

THE DEWEESE REPORT

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Three Questions to Change the Election

By
Tom DeWeese

The number of candidates for President seems to grow on a daily basis. Each new candidate attempts to convince us they are the new hope for a better tomorrow. Jobs. Inequality. And the ever popular – “let’s be bipartisan so we can all move forward together!” These are the topics – the safe topics – they stick to. All designed to assure that they hit emotional buttons in each of us, yet don’t cause controversy.

In fact, about the only reason we are given to vote for these candidates is that perhaps a charge that their opponent is involved in some kind of scandal or hired an illegal gardener. They resort to character assassination of their opponents as they dig for dirt. Or, the most common reasons we are given by candidates to vote for them, often reduced to the vocabulary of a cave man – “Republican good -- Democrat bad!” (or visa versa, depending on the candidate.) Are such grunts what the once proud American election system has been reduced to?

Consequently, as has been the case for the last many elections, rarely does a candidate risk taking on the really vital issues that get to the core of our nation’s pending demise. Have you heard a single candidate address any of these issues:

- The massive destruction of American industry by the EPA and other over-reaching government regulations – killing jobs by the thousands?
- The near complete usurpation of private property rights in communities and rural areas under the tiresome excuse of environmental protection? Who stands with the property owners as they see their American dream shattered under the innocuous title of “community development?”
- The growing imposition of non-elected boards and regional governments that are fast replacing our

elected representatives in making local community decisions – all powered by the imposition of federal grants that dictate policy, making most states and communities serfs of the federal government?

- The complete federal takeover of state and local school systems, enforcing a national curriculum that warps history, destroys mathematics and provides little in the way of real academics. Today’s “education” system basically focuses on behavior modification of the children, dwelling on changing their attitudes, values and beliefs. Frankly, that is little more than child abuse. Such a systematic manipulation and indoctrination of young minds is creating ignorant, mindless global village idiots that are easily maneuvered for political purposes.

Have any of these politicians even bothered to study the policies of the Department of Education or looked at the fine print of an EPA grant program to see what is required? If not, why not? If they intend to be the leader of the nation – shouldn’t they know what they are leading?

Kiss a baby! How about hugging a victim, such as a property owner that just had their dreams shattered as government bull dozers destroyed their yard for a bike path? How about one of these politicians standing with parents as their children are expelled from school because they wore a tee shirt with an American flag on it? Strange, as more and more of these victims emerge, the candidates never seem to mention them.

Of course the main stream news media pumps up this meaningless process by focusing only on the scandals and the other non-issues as they avoid reporting on real life. Scandals get headlines. Massive regulatory overreach is simply the proper role of government,

according to the news media. Of course, they will sponsor talk shows that pretend to do in-depth study and discussion of certain issues. But, mostly you will find the decks stacked against anyone who disagrees with the party line. Four to one is the usual standard of "fairness."

So, in such a climate, the politicians are able to get by with their non-issue campaigns. Debates, always hosted by the same news media, never ask the candidates substantial issue questions. And so the charade goes on, and those candidates who are best able to do the non-issue dance make it through. .

It's time to change all of that. Here's how.

Put the candidates on the spot during their public meetings. As they pontificate about their readiness to run the United States of America, ask them questions that matter to real Americans.

Starting now, as the presidential campaign heats up, let me offer three questions designed to shake up any public candidate meeting. A word of caution - do not take this action alone. Organize with at least three friends. Have each choose one of these questions to ask the candidates. If you have more people to join you, have others prepared to do a follow up question if they fail to answer. As you get your moment in front of the microphone, read the statement as I've provided below and then finish with the question shown in bold:

Property Rights Question

1. Private property rights are under assault in communities and rural areas across the nation as local, state and federal governments move to enforce new planning development programs, particularly under the labels of Sustainable Developments or "Local Visioning." **If elected, what actions will you take to protect the unrestricted right of use, enjoyment and disposal of private property by its owners?**

