



## KEY TERMS:

agenda  
truth

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## Discussion & Review Questions

1. Towards the beginning of the video, Mr. O' Handley notes that, " ... Big Green wants to take over your life. It has to. This makes perfect sense. Big Green, after all, intends to save the planet from oblivion. Your freedom would seem to be a small price to pay. To accomplish its mission Big Green needs two things: Money. And power. It already has a lot of both." What do you think Mr. O' Handley means by 'take over your life?' Explain. Why do you think Big Green values money and power so much more than your freedom? Explain.
2. Later in the video, Mr. O' Handley explains that, " ...money is only a means to an end [for Big Green]. The end is power. The power to transform society into what they think it should be. That's what this is really about." What do you think Big Green thinks society 'should be' like? Do you want Big Green to transform society? Why or why not? Do you think most Americans want Big Green to decide for them what their lives should be like? Why or why not?
3. Mr. O' Handley goes on to share with us: "Here's how Saikat Chakrabarti, the architect of the Green New Deal described it to the Washington Post. '...it wasn't originally a climate thing at all...we really think of it as a how-do-you-change-the-entire-economy thing.' Maybe you like all this. That's fine. But don't pretend it's about protecting the environment. Chakrabarti was being honest. You should be, too. It's about transferring more and more power to the government- at every level: federal, state, local." Why do you think that advocates of the Green New Deal want to fundamentally change the economy? Explain. In what ways does transferring more power to the government help Big Green? What do you think the Founders of the U.S. would think of Big Green and its agenda? Explain.
4. Towards the end of the video, Mr. O'Handley points out that, " ...the way [for Big Green] to get the power is to gin up scary scenarios. The planet is burning. The seas are rising. ...And what have all their horror stories led to? A generation of young people who have nightmares about a planet burning up around them. Poor people who pay higher energy bills than they need to because of massive subsidies for wind and solar power. Millions of birds, including endangered ones, dying, sliced to pieces by wind turbines. Yet, in the midst of all the-planet-is-burning fear mongering, the world is cleaner, healthier, and richer than it has ever been. Deaths from natural disasters are at all-time lows. Here's why: human beings adapt when faced with climate problems. We're really good at it. We've been doing it for thousands of years." Do you find the scare tactics of Big Green to be irresponsible and immoral? Why or why not? Why do you think that so many people, especially young people, are so quick to believe the fake news of Big Green? Explain.
5. At the end of the video, Mr. O' Handley concludes that, "You don't raise money off of common sense, and you don't get political power telling people how good things are, and you certainly don't become famous by being calm. Big Green is not poor, not honest, and certainly not powerless. It's time we all plug in to that truth." What do you think Mr. O' Handley means by his last statement? Explain.

## Extend the Learning:

### Case Study Green New Deal

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “It’s Not Just About Cost. The Green New Deal Is Bad Environmental Policy, Too,” then answer the questions that follow.

1. How expensive do researchers estimate the Green New Deal would cost? What happens when countries like Venezuela or China implement central-planning environmental policies? What would the Green New Deal massively expand, and what would it empower? What unintended consequences would come from implementation of the Green New Deal? What problems are seldom discussed by Green New Deal proponents? What did two recent National Bureau of Economic Research papers find? What is another hallmark of bad environmental policy? What is typical for most big-government environmental policies? What would the Green New Deal cause?
2. What types of problems arise when the government is in full control of environmental policy? Considering the known facts related to the outcomes if the Green New Deal was to be implemented, why do you think so many people still support it? Explain. Do you consider Progressives who claim to value protecting the environment, but who also support the Green New Deal, to be hypocritical? Why or why not? In what ways are the private sector and free markets better for the environment and better for people? Explain.
3. What do you think can be done to stop Big Green? Explain. How important do you think young people will be in stopping Big Green from ruining America? Explain.

# It's Not Just About Cost. The Green New Deal Is Bad Environmental Policy, Too

Nov 15th, 2019 3 min read



COMMENTARY BY

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Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) attends a news conference to introduce legislation to transform public housing as part of the Green New Deal outside the U.S. Capitol November 14, 2019.

Chip Somodevilla / Staff / Getty Images

## Key Takeaways

**Researchers estimate it would take more than \$5 trillion just to switch from coal, nuclear and natural gas to 100% renewables.**

**The Green New Deal would massively expand the size and scope of the federal government's control over activities best left to the private sector.**

**The reality is that environmental policies aren't good for the environment if they're so bad for people.**

We're not hearing much about the "Green New Deal" these days, but it's still a priority for some candidates, as anyone who's attended a recent Bernie Sanders rally can attest.

