

## **Green lunacies that literally cost the Earth**

By James Delingpole, The Daily Mail, 20 February 2017

Oh, how I wish I'd kept hold of my Skoda Yeti. If only I hadn't just sold it, I might have stood to make a cool £3,000 in compensation from the class action being brought by motorists against Volkswagen and its sister brands (Audi, Skoda, Seat) as a result of the Dieseltgate emissions scandal.

Like many duped motorists, I acquired my diesel car in the naive belief that it would not only be more efficient and cost-effective than a petrol one, but also that it was better for the environment. We now know that this green myth is a nonsense.

The particulate matter produced by diesel engines is toxic, polluting and may be responsible for tens of thousands of deaths annually across Europe.

Some manufacturers such as Volkswagen have known this for ages, but rather than lose business it rigged emissions tests to make its cars seem more eco-friendly than they actually were.

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### **Misery**

Clearly, VW deserves to be punished for its duplicity. But in my view, it is not nearly the culprit most deserving of a punitive law suit. What about the successive governments — in Britain and across the EU — which massively increased the growth of diesel through tax breaks and subsidies?

What about the scientists who came up with the dodgy theory that diesel was somehow cleaner and healthier because it supposedly helps combat climate change? What about all the green pressure groups and campaigning eco journalists who pushed for this dangerous and wrongheaded legislation?

The truth is that when it comes to damage, expense and misery caused by woolly-headed green 'thinking', the VW emissions scandal is but the tiniest tip of a vast iceberg.

In the name of saving the planet, lives and livelihoods have been destroyed, landscapes blighted, jobs killed, wildlife eradicated, prosperity reduced, science corrupted, kids brainwashed: in fact, forget the class suit against VW, it's about time we all had some compensation for the deceptions of the green lobby.

VW: Like many duped motorists, I acquired my diesel car in the naive belief that it would not only be more efficient and cost-effective than a petrol one

Let's start with the size of the global climate change industry, which on the back of government subsidies and policy-making has grown into a behemoth worth \$1.5 trillion (£1.24 trillion) a year, according to the Climate Change Business Journal — similar to what we spend annually on online shopping.

But while we willingly choose to part with our money on Amazon and eBay for stuff we want and need, much environmental spending is forced on us by government diktat and squandered on often pointless, wasteful projects we have no control over.

Consider the latest UK scandal, where in Northern Ireland the Belfast government will cost the taxpayer more than £1 billion because of a mismanaged renewable heat incentive scheme.

For every £100 they spent on eco-friendly energy, businesses were bribed with a £160 rebate. Because no cap was placed on the incentive, businesses piled in to take advantage — one enterprising farmer even heated a vast, empty warehouse to claim the subsidy — with costs to the taxpayer wildly out of control.

Perhaps we should be grateful that it has now led to the resignation of Northern Ireland's deputy first minister and former IRA terrorist Martin McGuinness — but it seems a ruinously expensive way to have got rid of him.

Almost anything with the word 'renewable' in it means eye-watering expense and intolerable waste. In Wales last week, an experimental tidal energy project, much of its £18 million cost funded by the EU and the Welsh government, went into administration within months after a sonar to protect seals, porpoises and dolphins had failed.

This hardly bodes well for the highly questionable £1 billion tidal lagoon project being mooted for Swansea Bay.

As for solar and wind energy, which produce about 14 per cent of Britain's power, their costs to consumers are vastly increased thanks to subsidies.

Last October, the National Audit Office stated that Britain's renewable electricity subsidies would be £8.7 billion a year by 2020-21. 'This is equivalent to £110 on the typical household dual fuel energy bill,' the NAO added.

On top of this, we have nuclear — in particular, Hinkley Point C, the white elephant nuclear energy project planned for the Somerset coast that Theresa May inherited from David Cameron and was once described as the 'worst deal in history'.

The technology is untested. Similar projects in Normandy and Finland have encountered such serious design and construction problems they are running years over schedule and billions of euros over budget.

Yet Britain is committed to spending £24 billion on Hinkley — mostly in subsidies, through increased electricity bills, to the French and Chinese — for the world's most costly energy.

This makes no commercial sense, but that was never the point: the UK government needed nuclear, at whatever cost, so as to help meet the swingeing carbon dioxide reduction targets to which it is legally bound by Ed Miliband's disastrous 2008 Climate Change Act.

The Act, dreamed up at the height of the global warming scare, was designed to 'decarbonise' Britain's economy.

Like foreign aid, the measures were more extreme than in other countries. The Act will cost the taxpayer £18 billion every year till 2050 and has since been used to justify all manner of crazy government schemes such as the anaerobic digester scam where developers are paid to convert agricultural waste into gas.

Several major pollution incidents and at least one explosion later, that scheme has cost taxpayers £216 million a year in subsidies.

Hinkley Point C: The white elephant nuclear energy project planned for the Somerset coast that Theresa May inherited from David Cameron

### **Sceptic**

And you really don't need to be a climate sceptic to realise it's all money down the drain.

Danish statistician Bjorn Lomborg has done the calculations: even if, from now on, all the countries in the world stick to the very modest carbon reduction targets they agreed in Paris last year, the effect on the world's temperatures will be to reduce 'global warming by the end of this century by a total of 0.17c: less than one-fifth of a degree'.

So, according to Lomborg, the benefit of all this expensive renewable energy is minimal compared with the cost. Added to all of this are the damaging side-effects, which are many and varied: vulnerable and elderly people driven into fuel poverty because of energy prices made artificially high by renewables subsidies; plus children brainwashed in schools by being fed scaremongering propaganda such as Al Gore's discredited movie on global warming *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Then there's the corruption and distortion of science by the flood of government research grants for projects that can show a connection, however tenuous, with the magical words 'climate

change'; and the misallocation of resources, whereby money is squandered on state-subsidised industries such as offshore wind turbines.

But maybe the worst thing of all about the bloated creature they call the Green Blob is the huge amount of damage it does to the environment in the name of saving it.

### **Disgust**

This was what first drew me to the subject: my growing disgust, as someone who loves wildlife and adores the British countryside, that misguided green policies are destroying our planet.

Instead of just burning coal as it was designed to, for example, our biggest power station Drax has been converted at vast cost to run partly on wood chips shipped over from the U.S.

These chips are cut from hardwood forests in North Carolina, and subsidised by the taxpayer to the tune of £500 million a year, in a process that actually increases carbon emissions.

It's madness — and it's happening across Europe, too, with protected forests felled to meet EU renewable energy targets.

Meanwhile, in Asia, Africa and South America, primary rain forest is being felled to grow palm oil plantations to create eco-friendly biofuels.

And what about wind turbines which kill millions of birds and bats every year, including protected species such as eagles and rare migratory birds?

The tide is turning, thank heaven. Whatever you think of President-elect Donald Trump, one thing's certain: he's determined to rein in an awful lot of the green lunacy that's cost the planet so dear for decades now.

And those 'future generations' the greens are always banging on about? I don't think they'll thank us for the damage we did in their name. They'll look back on this era of eco-lunacy with astonishment and ask: how could our great-grandparents be so dumb? Why didn't they sue?