



Written by [James Heiser](#) on November 13, 2012

Environmentalism: Oil Industry as Bad as Apartheid

Is the work of the American oil industry the moral equivalent of South African apartheid? Will coffee beans cease to exist before the end of this century? The most recent shrill outbursts from the environmental Left offer the latest evidence for global warming; the [silly season](#) for news is extended later and later into the fall.

The theory of manmade climate change has fallen on hard times in recent years: The [Climategate scandal](#), ongoing [questions about the quality of the science](#) behind the theory of anthropogenic global warming, further scandals such as [Glaciergate](#), and demands by the United Nations for as much as [\\$76 trillion in wealth transfers](#) from the industrialized nations to the developing world, have done much to undermine public belief in, and toleration for, the theory. Many [polls](#) in the last few years have shown a significant decline in the public belief in the climate theory, and those studies that attempted to show a reversal of that trend have been challenged on account of their [significant methodological flaws](#).

Now, the rhetoric coming from the theory's advocates has become even more shrill, with Bill McKibben — a man who has written numerous popular books on the topic — breaking out the old “divestment” talk from the days of the anti-apartheid movement. In an article for Takepart.com (“[2028: The end of the world as we know it?](#)”), the author of *The Global Warming Reader* declared war on the industry that makes the overwhelming majority of public and private transportation possible:

To prevent the end of the world as we know it, it will require no less than the death of the most profitable industry in the history of humankind.

“As of tonight,” McKibben said, “we’re going after the fossil fuel industry.” ...

McKibben says the key to realizing that goal is to battle the lifeblood of the fossil fuel industry — its bottom line.

To start, he’s calling for an immediate global divestment from fossil fuel companies. “We’re asking that people who believe in the problem of climate change to stop profiting from it. Just like with divestment movement in South Africa over apartheid, we need to eliminate the oil companies veneer of respectability.”

In conjunction with the divestment regimen, continued protests against unsustainable energy projects





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will also be crucial. McKibben will be in Washington, D.C., on November 18 to lead a mass rally against climate change and the Keystone Pipeline. "We can no longer just assume that President Obama is going to do everything he promised during his campaign. We need to push him."

For the countless thousands of people who waited in lines for gasoline in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy, or who huddled in their homes during the [nor'easter that followed the storm](#), the [lackluster response of FEMA](#) under President Obama's watch has certainly brought home to millions of Americans the necessity of a regular supply of oil and natural gas to maintain anything approaching a modern standard of living.

McKibben's appeal to his hearers to pressure Obama to further anti-energy activity demonstrates the degree to which the environmentalist fringe expects the "masses" to act against their own best interests. The divestment agenda of the anti-apartheid movement "worked" insofar as it brought more pressure on government and industry inside the Republic of South Africa than it inflicted pain on those individuals and corporations outside of the RSA who engaged in divestment tactics.

But can the same be said of divesting from the oil industry? Until McKibben begins to tour the nation solely by means of foot and horse-drawn carts, it will be difficult to comprehend what morally credible divestment scheme is being posited. And until his followers are prepared to eschew the heating of their homes by means of natural gas or coal-fired power plants, to abandon the use of gasoline automobiles, and to reject the abundance of food in North America that relies on fertilizers and relatively inexpensive means of bringing food to market, critics will continue to view the rhetoric of divestment as just bravado.

However, the rhetoric of divestment is cast in a new light when coupled with another point of hysteria for the global-warming lobby: the purported threat of the end of coffee by 2080. As Amy Rolph [blogged for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#), the true terror of global warming can be found in one salient detail: "I don't mean to alarm anyone, but global warming could be responsible for more than just rising sea levels and extreme weather events. It's also slowly killing coffee."

The "death of coffee" is the latest example of science-by-computer-model:

A study by conservation group Kew suggests that global warming could lead to the extinction of wild Arabica coffee by 2080. The study uses computer modeling to hypothesize how coffee production will be impacted by climate change, running through possible scenarios and to determine the prevalence of bioclimatically suitable regions for coffee growth.

The most favorable model predicted a 65 percent reduction in coffee-growing regions by 2080. The most dire model showed a 100 percent reduction.

The use of computer models for global-warming projections is limited by the variables considered in the model, and the result has been a series of models that have proven open to the charge that they "[grossly exaggerate](#)" the effects of global warming.

The difficulty, of course, comes when the various global-warming doomsday scenarios meet: Who will notice the extinction of coffee, if McKibben has destroyed the means to bring those coffee beans to a population affluent enough to import them in the first place? And how do you sell oil industry divestment to urban liberals who idle their Yukons in the drive-through lane at the local Starbucks?



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