Environmental Regulation: Need or Greed?
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The day that President Nixon signed into being the Environmental Protection Agency a new and clandestine multibillion dollar industry was also created. The lifeblood of the industrial complex of corporate environmental activism, in short the “Green Economy”, is the harvest of money leveraged out of products and services responsive to emerging environmental regulation. This sounds like a legitimate capitalist response to a present day problem, but it needs a closer look.

Over the last 50 years, this industry has dramatically shifted away from being responsive to environmental protection legitimately franchised to create solutions for identifiable problems. It has now assumed the role of creator of solutions in search of problems and assertively operates to place the right people in the right place to facilitate their exploitations and profits.

There is a never ending supply of solutions for a never ending supply of perceivable problems that generate a never ending stream of regulation well beyond the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act. This guarantees the industry an unimpeded and never ending cash flow spent on 22nd Century fear and not on 21st Century problems.

Some corporations create demand by advertising, and some create one product that cascades demand for other products. These are elective demands driven by consumers. But the industry that uses the fear of cancer in order to influence regulation that, by fiat, creates a consumer demand for that industry is a despicable thing and needs to be recognized as such and regulated appropriately.

This industry often uses thinly veiled front organizations headed by celebrities, lawyers, academics, and persons well placed within regulatory agencies to provide argument and opportunity for new regulations to bolster their cash flows. We are constantly told, usually by a non-profit organization of celebrities, that if we don’t regulate X we could all get cancer, or bring about an apocalypse of some kind. But never fear, Corporation ‘A’ has “new technology. This practice seems to be common knowledge, but there lacks a common concern. The public is paying a dear price by allowing the diversion of our money from the hard infrastructure problems we face today that are a clear and present danger. This practice threatens the systemic collapse of municipal systems and even entire state economies.

A case in point seems to be the hysterical report on hexavalent chromium in our public water supply recently published by the Environmental Work Group (EWG). The report is primarily a fear driving political piece and not a credible scientific report by any standard. The report is long on political genuflection and emotional appeal, but short on scientific credibility. On the Board of EWG are Drummond Pike and others of interest and notoriety. Mr. Pike is affiliated with the Tides organizations.
The EWG reported that they had collected 35 samples from various parts of the country using a variety of “contacts” as samplers. The EWG report also divulged that the samples were, “with few exceptions,” submitted to an EXOVA test facility within 24 hours of collection. Why EXOVA labs and not a variety of labs or labs in the respective states for analysis? EWG suggests that EXOVA has testing abilities that no one else has. Why only one sample from each city and not multiple samples for blind tests? These apparent shortfalls seem to be rather irresponsible and shouldn’t be accepted to support such a broad and bold claim. Yet, EPA immediately reacts with “official advisories” without scientific review of the study? EXOVA is a private company owned by Clayton, Dublier, and Rice (CB&R), an equity corporation. Just casually thumbing through the list of those board members we can find that at least three that also serve on the board of a major producer of water treatment technologies previously owned by Vivendi and purchased by CB&R in 2003. Others on the CB&R Board serve on boards of corporations that allegedly have financial interest in technologies that would be directly applicable to a demand for the removal of hexavalent chromium at the levels being recommended.

The pattern emerges. It is no secret that, in the 1990’s under the lead of Jean Marie Messier, Vivendi was actively engaged in the pursuit of companies and technologies seemingly purposed to make them a virtual sole source provider for hexavalent chromium and arsenic removal technologies. Vivendi produced the movie ‘Erin Brokovich’ which propagandized the fear of hexavalent chromium. The EWG makes much of this movie in their recent political report on chromium as did EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson in recent Senate testimony. Vivendi stood to exploit enormous windfall profits from public fear and politically leveraged and regulation forced cash flows. That fear had gone nearly dormant until EWG decided to publish its current report using EXOVA labs which is owned by CB&R which owns corporate technologies and patents and cites ‘Erin Brockovitch’ which was a Vivendi Universal property. A look at Messier’s political and organizational connections in the U.S. is interesting. Follow the money and notice who sits on which corporate boards, and their relationships to certain environmental groups and regulators.

The EWG report vicariously endorsed by the Tides organizations seeks to divert our funding away from real present problems. If the regulators deliver the regulations petitioned for in the EWG report, water infrastructure funds will be forcibly diverted from the obvious everyday problems of maintaining the good integrity of our sanitary systems to feed the green economy at the expense of the sustainability of our basic public health.

We need to expose this Rube Goldberg brand of corporate driven regulationism, repurpose the environmental suppliers, contractors, and financiers, and get down to the basic chore of providing a responsibly safe, responsibly clean environment and support systems. We have aging or non-existent infrastructure everywhere that threatens contamination while we spend our money in fear of an unclear and apparently non-present danger.

Why continue to pursue unaffordable, unmaintainable perfection at the expense of the best most comprehensive sanitary system on earth? Let’s get a grip.

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