Regional Government Question

2. It's a growing situation that local elected representative government is being overshadowed by the establishment of non-elected boards, councils, planning commissions and regional governments. These non-elected organizations are, in effect, taking government further away from the people as they deal in backrooms, unseen and unapproachable. Yet, while not elected by the people, they are creating policy that affects private property, tax rates and much more, especially through the taking of federal grant money, which results in federal control over the use and outcome of that money. **If elected, what actions will you take to eliminate these massive grant programs and to stop federal efforts to enforce creation of non-elected boards, councils and regional government boards?**

Social Justice Question

3. The term social justice is used more and more in today's official society. The actual meaning of social justice is redistribution of wealth, much of which is imposed through the tool of political correctness. Social Justice is used to create class warfare and divisions in our society. It is now widely used in our public school curricula to replace actual academics with behavior modification methods designed to change the attitudes, values and beliefs of the children. The openly stated purpose of such programs as Outcome based education and Common Core is to create new global citizens who reject traditional American values of individual freedom, free enterprise and limited government. Such curriculum is enforced through a centralized Federal Department of Education, which has usurped local input. **If elected, will you take action to shut down the federal Department of Education and return education policy to the states, making sure to end these orchestrated attacks on the attitudes, values and beliefs of the children?**

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Each of these questions pertain to one of the planks of Agenda 21. The three planks are 1. Social Equity; 2. Economic Prosperity; 3. Ecology (the assault on property rights). These are the infamous 3 E's of Agenda 21.

Ask these questions in a public forum and watch those clueless candidates squirm. Most won't have an answer. In fact most won't even know what you are talking about. They will try to evade or put some positive spin on it. But you will know. You will understand that such candidates will never work to fix these problems. And so will the rest of the audience.

It is time for our movement to take aggressive action against these slithering candidates. We need to descend on public forums. Organize. Place our people strategically around the room. And one by one begin to ask these questions. When they can't answer, have someone else ask it again, and again. Let them know they had better give these issues some thought. Let them

know that we are going to be there every time they appear in public. And let them know we are going to make them look like fools in front of audiences until they decide to actually talk about issues that mean something to real Americans.

Property owners; parents; small business owners. All are suffering from issues these candidates refuse to discuss. Make them discuss them. Make them show their true colors. Make our issues the ones that dominate this election campaign. Make them afraid to not talk about these issues.

Agenda 21 is designed to change our nation; our way of life; and our form of government. These candidates want to allow those changes to quietly take place, unseen and unnoticed by the public, while they remain silent. If the candidates want to drastically change our nation, then it's time we have a national debate about it. Starting today, ask the questions that will fire that debate. ***

Why The Patriot Act is Tyranny and Rand Paul is a Hero

By
Tom DeWeese

Senator Rand Paul is taking a lot of heat from establishment Conservatives and some in the media for his unwavering stand against the Patriot Act. The party line that is emerging says that we are now vulnerable to terrorist attack. Even Senator Paul, himself, said he was being accused of damaging America's defenses against such attacks.

These accusations are almost humorous considering that many of these same establishment Republicans have refused to force Barack Obama to enforce immigration laws. That fact now allows literally anyone who wants to harm our nation to cross over the border and to not only remain here, but also to receive tax payer benefits and perhaps even the right to vote. Reportedly, Obama is allowing people from the same Middle Eastern nations that give rise to terrorism to flood into our nation at horrific rates.

Newly announced presidential candidate Lindsey Graham is especially guilty of this let down in American security as he has pushed for policies to open our borders even further. So too have Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush. Has anyone accused them of damaging American national security?

The fact is Rand Paul is a defender of American security unlike any other candidate currently running to lead this nation. He's one of a very few to openly stand for the Constitutional rights of all Americans to be secure in their homes and free of government snooping into their private business.

The created hysteria over the Patriot Act being a guardian of our freedom is hog wash. This is the Patriot Act that was rushed into place just after a horrific terrorist attack – 9/11. Of course the nation was scared and of course out went the cry – “Do something NOW to protect us.”

When introduced, we were assured by the Justice Department that the Patriot Act was simply to give federal law

enforcement agencies the surveillance and investigative tools they needed to deter future terror attacks. However, the emotional rush to “do something” by quickly passing the Patriot Act, left little time for lawmakers to put its measures under scrutiny. In fact, then Congressman Ron Paul said he couldn't even get a copy of the Act before the vote.

