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<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials-perspective/010515-733224-restricting-fossil-fuel-prematurely-kill-poor.htm?p=full> ^[1]

By [H. STERLING BURNETT](#) ^[2]

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'How many people do you want to kill or let die?' That's how I'm going to respond from now on to anyone who argues we should end or sharply restrict fossil fuel use to prevent global warming.

Arguing the science has no effect on global warming alarmists. They are immune to facts and stick to models and fallacious arguments from biased, unscientific authorities.

Climate models say temperatures should climb right along with the rise in CO2 emissions, yet emissions rose from the 1940s through the 1970s, when scientists were warning of a coming ice age. And for the past two decades, CO2 emissions have continued to rise while temperatures have been in a holding pattern for the past 18 years.

Models say we should see more intense hurricanes, yet for nearly a decade the U.S. has experienced below-average hurricanes making landfall, and they have been no more powerful than previously experienced.

Sea-level rise has slowed, polar bear numbers have increased, the Antarctic ice sheet has set new records for expansion month after month and even the Arctic is back to average ice levels for the decade.

None of these trends is consistent with models' predictions, yet alarmists ignore the facts because controlling human lives is their underlying goal, and their failed models are the only thing that enables them to claim disaster is in the offing if humans don't change their ways.

Arguing economics is equally ineffective. Multiple analyses show the best economic response to the challenges posed by global warming is to use fossil fuels to grow peoples' wealth globally and adapt to climate changes as they come ? basically doing what humans have done throughout history.

In "The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels," author Alex Epstein makes a key point:

"Climate is no longer a major cause of deaths, thanks in large part to fossil fuels. ... The popular climate discussion ... looks at man as a destructive force for climate livability, one who makes the climate dangerous because we use fossil fuels. In fact, the truth is the exact opposite; we don't take a safe climate and make it dangerous; we take a dangerous climate and make it safe."

Humans have long fought a war with climate, and where we've won it has been through the use of technology, most recently including the use of fossil fuels.

Although there are many distinctions between developed economies and developing ones, a critical difference is the widespread availability and use of fossil fuels to improve living conditions.

People in countries using abundant fossil fuels live longer, have fewer infant deaths, are healthier, are more educated and are much wealthier on average than people who live without coal, oil and natural gas.

This is not a mere coincidence, as wealth, health, education and other living conditions remained virtually stagnant for most of human history until our discovery of the ability to transform coal, oil and gas into fuels that powered the Industrial Revolution.

In the West, fossil fuels light homes, making work and an active home life possible after dark without the use of dung, wood and tallow, thus preventing millions of unnecessary deaths from respiratory disease.

Conversely, lack of fossil fuels condemns millions to early deaths from diseases like those that they experience in underdeveloped parts of Africa and Asia. Children die in Africa from malnutrition or starvation because they lack access to the quality and quantities of food made available to the West through fossil-fuel-dependent industrial agriculture and transportation.

Lives are saved in modern hospitals thanks to fossil fuels, from the gasoline fueling emergency vehicles to the electricity keeping the lights, computers, climate controls and refrigeration on.

Electricity runs incubators that save premature babies' lives and respirators that keep people breathing until they can breathe on their own. Electricity runs the machines sterilizing instruments and conducting MRIs, X-rays, CT scans, and all the other tests and technologies that allow medical professionals to predict, diagnose, and treat the countless diseases and injuries humans suffer each year.

Electricity delivers safe drinking water and fossil fuels make the plastics that are used in hospital blood and medicine bags, tubes, wiring and even furniture.

Would you want to be treated at a hospital without these lifesaving technologies? If not, why should the billions of poor people around the world live without these modern wonders so you can pursue some ideal vision of the perfect climate?

That's the real question about fossil fuels: How many people are climate alarmists willing to let die prematurely to satisfy their perverse desire to end the use of fossil fuels?

Burnett is a research fellow with the Heartland Institute, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research institute based in Chicago.

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