



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 13, 2024

Green-nightmare Discovery: Fracking Wastewater Contains Crucial “Net-zero-tech” Metal

What happens when greentopian dogma meets discovery? We’re about to learn this with a finding that could send depressed environmentalists running for the lithium — and away from it.

That is, the discovery is that fracking wastewater contains massive amounts of lithium, an element necessary for the so-called “net-zero” technology of which greentopians are so fond. These ideologues find themselves facing a dilemma, however, because fracking is anathema to them.



Fox News [reports](#) on the story:

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The discovery of the potential for thousands of tons of lithium to be extracted annually from wastewater generated by fracking in the Marcellus Shale leaves proponents of a green energy future at a crossroads, Republicans said Thursday.

A [University of Pittsburgh study](#) suggested processing byproducts from natural gas production in Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale basin could potentially meet nearly half of U.S. lithium needs. The typical electric vehicle (EV) requires nearly 18 pounds of lithium to power its battery. That figure grows exponentially for Teslas, according to reports.

Rep. Guy Reschenthaler, R-Pa., who represents much of the Marcellus territory, told Fox News he wants to see those on the left change their tune.

“Now nearly 40% of our nation’s domestic need for lithium can be found right here as a byproduct of fracking,” he said. “I fully expect every single Democrat to join Republicans in supporting domestic natural gas development.”

“[There are] 100,000 union jobs the industry supports in Pennsylvania alone,” Reschenthaler said, while criticizing progressives in the Democratic Party for opposing the same fossil fuel speculation that led to the reported lithium boom.

Moreover, one of the study researchers, Justin Mackey, “told KDKA that in addition to supplying substantial amounts of lithium, processing the wastewater in that way ‘reduce[s] the cost of remediating and handling’ it, adding there may likely be similar lodes of lithium in West Virginia and Ohio shale deposits that could lead to an ‘economic boom,’” Fox also relates.

Assuming this lithium extraction is economically feasible, it’s a groundbreaking discovery. After all, “Not only is lithium a crucial component for everything the left likes to inaccurately file under ‘net zero’ technologies (electric vehicles, solar panel energy storage systems, wind turbines), but it’s necessary for basically all electronics—the computer I’m using to write this blog, and the phone from which you may be reading it,” [writes](#) commentator Olivia Murray, adding perspective. “In the U.S., we’re largely



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reliant on foreign lithium, as [Australia, Chile, and China produce 90%](#) of the lithium on the global market—which leaves us in a precarious position if there are any supply chain disruptions or price fluctuations—so sourcing it from dirty fracking water, in a process that reduces the cost companies already pay to clean the contaminated water, is quite a good deal for the American consumer, economy, and environment.”

Obviously, just as with an individual, a civilization’s goal should be to “stand on your own two feet”; this means we don’t want to be dependent on foreign sources, least of all China, for crucial resources/products such as antibiotics or lithium.

Moreover, “considering how utterly filthy and destructive to the environment the traditional lithium mining process is—just think how much worse it is in unbound-by-climate-deals China—it’s an even better deal to use the market, or the law of supply-and-demand, to diminish our dependence on products that come with ecologically devastating consequences,” Murray adds.

And how significant would this lithium harvesting be? “If we were to implement this lithium-from-fracking-water process *only* at the Marcellus Shale, with its almost 1,300-ton annual yield of lithium, it would bump the U.S. into one of the top lithium producers in the world, contributing more lithium to the market than 185 *nations combined*,” Murray relates. “(Out of 193 nations, [the bottom 185 produce together 700 tons](#) of lithium each year.)”

Of course, all this is predicated, again, on the supposition that the extraction is economically feasible. Yet what’s for certain is that if there is great profit in it, the market will bring it to fruition — that is, *if the government stays out of the way*.

This, though, is more than a big if, Murray points out. She opines that with our having copious amounts of natural gas and lithium, and with the industries built around them able to provide tons of jobs, there appears no downside here.

This is precisely why, too, the powers-that-be will likely cut this off at the knees, she pessimistically says.

In fairness, most everything has a downside, which is why Professor Thomas Sowell has sagely pointed out that in life there seldom are “solutions,” only “trade-offs.” Mature people proceed with this understanding here, realizing that there are no “perfect energy sources” (at least currently), only better and worse ones.

Unfortunately, Murray’s prediction is likely accurate; this is partially because greentopians, being radical ideologues, are immune to facts.

[A good example is](#) how after New Jersey enacted a ban on “single-use” plastic bags some years ago, the amount of plastic used for bags *increased 300 percent* — precisely the opposite of the intended result. The issue?

The reusable bags being pushed contain 15 times as much plastic as the “single-use” ones but aren’t, on average, used 15 times as much.

Despite this, there’s no indication that the N.J. plastic bag ban will be rescinded. After all, it has served its purpose: to value-signal greentopian rectitude.

This is why elections matter, too. Depending on who is in power next January, we will either apply common sense to energy policy or discover how uncommon it really is.



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