

DAILY TIMES

Guest column: Climate change deniers don't let facts get in way

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Letters to the editor from people who attack others for trying to make the world better are never in short supply, but at least the former climate deniers who once trolled these pages have come around and now accept that we are changing the atmosphere's composition and increasing average temperatures. It wasn't long ago, though, that recent letter writers complaining about car-owning climate activists were citing Exxon's talking points verbatim. That they're now at least acknowledging the reality of planetary warming is a sign of progress.

In the face of overwhelming evidence of atmospheric and ocean warming (and our responsibility for it), the new FOX News and American Petroleum Institute elevator speeches now focus on discrediting climate activists. If you're concerned enough to give up half a day marching in Philadelphia for clean energy progress, or if you write a letter to the editor pointing out our current government's contempt for science and its rolling back of previous administrations' measures to move us off oil and gas, then you're a hypocrite because you drive a car, use a phone, or fly on commercial airlines, etc.

The irrefutable, settled science that has even FOX's news division acknowledging the problem has triggered a real crisis among cranks. Since they can no longer rail about how "cyclical global warming is nothing new" or that "increased solar activity is causing warming," or "plants need CO2 so it's not a pollutant" or that "Europe will get colder once the Gulf Stream shuts down and balances out the warming," they've been stuck for material. So comedy writers in D.C. have come to the rescue with some new bits.

These comedy writers work for the American Enterprise Institute, the CATO Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Petroleum Institute, all oil-drenched propaganda arms of the Big Carbon Octopus. Their hysterical propaganda is then dutifully regurgitated by FOX, which tells us that we have no right to complain about climate disruption if we don't move back to the savanna as hunter gatherers or overwinter in caves huddled around smoldering buffalo chips. We're hypocrites for using cell phones instead of an open window. Unless we surrender our cars for bikes we should just shut up.

So why are trolls being reprogrammed to attack climate activists if the science and data are overwhelming? Because any delay in government action helps Big Carbon's bottom line. Instead of long ago investing in renewable technologies and shifting away from oil and gas, they doubled down, building more pipelines, more supertankers, more refineries, more fracking infrastructure, more oil trains, more offshore rigs, more expensive oil field exploration, etc. They won't just lose hundreds of millions they've invested in thousands of politicians in federal and state

governments. They'll hemorrhage hundreds of billions (or even trillions) in assets that would be stranded in a WW2-style mobilization. If you can paint the activists as hypocrites, you achieve delay. "I don't want to be a hypocrite, so I'll just wait until someone else does something about it."

Exxon, Shell, BP, et al. previously got the world to delay the shift by impugning scientists. Now that the science is irrefutable, and now that all those internal Exxon memos from in-house climate studies showing warming to be real, new delay tactics are needed. Delay is now sought by attacking those who are calling for a rapid transition to clean energy. If they can make citizens afraid to speak up in favor of a rapid transition for fear of being called a hypocrite, it does two things. First, it helps to discourage mass protest, which has always helped move the government in the right direction. Second, it creates doubt about activists in the way Big Carbon once created doubt about climate scientists. Certainly the crisis must be exaggerated because, look, "they're hypocrites."

The hypocrisy tag helps to let government off the hook. If millions of people are not pressuring federal and state governments to use their massive buying power and ability to invest in renewable energy research to improve the technology, they surely won't (considering how much Big Carbon has "invested" in administrations). Government research funding could help solar panels achieve efficiencies of 40% (from 20% now), but without public pressure that won't happen. Solar is already cheaper than oil/gas for basic electric needs, but 40% panel efficiency means you could heat your house more cheaply with electricity than gas or heating oil.

The hypocrisy labeling uses the classic magician's trick of misdirection. Instead of looking at the science, we're being asked to look at the activists and "what hypocrites they are." If they're hypocrites then Big Carbon gets more delay ... as the oceans continue to quietly rise.