

Caldara: Xcel Energy should consider carbon capture to save the planet and our pocketbooks

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I used to be a strong supporter of strict gun control, even giving money to gun control organizations. It took years of challenging my own anti-gun bigotries to clear the emotion away from my thinking on the issue.

Because I used to be one, I know gun control advocates don't want to be safe. They want to feel safe.

This same emotion applies to many environmentalists. They don't want to make the environment better. They want to feel like they are making the environment better.

This explains the rampant virtue-signaling in their movement. Like banning plastic straws and shopping bags, especially in land-locked states like Colorado where the stuff would have an impossible journey out to sea. It transmits their compassion.

But on the issue of greenhouse gases, you'd think substance would be more important than symbolism to them. Nope. Symbolism wins.

Take the much touted "Colorado Energy Plan" (CEP) which includes shutting down coal-fired power plants in Pueblo and replacing them with wind and solar power.

Even the lingo is politically loaded virtue signaling. Xcel Energy, which runs the Comanche I and II power plants, is "retiring" them early, the poor old obsolete dears. Fact is they are among the most technologically advanced, least polluting coal-fired plants in the world.

The old double-dip. Who knew cronyism could look so environmental? (Ask Tesla.) The real reason for their "retirement" is so Xcel can double bill us, ratepayers. They'll still be charging us to depreciate the "old" plants and the new plants at the same time and making a profit from both.

But who cares if Xcel is ripping off working families? It's a small price to pay for cutting carbon emissions and saving the world! Except there might be a better way to cut carbon.

As reported by absolutely no major media outlet in Colorado, the U.S. Department of Energy and The National Energy Technology Laboratory commissioned a report on carbon capture technology for the Pueblo plants. And guess what? If Xcel used the technology on the coal plants, they would reduce carbon emissions by 25 percent more

than their Colorado Energy Plan which replaces those plants with wind and solar and charges us double for it.

Of course, you haven't heard about the DOE's findings. It doesn't quite fit in with the "coal is evil" narrative sold by the anti-fossil fuel media.

Let me say it again. According to the report, keeping the coal plants in Pueblo and fitting them with carbon-capture technology would reduce greenhouse emissions by 25 percent more compared to the feel-good plan passed by the state government, which is in the pocket of the greedy, private electric company that's making money on it.

Further, the report calculates by doing carbon capture it would generate \$10.21 billion in carbon dioxide (CO₂) revenues and would create 18,600 Colorado jobs, 5,300 more jobs than the CEP. The reason being that there is a nearby market for the CO₂ and ready pipelines to deliver it.

There are customers for the CO₂. Oil and gas operations are already in operation that could use the CO₂ to pump back in the ground to get oil and natural gas out.

The oil drilling is happening no matter what they do with Comanche, but that doesn't override the emotion.

Religious environmentalists don't want to anything that could appear permissive of oil and gas or coal even if it helps them reach their own stated goals.

The report also predicts keeping the coal plants and re-using the CO₂ would increase Colorado wage and salary earnings by more than \$900 million and would increase Colorado tax revenue by over \$40 million.

But as enviros proved with Senate Bill 181 which will cripple oil and gas development in Colorado, good jobs for working families isn't a priority when you're saving the planet.

Maybe Xcel and enviros not supporting this makes sense. The mere appearance of supporting something that could remotely be good for coal, oil and gas is damaging to the much larger goal of money making and virtue signaling.

When comedian Billy Crystal was on Saturday Night Live in the 1980's he did this impersonation of Fernando Lamas. His catchphrase was, "Remember, it's better to look good than to feel good."

Remember, it's better to look environmental than to be environmental.

And Xcel, you look marvelous.

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<https://www.denverpost.com/2019/07/12/xcel-coal-plants-pueblo-caldera/>