Criticism of the GND tends to center on cost and rightly so. It would be extremely expensive. Researchers estimate it would take more than \$5 trillion just to switch from coal, nuclear and natural gas to 100% renewables.

But even if you set economic concerns aside, an ironic fact remains: In the United States and around the world, the central-planning policies at the heart of the GND have a horrible track record for the environment.

Governments in countries such as Venezuela and China (or in the past like the Soviet Union and Cuba) either routinely mismanage and waste resources, or ramp up production with little to no accountability for environmental damage that comes with it. The absence of price signals reduces the incentive to be more efficient and do more with less.

In addition, the absence of property rights reduces the incentive to conserve and gives government-controlled industries a free pass to pollute without compensating or protecting its citizens.

The Green New Deal would massively expand the size and scope of the federal government's control over activities best left to the private sector. It would empower the feds to change and control how people produce and consume energy, harvest crops, raise livestock, build homes, drive cars and manufacture goods.

Secondly, the Green New Deal would result in a number of unintended consequences. For instance, policies that limit coal, oil and natural gas production in the United States will not stop the global consumption of these natural resources. Production will merely shift to places where the environmental standards are not as rigorous, making the planet worse off.

Moreover, it's not as if wind, solar and battery technologies magically appear. Companies still have to mine the resources, manufacture the product and deal with the waste streams. There are challenges to disposing potentially toxic lithium-ion batteries and solar panels, or even wind turbine blades that are difficult and expensive to transport and crush at landfills. While these are solvable problems, they're seldom discussed by GND proponents.

There would also be massive land use changes required to expand renewable power. Ben Zycher at the American Enterprise Institute estimates that land use necessary to meet a 100% renewable target would require 115 million acres, which is 15% larger than the land area of California.

Two recent National Bureau of Economic Research papers underscore the unintended consequences of energy policy on human well-being. One found that cheaper home heating because of America's fracking revolution is averting more than 10,000 winter deaths per year. The Green New Deal would wipe all of that away, and reverse course by mandating pricier energy on families.

Another paper found that the Japanese government's decision to close safely operating nuclear power plants after Fukushima increased energy prices and reduced consumption, which consequently, increased mortalities from colder temperatures. In fact, the authors estimate that "the decision to cease nuclear production has contributed to more deaths than the accident itself." Unintended consequences.

Another hallmark of bad environmental policy is focusing on outputs, not outcomes. According to the frequently asked questions sheet released along with the Green New Deal, it is "a massive investment in renewable energy production and would not include creating new nuclear plants."

One would think that if we only have 11 or 12 years to act on climate change, we'd want to grab the largest source of emissions-free electricity we can get. But that's not the case.

That's typical for most big-government environmental policies: they're so focused on prescriptive ways to control peoples' behaviors that they crowd out or ignore opportunities for innovative solutions.

The reality is that environmental policies aren't good for the environment if they're so bad for people. The costs of the GND would be devastatingly high for households. Government policies that drive up energy bills are not only very regressive, but they would also harm consumers multiple times as they pay more for food, clothes and all of the other goods that require energy to make.

By shrinking our economy by potentially tens of trillions of dollars, the Green New Deal will cause lower levels of prosperity and fewer resources to deal with whatever environmental challenges come our way. That's a bad deal for our economy and our environment.



# QUIZ

## What is Big Green?

1. **What does Big Green intend to do?**
  - a. expand individual freedoms
  - b. save the planet from oblivion
  - c. downsize government agencies
  - d. advocate for less expensive environmental policies
  
2. **A major organization that sets the agenda for the Big Green movement is \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. Greenpeace
  - b. Sierra Club
  - c. World Wildlife Fund
  - d. All of the above
  
3. **The Paris Climate Accord will cost the world \$1 to 2 trillion every year.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
4. **Instead of protecting the environment, what is the Green New Deal really about?**
  - a. protecting the freedoms of Americans from every level of government
  - b. creating a viable third party in American politics
  - c. transferring more and more power to the government
  - d. expanding free market trade, both domestically and internationally
  
5. **According to Big Green, we're all going to be dead soon unless we listen to \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. Al Gore
  - b. Bill McKibben
  - c. Greta Thunberg
  - d. all of the above



# QUIZ: ANSWER KEY

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