As a result, provisions of the Act offered major opportunities for government abuses of law-abiding private citizens. The Act says that the government does not need to have a suspect or to even be conducting an investigation related to terrorism to monitor your visits into web sites on the Internet.

The Patriot Act changed the definition of terrorism, allowing even legitimate protestors, such as pro-life activists, to be at risk of being labeled “terrorists” if violence erupted at their events. And since its enactment, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has officially contracted with the Department of Homeland Security to create definitions of what and who constitute domestic terrorists. Just as predicted, that definition does not include Middle Eastern men connected with groups like Al-Qaeda or ISIS. Instead, in many official circles it has come to mean those Americans who demand that the United States government adhere to the U.S. Constitution.

The Patriot Act expands the capability to obtain warrants and conduct searches without disclosing them immediately. Under the Act, law enforcement can walk into your home and take records without your knowing they were there. If a warrant is obtained, you may never know about it. It doesn't even require a real judge to obtain one anymore.

The Act requires fuller identification of bank customers. A year before 9-11 more than 150,000 Americans protested these very provisions in a scheme by the FDIC called “Know Your

Customer.” Congressman Ron Paul wrote of the Know Your Customer plan, “Under these regulations, banks will be required to first create a profile of all new and current customers. The profile will include such information as their credit history and other standard financial reviews, but will be expanded to include the customer’s deposit and withdrawal habits. This information will be gathered over the first few months of the account’s creation. After that, any account activity that deviates from the profile will be considered suspicious behavior.”

Rep. Paul went on to say, “Not only will ‘unusual’ deposits into your account trigger suspicion, but so too might large cash withdrawals.” Privacy advocates were able to officially stop the Know Your Customer scheme. But most of its provisions returned in the Patriot Act. And just this year, 2015, the Justice Department announced its intention to carefully watch the activities of all Americans and their bank accounts by suggesting banks report anyone withdrawing at least \$5000.

Under the Patriot Act, a special software was developed to help firms in 25 finance-related industries, covered by the law, to compare millions of customer records with thousands of entries on federal blacklists.

Businesses such as car dealers, insurance companies, investment brokers, lenders and real estate firms are required to file “Suspicious Activity Reports” to the Treasury Department.

Here’s an interesting fact. The Patriot Act only mentions protecting our northern border. It says not a word about the southern one. Our southern border remains, absolutely wide open, allowing anyone to literally walk into this country. And the Obama Administration has used that loophole beyond what any normal American could have ever foreseen at the writing of the Act.

In the name of fighting terrorism, we have witnessed a new kind of government “urban sprawl” oozing out of Washington, D.C. into every back alley, bedroom, and underwear drawer in America.

In 2004 the Government Electronics and Information Technology Association (GEIA) reported that there were more than 100 federal entities involved in forging the largest conglomeration of government/private contractor interests since the creation of the Pentagon. GEIA represents hundreds of corporate members which had cashed in on the Homeland Security -citizen-surveillance-spending spree.

In September 2002, dozens of major high-tech companies formed the “Homeland Security Industries Association.” A key objective of the association was to win a piece of the action for the creation of national ID cards for travelers.

Business Week reported that the SAS Institute was among many corporations scrambling to launch a whole new line of anti-money laundering software designed to help insurance companies, investment banks and brokerage firms spy on their clients’ financial activities on behalf of the government in compliance with the Patriot Act.

Bert Ely, the head of a consulting company for financial institutions, warned that the anti-money laundering provisions of

the Patriot Act would do nothing to stop the financing of international terrorists. At best, he said, the new provisions would actually provide evildoers with a road map to avoid detection.

What the Patriot Act provisions are really about, said Ely, is to have the United States fall into line with an international campaign being waged by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Financial Action Task Force against countries that serve as tax havens. It’s all about tax collection!

Business Week also reported that private-sector software makers were racing to develop programs to zero in on gambling. Business Week noted that, “the feds have put casinos on notice that they’re next in the line of security.” Now, how many terrorists have actually raised their funds in Las Vegas?

In mid-September 2002, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Office of Homeland Security held an expo in Washington. Medium and small firms from across the nation were invited in to showcase the very latest in citizen surveillance wares.

