

Energy Policy: 'Change or Die!'

Several years ago I came across a well-written book that outlined a step-by-step process for personal change. The book, *Change Or Die*, actually explored the psychology of change. The author, Alan Deutschman, helped me to focus several important health changes in my personal life. I chose to "change," not "die."

The Obama administration is at an important crossroads—or a "change or die" moment—as well with regard to energy. The president wants to be seen as a job creator but his green policies have squandered resources and disillusioned all but the most ardent energy zealots. The president could ease the burden of the average American citizen by simply backing away from his rigid ideology concerning energy.

Ironically, his energy policies have begun to exacerbate the cash problems of our hardest-working citizens. I bear no ill will toward President Obama, and I defend him whenever I can; but there are a few areas where his policies are simply indefensible.

We have all heard the administration's cronies exhort us that, "We must not balance the budget on the backs of the poor." I most heartily agree. Neither must we attempt to save the planet by sacrificing the poor on the altar of environmental extremism. For all the administration's rhetoric concerning working-class folks, they have initiated an energy war on the poor.

For almost four years, the president's energy policies have not truly focused on conservation or saving the earth; they have been about placating the lobby of environmental radicals who view mankind as parasites on the environment—not stewards

of it. As unbelievable as it sounds, these extremists actually want energy to be more expensive.

Let me be more specific. Earlier this year, the Obama administration rejected a proposal to build a pipeline between Alberta, Canada, and Texas. The "Keystone Pipeline" would have reportedly brought in about 830,000 barrels of oil a day and created tens of thousands of jobs for Americans. Although the proposal had received bipartisan support, the administration claimed it needed more time to gather and review information.

The initial application, however, was filed in 2008, and the Department of State has already conducted a three-year environmental impact review. At a time when everyone in the country needs more affordable energy and jobs, the White House rejected both. Why? Because environmental extremists care more about soil composition than people.

The Keystone decision was the latest in a long series of policy choices that prevents Americans from obtaining the affordable energy we all need, and increases our dependence on petroleum from the Middle East. This policy not only drives up fuel prices, but also further weakens our already struggling economy. Who suffers most as gasoline creeps steadily toward \$5 a gallon and heating and air conditioning costs rise? Not the folks making the decisions to keep it that way, I can promise you that.

Meanwhile, the White House's two best ideas seem a little less than brilliant. First, it wants to combat our energy problems by investing heavily in "green" energy for the long term. Second, it wants to open the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in the short term. Even a casual observer can see that the president's green energy initiative has been financially disastrous.

From the failures of flagship companies like Solyndra, which went bankrupt despite hundreds of millions of dollars of

federal aid, to the cost of each green job actually created, legislators from both sides of the aisle no longer view federally funded green energy projects as the future of economic growth.

To add insult to injury, a recent investigation by *The Wall Street Journal* discovered that most of the jobs reportedly “created” with countless dollars of stimulus money were temporary, and some are not even real! For example, \$4.3 billion went to 36 wind farms, which reported the creation of 7,200 jobs, but now employ only 300. That is a cost of more than \$14 million per permanent job!

As for tapping into the nation’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve, James L. Jones and Jason S. Grumet of the Bipartisan Policy Center weighed in through *The New York Times*, saying that this is a bad idea.

“The oil reserve,” they explain, “should be preserved to address an emergency disruption in supply.” They go on to state the obvious solution: “Despite the traditional election-year rancor, there is actually considerable bipartisan agreement on what needs to be done. Increasing domestic oil production is extremely important to our economy and to reducing our trade deficit.”

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of Grumet and Jones’ analysis is the fact that Jones is a former Obama adviser. Affordable energy must be a vital part of putting Americans back to work. Unfortunately, the man in charge appears to be brainwashed by environmental activists.

The Declaration of Independence says we need a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” If we accept this foundational truth, we must demand better from our president, his administration and our legislators. It’s time to call for a real change.

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