

DAILY FREEMAN

‘Energy dinosaurs’ seek profits over climate and people’s lives

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Dear Editor,

Syndicated columnist Cal Thomas has done it again with his mocking and insulting piece in the Freeman, “Hysteria over Paris pullout,” June 4, 2017.

The author of the 1975 Newsweek article cited by Thomas, Peter Gwynne, says in the 1970s, sulphate aerosols were offsetting the effect of greenhouse gases, and that, now, “I am in the embarrassing position of being a cat’s paw for denial of climate change.”

A Scientific American article “Dark Money Funds Climate Change Denial Effort” in 2013 references a study detailing how \$558 million funded 100 climate denial organizations from 2003 to 2010. Unknowable sums have been funneled through organizations which hide the source of their funding. The denial industry was spawned by Big Oil and Big Tobacco, working hand-in-glove to set up fake grassroots groups like “The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition,” to sow doubt about the 1992 EPA report on the dangers of second-hand tobacco smoke and the health effects of smog. As a tobacco spokes person put it, “Doubt is our product, (it is) the best means of establishing a controversy.”

An MIT study estimates that 200,000 people die annually as a result of fossil pollution in the U.S. alone.

The Koch Brothers, who are major climate-denial funders and founded the Cato Institute, which Thomas frequently cites, hold major interest in Alberta tar sands, which, if fully extracted, would alone raise global temperatures 0.5 degrees Celsius.

If climate skeptics were sincere, and not just shills for the fossil industry, they would advocate a rapid transition to renewable energy, saving the fossil fuels for the expected cooling.

Stanford University economist, Tony Seba, in a recent lecture “Clean Disruption”, shows how inexorable economics will render fossil and nuclear energy sources obsolete in the very near future. Solar photovoltaics and battery technology are on an exponential trajectory. Already job growth in renewables is outpacing that of dirty energy.

Energy dinosaurs see the writing on the wall, and are trying to slow the inevitable, and maximize profits from fossil fuels and infrastructure like pipelines as fast as they can; climate and people’s lives be damned.

It's up to us to resist Pilgrim, Spectra, Keystone and any new fossil pipelines, as well as oil "bomb" trains, and oil tanker anchorages on our beloved Hudson River.