The US Chamber of Commerce hired the former deputy assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to act as a liaison between the chamber and businesses seeking homeland security contracts. PoliticalMoneyline reported that 444 groups and individuals had registered as lobbyists to deal with “terror” and “security” issues.

IBM has opened a “Government Solutions Center” in Vienna, Virginia. The high-tech Unisys Corporation established a similar exhibition for inspection by federal surveillance planners, called the “Homeland Security Center for Excellence.”

Both corporations raced to cash in on billions of dollars for facial recognition systems at airports and, in anticipation of “trusted traveler” cards, a high-tech ID tied to extensive background checks and biometric identification.

So, in the name of fighting terrorism, America was saddled with a massive control over the actions of all Americans, yet it failed to foil even a single terrorist plot. What it did accomplish, however, was a massive buildup of government policing power, designed to keep tabs on every movement of the American people. In addition, the Patriot Act created massive financial opportunity for industries that produced surveillance equipment and software.

All of this is what Senator Paul was objecting to. This massive growth of government and the obvious loss of liberty that comes with it is what he was trying to stop.

Does it then come as a surprise that Senator Rand Paul has become public enemy #1 by establishment Republican hawks, big money Republican fund raisers, all big government proponents and their Patriot Act-dependent industries? As said in the landmark movie “Network,” he has messed with the natural order of things.”

Senator Rand Paul is a hero to all who value their liberty, personal privacy and private property rights. He is the only candidate now running for President to actually take positive action to try to preserve and protect our freedoms. He deserves the respect and support of all who claim to favor those liberties. ***

NSA and how the Fourth Amendment stops government abuses

By

Ken T. Cuccinelli II and Mark Fitzgibbons

The debate surrounding the sunset of section 215 of the Patriot Act is a historic moment for the Fourth Amendment, which protects Americans from unreasonable searches and seizures of their persons, houses, papers and effects.

Americans do not and cannot trust government to be benevolent — nor should they. This is part of the reason our Constitution was written as it was in the first place. And this truth has been proven again and again in modern times, by so many recent official misdeeds and falsehoods coming from the mouthpieces of government — including prosecutorial misconduct that has had grave consequences and serious criminal penalties for its victims.

For example, when the Benghazi attack occurred, killing four American diplomats, the Obama administration lied and blamed a maker of an anti-Muslim film. And it is bad enough to see the IRS claiming to have "lost" emails and allowing hackers to steal private taxpayer information from its systems. But that seems tame compared to other malicious, targeted abuses of power against individuals, businesses and property.

What makes the Patriot Act debate stand out is that some people in positions of responsibility deny that there is even a Fourth Amendment problem with arbitrarily collecting the metadata of all customer records from telephone companies. This mass collection is not merely an expansion of power beyond previous Fourth Amendment interpretation. It also sets dangerous precedent that all metadata is subject to government's taking without a warrant signed by a judge after a showing of probable cause that the law may have been violated.

"Metadata" is everywhere. It runs our websites and social media pages and underlies the accounting and financial records of businesses. Government is already banging on both of these doors, with the Federal Communications Commission trying to seize control of the Internet and the Consumer Financial Protection Agency claiming blank-check authority over business records. A metadata "exception" to the Fourth Amendment could give government unchecked power over business, free speech, freedom of association, religious liberty and more.

Making matters worse, more than 300 federal statutes authorize government agencies to issue "administrative subpoenas" unilaterally. Bypassing neutral judges and probable cause, government agencies may obtain private records of individuals and businesses, Fourth Amendment be damned.

Those who know history know that government's power and lawlessness inevitably expands unless stopped or reversed. Magna Carta, which turns 800 on June 15, the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution are examples of

documents that came about when people rebelled against government lawlessness and reclaimed legal authority over government.

These documents are celebrated as monuments of freedom because they place government under control of the rule of law. They demonstrate that government is best when there is paramount law controlling its behavior — when there is a separation of powers, checks and balances and accountability to the people.

Everyone understands the desire to keep America safe, but Americans are annoyed and troubled that some people in positions of power refuse even to acknowledge the Fourth Amendment problem with the Patriot Act and the collection of metadata.

