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## Green jobs are national scandal

[Deroy Murdock \(/authors/deroy-murdock\)](/authors/deroy-murdock)

Oct 7 2011 - 10:53pm

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Solargate is just the tip of the iceberg.

This reflects the madness of President Barack Obama's obsession with "green jobs." It would be bad enough if this disaster were limited to possible criminality at Solyndra -- the California-based solar-panel maker that Obama stimulated with loan guarantees, despite repeated internal warnings. Solyndra's August 31 bankruptcy transformed 1,100 green jobs into pink slips and marinated taxpayers in \$527 million of red ink.

But many green-jobs programs that have not been raided by the FBI -- as befell Solyndra last September 8 -- nonetheless are fiscally reckless enough to merit a five-alarm national scandal.

Consider:

-- Hopewell Junction, New York's SpectraWatt, Inc. scored \$500,000 from the Energy Department in June 2009 and \$150,000 from the National Science Foundation in June 2010. Last August 19, the solar-power company went bust.

-- Evergreen Solar was stimulated with \$5.3 million of Massachusetts government cash and praised by the White House for helping to "kickstart the economy." Evergreen went bankrupt last August 15.

-- Mountain Plaza, Inc. went bankrupt in 2003. Nonetheless, its "truck-stop electrification" technology won \$424,000 in EPA stimulus funds administered by Tennessee's Transportation Department. Yet again, Mountain Plaza filed for bankruptcy in June 2010.

-- Notwithstanding its February 2009 bankruptcy and default on a \$58 million loan from BNP Paribas, Wisconsin-based, ethanol-oriented Olsen's Mill Acquisition was stimulated with \$10 million in January 2010, along with Olsen's Crop Services. ADM purchased the defunct operation's assets last month.

Team Obama also has subsidized projects that may be neither fraudulent nor failed, per se, but severely abuse taxpayers:

-- As the Wall Street Journal reports, cash-strapped Americans are changing babies' diapers less frequently and doubling down on diaper-rash ointment. What a perfect time for Team Obama to subsidize foreign solar companies.

Energy last June 18 gave Solar Trust, an American subsidiary of Germany's Solar Millennium, a \$2.1 billion loan guarantee for a Blythe, California solar-power facility. Last June, Energy handed Spain's Abengoa Solar a \$1.2 billion guarantee for its Mojave (California) Solar Project and backstopped \$1.45 billion last December for Abengoa's Gila Bend, Arizona outpost.

-- On September 28, Energy approved a \$737 million loan guarantee for Nevada's SolarReserve Project. It promises 600 construction jobs at \$1.23 million each and 45 permanent jobs at \$16.4 million per position. Energy also guaranteed \$337 million for Sempra Energy's Mesquite Solar Project in Arizona. Its 300 construction jobs cost \$1.12 million each, while its seven permanent positions equal \$48.1 million per job created.

-- In Seattle, an Energy grant provided \$20 million to weatherize homes. Sixteen months later, this outlay has generated 14 administrative jobs at \$1.42 million apiece. How many homes have been retrofitted? Three.

Citing Energy's data, Investors Business Daily reports that subsidies averaged \$1.65 per megawatt hour in 2007. Wind and solar: \$24. Similarly, while Obama "invests" up to \$48.1 million per job, private employers hire the average individual for \$58,510 annually, the Labor Department calculates.

When will liberals join conservative in denouncing this green-jobs fantasy? While most free market supporters would convert these funds to tax relief or debt reduction, only blind liberals cannot see that this extravagance impoverishes their favorite causes.

Every dollar that chases a money-losing windmill is a dollar that cannot fund Head Start.

Every million that spawns only one job is a million that cannot finance 270 average Pell Grants for needy college students.

And every billion that vanishes into green bankruptcy is a billion that cannot help impoverished Americans heat their homes with government assistance.

It would be refreshing to see liberals fight as hard for poor people as for solar panels.

Undeterred, the president chases the Sun, like a motorist speeding west across the desert as dusk approaches. Obama swears that the Sun is within his grasp. Yet it stubbornly remains just beyond the horizon.

Too bad Barack Obama won't finance his self-defeating solar road trip with his own money.

*Deroy Murdock is a columnist with Scripps Howard News Service and a media fellow with the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University. E-mail him at deroy.Murdock@gmail.com*

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