

# Green New Deal: great slogan, ignores limits to growth

## 100% renewable energy after finite concentrated fossil carbon? solar power will run a smaller, steady state society

“Green New Deal” is a great slogan. Unfortunately, the campaign ignores inconvenient facts.

We are beyond the limits to growth of non-renewable fossil fuels and of “renewable” resources such as forests, fish, soil, fresh water and food. Overconsumption and overpopulation equals overshoot.

Using unprecedented levels of energy does not mean there are equally sized alternatives to power the American Way of Life (AWOL).

I have used solar panels since 1990; they are great but not as concentrated as oil. It takes fossil fuels and mineral ores to make, move and install them. Claims we could have 100 percent of current consumption without fossil fuels don't describe how to heat cold cities.

We will live radically differently on the resource downslope, but the end of economic growth doesn't poll well in Democratic Party focus groups. Greenwashing (the false claim of environmentalism) and wishful thinking are popular but unable to sustain social safety nets.

Merely acknowledging the reality of climate chaos means little unless accompanied by efforts to relocalize food production and other efforts to live with less energy.

Most Democratic politicians profess concern for climate while promoting exponential growth, highway expansions, urbanization and industrial clearcutting.

Data for Progress, a think tank working with 350.org and Sunrise Movement, says “**clean**” **nuclear power** should be part of the Green New Deal [“New Green Deal Policy Report,” dataforprogress.org, Sept., 2018, p. 5]. Atomic fission is the most dangerous way to boil water. Only time, lots of it, can detoxify nuclear waste.

As the fracking bubble subsides (due to geology) we will enter the new world of permanent energy rationing, which will collapse the exponential growth economy and fuel scapegoating of whom to blame. Living on our solar budget as oil, coal and unnatural gas are depleted will force us to relocalize production whether we want to use less or not. Thermodynamics cannot be changed by politics. Entropy is not a good idea, it's the law.

We are damned if we drill because of toxic pollution and climate chaos.

We are damned if we don't because fossil fuels power food supplies, keep cities warm in the winter, and run electric power grids.

Fractal Permaculture: local, bioregional, global by Mark Robinowitz [www.peakchoice.org/fractal.html](http://www.peakchoice.org/fractal.html)

RetroSuburbia.com: The downshifter's guide to a resilient future, by David Holmgren, permaculture co-originator

Transition Towns: [www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org) [www.transitionus.org](http://www.transitionus.org)

Richard Heinberg and David Fridley, Post Carbon Institute Our Renewable Future: Laying the Path for One Hundred Percent Clean Energy [www.postcarbon.org](http://www.postcarbon.org) [www.ourrenewablefuture.org](http://www.ourrenewablefuture.org) [www.shalebubble.org](http://www.shalebubble.org)  
[www.postcarbon.org/could-a-green-new-deal-save-civilization/](http://www.postcarbon.org/could-a-green-new-deal-save-civilization/) by Richard Heinberg (rhetoric vs. reality)

[www.greens.org/s-r/60/60-09.html](http://www.greens.org/s-r/60/60-09.html)

A Critique of Jacobson and Delucchi's Proposals for a World Renewable Energy Supply, by Ted Trainer  
[www.greens.org/s-r/48/48-11.html](http://www.greens.org/s-r/48/48-11.html) Renewable Energy Cannot Sustain a Consumer Society, by Ted Trainer

[www.resilience.org/stories/2009-11-09/scientific-americans-path-sustainability-lets-think-about-details/](http://www.resilience.org/stories/2009-11-09/scientific-americans-path-sustainability-lets-think-about-details/)  
Scientific American's Path to Sustainability: Let's Think about the Details, by Gail Tverberg on November 9, 2009

[www.resilience.org/stories/2017-09-19/100-percent-wishful-thinking-green-energy-cornucopia/](http://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-09-19/100-percent-wishful-thinking-green-energy-cornucopia/)  
100 Percent Wishful Thinking: The Green-Energy Cornucopia  
by Stan Cox, author, Any Way You Slice It: The Past, Present, and Future of Rationing

[www.resilience.org/stories/2019-01-15/that-green-growth-at-the-heart-of-the-green-new-deal-its-malignant/](http://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-01-15/that-green-growth-at-the-heart-of-the-green-new-deal-its-malignant/)  
That Green Growth at the Heart of the Green New Deal? It's Malignant, by Stan Cox, January 15, 2019