The Constitution's Bill of Rights was written in broad strokes in the context of the era. The First Amendment freedom of the press, naturally extended to radio, then television, neither of which existed when the Bill of Rights was adopted. The Fourth Amendment's protections of "papers and effects," which are private records and property, should naturally extend to metadata. The government's authority to reach metadata of persons and merchants should be read in this originalist context.

To preserve the Fourth Amendment, certain reforms would be useful in clarifying it for the 21st Century, and correcting mistakes of judicial, executive and legislative interpretation. First, there should be no presumption that private records in the possession of private third parties may be taken by the government without probable cause. Also, all warrants — and that includes administrative subpoenas — should be issued only by neutral judges or magistrates to preserve the separation of powers inherent in the Fourth Amendment. Because warrants are issued in chambers, there is no danger in matters of national security.

In Virginia, we have participated in promoting a "21st Century Fourth Amendment" that includes these needed reforms and more, including tightening the definition of probable cause to ensure valid laws are being enforced. These originalist reforms make sense for all the states, and even for the federal government, in protecting our security from Orwellian government. ***

Ken Cuccinelli, the former attorney general of Virginia, is president of the Senate Conservatives Fund. Mark Fitzgibbons is co-author with Richard Viguerie of The Law That Governs Government: Reclaiming The Constitution From Usurpers And Society's Biggest Lawbreaker. Reprinted from the Washington Examiner of June 1, 2015

The trouble with Google defining “truth”

It thinks we're only entitled to seeing **Google's** “facts,” especially on climate change

Ron Arnold

With its \$385 billion share value, Google, Inc. has bumped Exxon Mobil to become America's No. 2 ranked company in market capitalization.

That may not be a good thing. A February article in *New Scientist* announced, Google wants to rank websites based on facts, not links, and writer Hal Hodson said, “The internet is stuffed with garbage. Google has devised a fix – rank websites according to their truthfulness.”

Not surprisingly, the idea of changing page rank from popularity to “truthfulness,” based on a Google-made “knowledge vault,” did not go down well.

Fox News reported, “Google's plan to rank websites is raising censorship concerns.” Douglass Kennedy opened with, “They say you're entitled to your own opinions, but you are not entitled to your own facts. It's a concept not everyone is comfortable with.”

They're saying we're only entitled to **Google's** “facts,” which completely short-circuits how slippery “facts” can be and naively equates facts with truth. Ask any lawyer about truth.

Today's climate wars consist of arguments between highly qualified scientists about facts that some sincerely believe are true, and some sincerely believe are false, each for solid reasons. It should be an honest debate among equals, but it's degenerated into a power play by alarmists to kill debate to drive favored public policies that are pushed by certain politicians and their social and political base.

Google's truth plan is not so simple. Facts are statements about existence. Statements about existence can be true or false. Existence itself – your kitchen sink or the climate or whatever – can't be true or false; it just exists. Say anything you want about existence, and it won't change a thing. It still just exists. Existence doesn't give a damn what you think about it. Facts are statements about existence, and statements are always arguable.

But get everyone to believe Google Facts, and you can enforce political policies worth trillions of dollars to climate profiteers – and impose punitive, economy-strangling, job-killing regulations on millions of families.

You can see where this is going.

Imagine: Big Google the Universal Truthsayer. That's as scary as “Mr. Dark” in Ray Bradbury's 1962 novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, only worse. It's the perfect machine to kill all dissent and wither the Internet into

a wasteland of groupthink, susceptible to disinformation campaigns from any power center from the CIA, to the rich bosses of Google, Inc. to Google's political friends and allies.

What about those rich bosses? Google's two co-founders, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, created a corporate foundation in 2005. The Google Foundation has 2013 assets of \$72,412,693, gave grants of \$7.9 million, and added \$29.4 million from corporate profits.

Three of Google's top-ten recipients are key climate alarmists: the World Wildlife Fund (\$5 million); Energy Foundation (\$2.6 million); and rabidly anti-fracking Natural Resources Defense Council (\$2.5 million).

NRDC is particularly influential because it also received \$3.01 million in taxpayer-financed Environmental Protection Agency grants since 2009 and has 50 employees on 40 federal advisory committees: NRDC has 33 employees on 21 EPA committees, and more in six other agencies.

