



Written by [William P. Hoar](#) on October 27, 2020

Published in the November 9, 2020 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 36, No. 21

Correction, Please!

Leftists Fan the Flames of “Climate Fires”



Diversion: Governor Gavin Newsom has proclaimed his state’s phase-out of internal combustion engines by 2035 because, he says, they cause global warming and California fires. But for decades forest managers have warned about the dangers of the state’s poor forest management. (*Photo credit: AP Images*)

Item: *Attempting to justify his executive order banning the sale of all new gas-powered cars in California by 2035, Governor Gavin Newsom said on September 23 (on Twitter and Facebook, among others): “NEW: We’re facing a climate crisis. We need bold action. CA is phasing out the internal combustion engine. By 2035 every new car sold in CA will be an emission free vehicle. Cars shouldn’t give our kids asthma. Make wildfires worse. Melt glaciers. Or raise sea levels.”*

Item: *Discussing ongoing wildfires in California, the London-based Economist (in its August 29-September 4 issue) acknowledged that some previous fires “have been man-made. One started when a car tyre blew and the wheel’s metal rim scraped the pavement. This year’s fires are the latest and starkest example of a different man-made influence: climate change.”*

Item: *Democratic nominee Joe Biden on September 14 pointed the blazing finger of blame at one person in particular, Donald Trump, saying: “If you give a climate arsonist four more years in the White House, why would anyone be surprised if we have more of America ablaze?”*

A vote for Joe, on the other hand, would apparently guarantee fewer wildfires, floods, and hurricanes.

Item: *The establishment left-wing New York Times repeatedly pushes the emergency button about climate change. On September 20, for example, the paper published an article entitled “Just Call Them Climate Fires,” written by two of its “graphic editors” — complete with a U.S. map depicting (among others) areas with “water stress,” “extreme heat,” “hurricanes,” “wildfires,” and “sea level rise”; this was supposed to “personalize” climate change in “emotional and personal terms” that are “far more persuasive.” The piece’s headline is derived from a comment by Washington Governor Jay Inslee about events on the West Coast. In his words: “These are not just wildfires. They are climate fires.”*

Following its own advice to terrify the audience, the Times in its September 23 print edition ran a page-



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one article with a dramatic photo of a California fire. It had this jolting headline: “A Climate Crossroads with 2 Paths: Merely Bad or Truly Horrific,” and this menacing subhead: “A Surge in Cascading Disasters Intensifies a Sense of Urgency.” The paper said that such disasters “are the here and now, worsening for the next generation and perhaps longer, depending on humanity’s willingness to take action.”

Correction: Some calamity-mongers are so addicted to exaggerations that they can’t even tell the truth without lying.

California Governor Newsom, for instance, pays scant attention to a solution to catastrophic forest fires that would really be effective — and could take place before he is out of office: proper forest management.

Joe Biden fallaciously impugns the president (who has called out forest mismanagement) while dissembling about his own alliance with the zealots of the Green New Deal.

If you really want to discover the culprits behind the wildfires in California and elsewhere on the West Coast, you can find many of them in the eco-camp — who have hurt their own cause and the forests. Among those taking notice of this, more than a decade ago, was Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich; he pointed out that the “environmentalists have gone to the extreme to prevent controlled burns, and as a result we have this catastrophe today.” That was in 2009.

The benefit of controlled burning is not a new phenomenon. American Indians used the practice for centuries. As pointed out by (maverick) environmentalist Michael Shellenberger (author of *Apocalypse Never*), the forests in America’s West were supposed to burn more often. As he has said: “When Europeans came, they reported California being very smoky and on fire during the summers. And Native Americans burned huge amounts of land.” Plants and debris from dead trees will accumulate unless there are small fires. If you want a wildfire, just leave this potential fuel there and before long you get a fire you cannot control.

Various leftist geniuses had different ideas. Writing recently for American Greatness, Edward Ring, co-founder of the California Policy Center, recounted that, year after year, “environmentalists litigated and lobbied to stop efforts to clear the forests through timber harvesting, underbrush removal, and controlled burns. Meanwhile, natural fires were suppressed, and the forests became more and more overgrown.”

As Ring summarizes:

If an honest history of California in the early 21st century is ever written, the verdict will be unequivocal. Forests that thrived in California for over 20 million years were allowed to become overgrown tinderboxes. And then, with stupefying ferocity, within the span of a few decades, they burned to the ground. Many of them never recovered.

This epic tragedy was the direct result of policies put in place by misguided environmentalist zealots, misinformed suckers who sent them money, and the litigators and lobbyists they hired, who laughed all the way to the bank.

In the meantime, there has been a glut of reports about the frequency of wildfires. And, no surprise, the mainstream media exaggerate. NASA satellites have revealed that, globally, there has been a 25-



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percent *reduction* of wildfires since 2003. James Taylor, the president of the Heartland Institute, cites those findings and also notes that if “global warming were to blame for California’s wildfires, we would expect to see a global increase of wildfires, but just the opposite is the case.”

As Taylor told the *Washington Times*, it is “troubling and indeed dangerous to blame climate change for wildfires that could have and should have been stifled by wise proactive forest management.” Using the mantra of “climate change,” as he put it, “may prove politically convenient for policymakers to shift attention from their own poor policy decisions, but such misdirection fails to address the root cause of out-of-control wildfires that kill people, destroy ecosystems and destroy people’s lives.”

