

I am State Representative Reagan Paul from District 37. I represent the towns of Winterport, Prospect, Stockton Springs, Searsport, and part of Frankfort.

Let's dive in. Maine is not California. The GDP of Maine is about 3% of California's. We do not share the same economy, climate, values, or culture. So let's forget about California and let's talk about Maine. According to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), Maine's net contribution to the world's CO₂ emissions is .000098%. Nothing...let me repeat...nothing Maine does will have any impact on climate change. May I add here, climate change is not a new phenomenon. It has been happening for thousands of years, since the day God created the heavens and the earth. If every source of CO₂ in the State of Maine ceased tomorrow - if we permanently turned off every light, furnace, vehicle, or other power source and lived like our ancient ancestors, it would have NO measurable impact on the climate.

I am a member of the energy, utilities, and technology committee. I listened to all of the testimony day in and day out. Here is what I know, the Maine Won't Wait agenda is nothing but a set of artificial goals that can never be reached and there is no plan, because there can't be one with an achievable goal. 100% renewable is a myth.

Proposals to eliminate gas-powered automobiles are likely to win politicians media coverage and cheers at town hall meetings (at least in some places). But the actual environmental impact of such policies remains unclear. It's important to remember that CO₂ emissions are not just about what comes out of vehicles, but also what goes into vehicles. Electric vehicles might not emit emissions through exhaust pipes like gas-powered cars, but they expend tremendous amounts of CO₂ during their production and charging cycles, and require numerous elements—such as lithium, cobalt, and manganese—that must be mined from the earth.

While conventional wisdom says electric vehicles are more environmentally friendly and an effective tool to fight climate change, research suggests electric vehicles may have environmental costs that actually exceed those of internal combustion engines when the full cycle of production is included.

Using the Energy Information Administration's long-term forecasts for the number of electric vehicles through 2050, the Manhattan Institute estimated how much electricity these vehicles would require. Their research shows that electric vehicles are worse for the environment than modern gas powered vehicles. When the three key pollutants that are regulated in the US Clean Air act are broken down, including sulfur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, and carbon dioxide, it was found that electric vehicles will likely increase air pollution compared with new internal combustion vehicles. You heard that right. More electric cars and trucks will mean more air pollution. But that is from Politico, not exactly a conservative think tank. The fact is, modern gas-powered vehicles are not what your granddaddy was driving. Today's vehicles emit very little pollution, about 1% of what they did in the 1960s.

The World Economic Forum has also called attention to the dirty secrets of electric vehicles which includes both adverse environmental impacts and children as young as seven working in cobalt mines in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where more than half of the world's cobalt is produced.

“[R]aw materials needed for batteries are extracted at a high human and environmental toll. This includes, for example, child labour, health and safety hazards in informal work, poverty and pollution,” according to the World Economic Forum’s Global Battery Alliance. “A recycling challenge looms over the eleven million tons of spent lithium-ion batteries forecast to be discarded by 2030, with few systems in place to enable reuse and recycling in a circular economy for batteries.”

Let’s not forget that these batteries are manufactured in places such as China where generation of electricity remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels, including coal, which increases the carbon footprint of electric car batteries. For this reason, Amnesty International is calling on nations to disclose the carbon footprint of electric car batteries, so that their environmental impact can be accurately assessed.

The law of unintended consequences, one of the proverbial building blocks of economics, shows that actions, those undertaken by people but especially those undertaken by governments, have consequences that go far beyond their desired effects. Many people of good faith wish to help the environment by rejecting or limiting the use of gasoline. The desired effect is lower consumption of gasoline. However, there are also unintended consequences of this action.

By restricting the use of gasoline, environmentalists increase the demand for electricity. This in turn increases the price of coal, which incentivizes production of coal, a fossil fuel that produces more CO₂ emissions than gasoline.

The great economist Claude-Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850), in his seminal essay “That Which is Seen, and That Which is Not Seen,” observed there was a tendency for humans to judge actions based on immediate effects (“a small present good”) while ignoring their long-term consequences (“a great evil to come”). Bastiat said it was man’s inability to see the results of actions in their totality—the seen and the *unseen*—that resulted in mankind’s greatest deprivations.

If we celebrate the decline in emissions from gas-powered vehicles but ignore the considerable environmental costs of electric vehicles, we fall into the trap Bastiat described 170 years ago. Let me finish as I started: Maine is not California and Maine’s climate goals are nothing more than emotional decisions not based in reality. Thank you for your time.