The big gun in Google philanthropy is Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt, whose Schmidt Family Foundation (\$312 million, 2013 assets) is a major armory for groups that attack skeptics of dangerous manmade climate change. The Schmidt Foundation has given \$67,147,849 in 295 grants to 180 recipients since it was endowed in 2007.

Top Schmidt money went to Climate Central (\$8.15 million), a group of activist climate scientists bolstered by \$1,387,372 in EPA grants since 2009.

Schmidt also gave \$3.25 million to the Energy Foundation, which was almost superfluous, since EF is practically the Mother Ship of green grants, with \$1,157,046,016 given via 28,705 grants to 11,866 recipients since 1999.

Among the shadier grants in the Schmidt portfolio are anti-fracking, anti-fossil-fuel grants totaling \$1.19 million to the Sustainable Markets Foundation, a shell corporation that gives no recorded grants, but funnels money to climate and anti-fracking organizations such as Bill McKibben's 350.org, so that the donors are not traceable.

Schmidt supported the far-left Tides Foundation empire with \$975,000 for an anti-consumer film, “The Story of Stuff.” It gave the Sierra Club \$500,000 for anti-natural gas activism, the Center for Investigative Reporting \$985,000 for an anti-coal film, and so forth. Schmidt's list goes on for pages.

With all the massive resources of wealth and power alarmists have, we must ask: Why do they give so much to destroy the climate debate and the debaters? What are they afraid of?

Perhaps they have staked so much money and reputation on manmade climate catastrophe claims that they are terrified by the prospect that inconvenient evidence, data, debate and scientists could destroy their carefully constructed climate house of cards.

Or perhaps it's what Eric Schmidt said at January's World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, when he was asked for his prediction on the future of the web. "I will answer very simply that the Internet will disappear."

How? The mature technology will be wearable, give us interactive homes and cars, and simply fade into the background – to become something that we all have, that most of us don't really know (or care) very much about, as long as it can do whatever we want.

That's the view from the pinnacle of wealth and power. On the ground, the joke is on Google.

Michael Humphrey, *Forbes* contributor and instructor at

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The anti-pesticide groups used the postponement to switch their rationale for restricting neonics. Instead of critical threats to managed honeybees, they now say it is native or wild bees that need help. The shift reflects a shrewd, cynical calculation.

Since there are far fewer studies on the status of wild bee populations, activists can make any claims they like. As the NRDC's Jennifer Sass said in November 2014, environmentalist groups can only "presume" that wild bees are in decline. But they sure know how to get ample press coverage for their presumption.

They, the White House and EPA need to check their facts this time. U.S. Geological Survey wild bee specialist Sam Droege says scientists still don't know which species are declining or flourishing, but he believes most are doing fine. (There are some 4,000 native species of wild bees in North America.) Similarly, a 2013 study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* analyzed U.S. native bee populations over a 140-year period and echoed that assessment. Of 187 native species analyzed, only three showed steep declines, and they were likely due to pathogens.

This may be why anti-pesticide activists are simultaneously employing another new tactic. By combining summer and winter bee losses, they can make it look like the honeybee crisis is worsening, as a May 14 *Wall Street Journal* article put it. This stratagem also benefits from the

Colorado State University, sees younger people abandoning the public forum in favor of one-to-one connectivity. He says they don't trust the Internet.

Why? Millennials say the Internet is cheapening language, it is stunting curiosity (because answers come so easily), we are never bored so we lose creativity, it steals innocence too quickly, it makes us impulsive with our buying and talking, it is creating narcissists, it creates filter bubbles that limit discovery, it hurts local businesses, it is filled with false evidence, it desensitizes us to tragedy, it makes us lonely.

They want the real world.

Google that. ***

Ron Arnold is Ron Arnold is executive vice president of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise and coauthor of *Cracking Big Green: Saving the world from the Save-the-Earth money machine*.

fact that summertime loss data go back only five years, so there is no way to look for historical trends or patterns.

The White House would do well to leave science to experts, rather than activists with an ax to grind. If bee numbers are increasing, it is much harder to justify restricting a pesticide that is needed by farmers – and that would be much better for honeybees, wild bees and other beneficial insects.