Similarly, even the governor of California has had to admit that the state’s power shortages that have left so many fuming and steaming in the dark were the result of mandates for “renewable” power. (California has called for 60 percent of its electricity to come from renewables by 2030 and 100 percent by 2045 — even as it shuts down multiple power plants that operate with politically incorrect sources.)

It turns out that when you reject fossil fuels, you do get something in return: power shortages.

Newsom acknowledged in August, amid green blackouts, that there had been “gaps” of reliability as California transitioned to renewables. At the same time, he insisted that the state was still “committed to radically changing the way we produce and consume energy.”

Or, as the *Wall Street Journal* expressed it, a bit more tartly:

In other words, Democrats in Sacramento are so committed to ending fossil fuels that the hoi polloi are simply going to have to make some sacrifices — such as living with blackouts as if the state were a Third World country. So shut up and broil, and wait for the Green New Deal to do this for the rest of America.

Indeed, the Green New Delusion has been promoted as a blueprint for the entire country. The likely disastrous result is, in part, why Joe Biden — when talking to “moderates” — has insisted that he does not support the Green New Deal. Yet, when Biden seeks support from “progressives,” there is a different story. Biden’s own campaign website praises the GND, saying it is “a crucial framework for meeting the climate challenges we face.”



Heat wave? California’s leading politicians say their state is burning because of global warming. But



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fires worldwide have declined, not risen, so it's a local problem. (*Photo credit: AP Images*)

The Green New Deal, under one form or another, is not going to disappear when the calendar turns. It is too important to the progressives calling so many Democratic shots. There is more to it than feel-good ecological catch phrases. As summarized by the *Washington Examiner*:

The \$93 trillion Green New Deal, the signature legislation of the climate alarmist movement, contains many items that are completely extraneous to the climate debate, and it does so by design. It aims to have government create jobs; to build massive new infrastructure; to guarantee "economic security for all people of the United States," whether they want to work or not; to secure "healthy food"; to "promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression"; to provide socialized healthcare and subsidized housing.

"Climate," as noted by the *Examiner*, "became useful camouflage for a lot of really bad ideas."

Still, there are many proponents — seemingly convinced that the globe is due to burst into flames and extinguish all mankind — who insist we must pay the high price because that will save the planet. Well, in a discouraging word, "nope."

There are pesky facts. Alan Reynolds, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and former vice president of the First National Bank of Chicago, has pointed out that American "passenger vehicles account for only about 2.4% of global greenhouse emissions. Since California accounts for 11% of all U.S. light vehicles, totally abolishing all passenger vehicles in California (not just the newest ones) might reduce global greenhouse gases by 0.26%." That dud gives failure a bad name.

Moreover, as Reynolds explained for the American Institute for Economic Research, "Even literally abolishing all cars and light trucks in the entire United States would make only a trivial change in worldwide carbon and methane emissions." In addition, the existing fleet of vehicles — in California or nationwide or worldwide — is certainly not going to disappear. So, as Reynolds concluded, even if all new American

electric vehicles had a nationwide market share of 20% by 2030, as optimists predict, each year's new cars and light trucks make only a small change in the fleet — which would still be 93% gas and diesel vehicles in 2030. It won't matter anyway, since U.S. cars and light trucks now account for only about 2.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

There is another galling point about those electric cars. They have 1,000-pound batteries that are largely imported and require extensive mining operations. Such batteries are derived from countries with heinous records (including child labor). Communist China, as the *Wall Street Journal* has reported, controls about 70 percent of the world's lithium supply and 83 percent of the anodes used in batteries.



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False advertising: The Green New Deal would hardly mean a green America. Not only would the Green New Deal ensure that we buy “green energy” devices from China, but it would also lead to the outsourcing of jobs as the cost of energy in this country skyrockets. *(Photo credit: AP Images)*

And the mining needed for the batteries would probably increase the U.S. dependence on rare-earth minerals mined in Russia and China. This is a point that has been made by Mark Mills, a faculty fellow at Northwestern University and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. Mills has also taken note of the fact that the United States imports about 90 percent of solar panels and 80 percent of the key power components of wind turbines — crucial aspects of the Green New Deal.

If we do purchase “green-machine components,” Mills has explained, this is “essentially an export of both jobs and hydrocarbon consumption. Nonetheless, all EVs and all wind-solar is the stated goal in California. It’s also a key plank in the Democratic Party’s energy plan, as it is with many states and governments around the world.”

There is a larger picture — one that is understood by our enemies and competitors overseas. Here is a central part of it, as Mills pointed out in a *Washington Examiner* article (“The Myth of the Great ‘Energy Transition’”). For the United States, he writes,

the practical effect of implementing a Green New Deal would be a complete reversal of import dependencies. America is essentially self-sufficient in petroleum and a net exporter of natural gas as a direct consequence of the shale-fracking revolution. But virtually all of the new demand for “energy materials” will come from imports, either directly or indirectly in the form of the green machine hardware and components manufactured elsewhere.

If this upshot isn’t bad enough, even worse may be on the horizon. The prospect of a “climate lockdown” has actually been floated by a United Nations economist for an influential media site that calls itself the “world’s opinion page.” Mariana Mazzucato, a University College London economics professor, warned in September that “in the near future, the world may need to resort to lockdowns again — this time to tackle a climate emergency.” This piece (“Avoiding a Climate Lockdown”) appeared on “Project Syndicate,” which has been heavily funded by, among others, leftist billionaires Bill Gates and George Soros.



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Friedrich Hayek, a quite different type of economist, also had a prescient admonition about crises. As Hayek put it, “‘Emergencies’ have always been the pretext on which the safeguards of individual liberty have eroded.”



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