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OPINION | COMMENTARY

## *The Case for a Green 'No Deal'*

Climate alarmism isn't popular with the public, so Republicans don't need an alternative.

By Steve Milloy

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Emissions rise from a coal-fired power station behind a temple in Tongling, China, Jan. 16. PHOTO: QILAI SHEN/BLOOMBERG NEWS

The Senate rejected the Green New Deal on a 57-0 procedural vote last month. Not a single senator voted to bring the proposal to the floor, including its chief sponsor, Massachusetts Democratic Sen. Ed Markey. Climate alarmists demanded that Republicans come up with a plan of their own. But the best plan may be no plan at all, for at least four reasons.

First, cutting U.S. emissions won't have much of an effect on the climate. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, total man-made emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases were an estimated 53.5 billion metric tons in 2017. If the U.S. went dark and magically stopped emitting CO<sub>2</sub> today, the rest of the world would continue to emit on the order of 45 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, an amount far in excess of the Kyoto Protocol's goal of reducing annual emissions below the 1990 level of 35 billion tons. Supposing the U.S. could go carbonless, the difference in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels by 2100 would be only about 29 parts per million. Based on Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change modeling, this would make no discernible difference in mean global temperature.

Second, claims of reductions in national emissions should be taken with a grain of salt. According to an August 2018 report from the ClimateWorks Foundation, Western industrial nations have simply outsourced as much as 25% of their emissions to Asia, where labor is cheaper and environmental and workplace regulation is less expensive. Local emissions may be "cut," but global emissions aren't. Despite decades of climate alarmism, the world is burning more coal, oil and natural gas than ever. Still, a billion people around the world live in homes without electricity. The U.N. projects that global population will grow from 7.6 billion today to 11.2 billion by 2100. So long as people who are living in poverty seek a way out of it, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will rise.

Third, the only thing certain about CO<sub>2</sub> is that it's necessary for life on Earth. It's plant food. NASA satellite images have charted the greening of the Earth since the early 1980s. The notion that climate change is necessarily bad is an assumption, and possibly an unfounded one. There is no known or demonstrable "correct" or "optimal" level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. There is similarly no known or demonstrable "correct" or "optimal" average global temperature. The

climate is always changing, albeit gradually and often imperceptibly. The U.N. reported in its first climate assessment in 1990 that average temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere have been warming since about 1650, the end of a relatively cold period known as the Little Ice Age. Recent research has demonstrated that warming has helped increase corn yields and helped corn production move into colder climates like the Canadian province of Alberta.

Fourth, pointlessly wrecking the U.S. economy is bad politics. Climate routinely ranks at or near the bottom in polls of voter priorities, and climate alarmism has never been a political winner. Bill Clinton tried and failed to get his BTU tax passed in 1993. The Senate voted 95-0 in 1997 on a resolution to keep the U.S. from signing the Kyoto Protocol. Sens. John McCain and Joe Lieberman couldn't rally enough support to pass a bipartisan cap-and-trade bill in 2003. Sen. Markey and Rep. Henry Waxman's cap-and-tax bill died on the vine in 2010. And then there is the recent skunking of the Green New Deal.

Climate crusaders do make a lot of noise, political and otherwise. Some activists mean well but are simply uninformed or wrongheaded. Some use climate as a stalking horse to advance a socialist agenda. "System change not climate change" is a common poster at climate rallies. Some look for business or rent-seeking opportunities from stoking panic over the climate. Some go along with climate-change hysteria out of political correctness. All of this noise crashes into the realities of immense and growing emissions driven by the desire of poor people around the world to achieve a higher standard of living.

If the GOP needs a climate plan, consider what Utah Sen. Mike Lee suggested during the debate over the Green New Deal. "The solution to climate change is not this unserious resolution, but the serious business of human flourishing. . . . Fall in love, get married, and have some kids."

Amen, Senator.

*Mr. Milloy served on the Trump EPA transition team, publishes JunkScience.com, and is author of "Scare Pollution: Why and How to Fix the EPA."*

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