As Randy Oliver emphasizes, it is important to let science do its job, figure out and address what is really happening to bees, use all insecticides carefully and responsibly, and not stigmatize neonic seed treatments on ideological or junk science grounds.

Otherwise, bee problems are likely to get worse, while neonic bans cause crop losses and a return to spraying pesticides that really can cause significant environmental problems. ***

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Bee facts changed – green agendas did not

Activists and White House appear ready to present new justifications for unjustified policies
Paul Driessen

The White House finally appears ready to announce conclusions and policy recommendations from the Pollinator Task Force it appointed a year ago. Environmentalist groups eagerly await the decision. After clamoring and campaigning for years for government action, they hope to get tough restrictions on using innovative new insecticides called neonicotinoids.

Agricultural interests await the decision with trepidation. A ban or broad restrictions would cost billions of dollars annually, force them to employ pesticides that are more difficult to use and more toxic for beneficial insects, and compel them to confront more secretive government “science” and faulty justifications for policies that are not supported by the evidence.

The deadline imposed by President Obama’s task force memo passed months ago, and yet the White House has been strangely silent on the issue of pesticides and honeybee health. What initially looked like an easy lame-duck giveaway to green groups has turned out to be factually complicated.

Long before the White House weighed in, anti-insecticide activists promoted claims that honeybees were headed for extinction because of pesticides, specifically neonics – unless the government banned them. Time magazine picked up their refrain, devoting a long cover story to the scary prospect of “a world without bees.” Other news stories uncritically repeated the end-of-bees assertions. One-third of the food we eat could disappear without bees to pollinate crops, they proclaimed. But there was a problem.

The narrative turned out to be false, extensive evidence now demonstrates – and inconvenient truths had gotten in the way of another slam-dunk Executive Branch edict.

Neonicotinoids are actually much less toxic for bees, other insects, humans and animals than alternative pesticides, in part because they are primarily used to coat seeds. The neonics become part of the plant’s tissue structure and defense system, affecting only pests that feed on the protected crops. Farmers can greatly reduce pesticide spraying, especially with older, more toxic chemicals.

Field studies have repeatedly shown that bees are unaffected by neonics at real-world exposure levels. In fact, bees thrive in canola (oilseed rape) fields and other crops grown with neonic-treated seeds, and the number of bees has been rising steadily worldwide the past few years, even as neonic usage peaked.

U.S. Department of Agriculture annual beekeeper surveys reveal that the number of honey-producing hives in the United States has held steady at about 2.5 million since 1995. Indeed, the numbers increased four of the last five years and are actually higher now than when neonics first came on the market in the mid 1990s. Most beehive problems now involve less experienced hobby beekeepers.

A similarly hyped issue, “colony collapse disorder,” turned out to be a cyclical problem going back centuries. Recent large-scale die-offs of domesticated bees appear to be caused primarily by Varroa mites (which feed on bees and can transmit bee viruses and diseases), parasitic phorid flies, Nosema intestinal fungi, and tobacco ringspot viruses. Beekeepers have accidentally killed entire hives trying to combat these problems.

Honeybee habitat loss from urban, suburban and even agricultural development has also taken a toll. Just removing fences, to improve agricultural efficiencies and let cattle roam and feed, reduces bee forage and nutrition. That further increases bees’ susceptibility to mites, disease and stress, entomologist and professional beekeeper Randy Oliver told me.

But facts like these never stopped organizations like Beyond Pesticides and the Natural Resources Defense Council from claiming America and the world faced a “bee-pocalypse” – and the cause was never a convergence of problems; it was always because of their newest bogeyman: neonicotinoids.

The facts likewise never stopped the White House from telling the EPA to scrutinize neonics intently, in the name of protecting pollinators.

Eventually, though, the facts caught up with the fear-mongering. As journalists wrote articles exposing the environmentalist falsehoods, the “honeybee Armageddon” justification began falling apart.

The White House and Big Green pressure groups did not want egg on their face. What to do? The preferred tactic: postpone the task force report and stall for time to concoct a new fable. It had worked before on other issues. A compliant, allied media and gullible public should make it work again.

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