pollution, climate destruction, and natural-resource exhaustion. He explains that the Earth is not in danger of overpopulation, but population is starting to level off as countries become more developed, and we’ll likely see a *decrease* in global population over the next century. Likewise, as nations become more developed and standards of living rise, pollution-control measures are often put in place. The global pollution problem is actually getting *better*, not worse. Catastrophic man-made global warming is a myth, and carbon dioxide is not a pollutant. The Earth is actually rather cool right now, and CO₂ levels are fairly low when compared to many points in geological history. Natural resources are not in danger of being exhausted; on the contrary, as technology increases, more resources are recovered and they are used more efficiently.

Goreham explodes the myths of renewable energy in chapter seven, demonstrating that renewables can’t effectively power modern industrial nations, and that renewables actually cause environmental destruction, rather than saving the environment, since they require many times (sometimes hundreds of times) the amount of land area than comparable-producing conventional power plants running on hydrocarbon fuels. Wind and solar, the darlings of the “green energy” movement, are intermittent, unreliable, and inefficient, since they depend upon fickle Mother Nature for their power supply. Conventional power plants must be kept running as a backup when wind and solar aren’t producing enough to supply the grid. Renewables are also expensive and require government (i.e., taxpayer) subsidies or feed-in tariffs (laws requiring utilities to purchase electricity from renewables) to be



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remotely competitive.

In chapter nine, “Business Environmental Policy — Sensibly Green,” Goreham offers businesses what he calls a “sensibly green environmental policy”:

- 1. Use the lowest-cost mix of process elements** to produce the lowest-cost, highest-value products and services. Sensibly reduce the use of energy, materials, water, labor, and capital. Energy should be conserved like any other process input. Water should be used rationally, based on local availability and cost.
- 2. Reduce waste** from processes to minimize cost and environmental impact. Use recycled materials where advantageous to reduce production cost.
- 3. Minimize the discharge of hazardous air and water pollutants** to reduce environmental impact. Limit the release of lead, mercury, sulfur oxides, nitrous oxides, and particulate emissions into the air and the discharge of natural and synthetic chemicals into the water. This does not include carbon dioxide, which at today’s low atmospheric levels is not harmful to humans or the environment.
- 4. Design and test products** to minimize danger to humans or nature.
- 5. Prepare** for severe weather or natural disaster events. Contrary to the claims of some, neither society or industry can control the frequency or severity of weather, so companies must adapt and prepare for changing conditions.
- 6. Restore nature** after completion of mining or construction activities.
- 7. Comply** with environmental laws and regulations.

Goreham then proceeds to list items that should *not* be part of a company’s environmental policy:

- **Counting carbon dioxide emissions.** Unless required by law or for possible public relations benefit, totaling your firm’s carbon footprint is a waste of resources.
- **Purchasing carbon offsets.** There is no evidence that purchasing carbon offsets to invest in “carbon-soaking” projects has the slightest effect on global temperatures.
- **Special efforts to reduce energy consumption.** Like any resource, energy should not be wasted, but neither should extraordinary or expensive efforts be taken to conserve energy. Nations that use the most energy per person discharge the lowest levels of harmful pollutants. Low-cost energy is the foundation of economic growth, generating capital to fund air and water pollution control measures. There is no evidence that energy production hurts the environment or that energy resources face exhaustion.
- **Payment of a premium to use renewable energy.** Electricity from a 120-volt or 240-volt outlet is identical whether renewable or from hydrocarbon fuels. Energy does not have color. No company should pay a premium for “green” energy unless the public relations benefits outweigh the increased electricity cost.
- **Payment of a premium to use biofuels or electric vehicles.** Electric vehicles and biofuels should be adopted only when they offer superior cost/benefit for your firm. Many studies show that biofuels consume more land and water and emit more pollutants than use of gasoline or diesel fuel for vehicles.
- **Special efforts to use natural or renewable materials.** Today’s engineers are amazing. They can



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make plates from pig urine, furniture from hay, and concrete from rice. But why do so if the foundations of sustainable development are wrong? Products that intentionally use natural materials or shun petroleum-based materials offer negligible actual environmental benefit.

As Goreham notes, such feel-good green policies belong in only one place in a company's budget — public relations — “because they don't do anything else.”

Goreham holds an MS in electrical engineering and has more than 30 years' experience in engineering and executive roles in Fortune 100 companies. He is currently a speaker, researcher, and author on environmental issues and has appeared on numerous radio and television programs. He is also the executive director of the Climate Science Coalition of America, a “non-political association of scientists, engineers, and citizens dedicated to informing about the realities of climate science and energy economics.”

Outside the Green Box is an enjoyable read, written in an accessible, non-technical style and filled with ample illustrations, photographs, and charts to explain rather technical information. But readers should not be fooled by the “layman's style” writing — Goreham's book is annotated with more than 800 footnotes and is clearly the result of a great deal of research.

Readers who enjoy this book will want to check out Goreham's 2012 book, *The Mad, Mad, Mad World of Climatism: Mankind and Climate Change Mania*, in which he spends an entire book, rather than just one chapter, debunking the myth of man-made global warming and all the hysteria surrounding it. For a more in-depth analysis of this previous book, see our review in the February 18, 2013 edition of *The New American*.

Goreham is hopeful, and believes the tide is turning, so to speak, on the environmental movement. He relates that when he gives presentations to businesses, the audience members often remark that he was “preaching to the choir,” but it seems as if most business owners do not know that they are part of a silent majority who reject the theories of man-made climate change and the alleged need for sustainability practices. Goreham feels that, with time, more and more people will wake up and see the ill effects of “going green,” and environmental policies will begin to change. This is already beginning to happen in many developed countries, even Europe, which drank the green Kool-Aid early on. Especially in America with the Trump administration in charge, some of the more onerous regulations will (hopefully) be curtailed if not outright reversed. The solution is for more people to read books such as *Outside the Green Box* and spread the word about the follies of going green.



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