

The ‘Eco-Right’ — Global Warming Fanaticism In A Conservative Wrapper

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Few have heard of the “eco-Right” — so-called conservatives who support the Left’s global warming policie — but it’s arguably the biggest threat to the future of the conservative movement. These groups may call themselves “free market” environmentalists, but they preach the religion of manmade global warming with the same fervor as the left-wing faithful.

The eco-Right has met with serious skepticism from conservatives, many of whom (myself included) argue that they’re dupes for inviting the Left’s cronyism and devastating environmental policies into the conservative movement.

They aren’t the Left, but as Daily Signal reporter Kevin Mooney points out the eco-Right’s calls for big government “solutions” to climate change—including an onerous tax on carbon dioxide emissions—have little in common with genuine conservative principles of limited government, individual liberty, and constitutionalism. Worse, they join the Left in pushing bad science by demonizing carbon dioxide—a natural gas essential to life on Earth—as a “pollutant.”

Disturbingly, many of these groups are heavily funded by liberal foundations—raking in millions of dollars from mega-donors like the Hewlett Foundation and billionaire George Soros—to push destructive policies.

I’ve written at the Capital Research Center about the eco-Right groups that infiltrated CPAC in February, the largest gathering of conservatives in the country, to advocate for un-conservative carbon taxes.

A carbon tax would massively raise household energy prices by taxing emissions from oil, coal, and natural gas, commodities which power the U.S. economy. It would artificially hike gas prices at a time when America has become the largest oil producer in the world is poised to become its biggest oil exporter—possibly costing the U.S. upwards of \$1 trillion in GDP losses by 2030, according to the Heritage Foundation.

These groups—RepublicEn and Young Conservatives for Carbon Dividends—promise to pay the extra costs back to taxpayers, a scheme they call “carbon dividends.” Call it what you like, but taxing Americans in order to pay them off is like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

If such a policy were presented by liberals, conservatives would denounce it as wealth redistribution—so why should the eco-Right get a pass?

Similarly, I've documented the Niskanen Center's descent from libertarianism to leftism after the Cato Institute breakaway began receiving huge donations from liberal groups. A list of Niskanen's major donors in 2019 ([archived here](#)) reveals 6-figure grants from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Hewlett Foundation, and the Pritzker Innovation Fund (associated with the family of Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker), among others.

Most disturbing is a \$500,000 grant from Soros' Open Society Foundations in 2017; one wonders if it's a coincidence that Niskanen now shares Soros' borderless "open society" ideology.

The Niskanen Center has used that funding to lobby for carbon taxes and even provide pro bono legal aid to lawsuits against Exxon and Suncor, oil companies sued by two Colorado jurisdictions in 2018 for supposedly damaging the climate. In the wake of the lawsuit, Niskanen founder Jerry Taylor authored a piece entitled "Oil Companies Should be Held Accountable for Climate Change"—accusing the companies of "contribut[ing] to global warming" and "increas[ing] the number and severity of wildfires, droughts, and flash flooding."

(It's worth adding that David Bookbinder, Niskanen's chief counsel on the case, is as liberal as they come. He was previously chief counsel to the Sierra Club, where he managed its involvement in the 2007 U.S. Supreme Court case *EPA v. Massachusetts*—a landmark case much-beloved of liberals since it established the EPA's authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.)

Ironically, the eco-Right hasn't found much support among die-hard environmentalists, who refuse to compromise on anything short of their radical Green New Deal, which would force the U.S. transition to 100 percent renewable energy production in the next decade. Environmental activists have one overriding goal: the complete transformation of America to a "green" socialist state. Nothing less will do.

Yet these "climate change conservatives" offer the Left a backdoor for the kind of big government, statist policies that true conservatives would never support if they weren't falsely labeled. It's a siren's song that promises "free market" global warming policies but will only result in green tyranny. Why else seek out leftist funding?

Genuine conservatives have nothing to gain and everything to lose by listening to the eco-Right—don't give up the ship.