



# COLAB SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

WEEK OF JANUARY 17-23, 2016



COLAB <sup>7th</sup> ANNUAL  
San Luis Obispo County

# DINNER & FUNDRAISER

2016 - The Year of Opportunity!



## Peter Adam

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Chair

How Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties  
can Win the Wild West (Coast)

Friday, March 11, 2016

Alex Madonna Expo Center,  
San Luis Obispo

5:15 PM - Social Hour, No Host Cocktails

6:15 PM - Filet Mignon Dinner including Wine

Exciting Auction!

LIVE BAND with Dancing!

\$125 per person / \$1100 per table of 10

Reserved seating for tables of 10

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Cocktail Attire Optional

**THIS WEEK**

**NO BOARD MEETING ON TUES. JAN. 19<sup>TH</sup>**

**SLO COLAB IN DEPTH**

**(SEE PAGE 9)**

**LAST WEEK**

**RADIO NEWSMAN DICK MASON TELLS BOS  
HOW HILL HARASSED HIM AND HIS  
DAUGHTER**

**BUSINESS, AG, AND THE TAXPAYERS SCORE  
SOME POSITIVE POINTS:**

- BIG EXPENSIVE BIO-SOLIDS PLAN DUMPED-**
- BLACK LAKE RESORT DEVELOPER CAN ROLL  
DICE ON TRYING FOR NEW PLAN-**
- LONG TERM BILLBOARD TO BE RETAINED-**

**PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES  
TEMPLETON MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY 5/0**

**LAETITIA AG SUDIVISION CONTINUED TO  
FEBRUARY 11, 2016**

## THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

There will be no Board meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 as it is the day after a national holiday (Martin Luther King's Birthday)

## LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

### Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, January 12, 2016 (Completed)

**In General:** Tuesday's actions were somewhat of a trifecta of positive outcomes for agriculture, business, and taxpayers. Newly minted Board Chair Compton clearly had her ducks in a row – even if Gibson is lagging. The actions are detailed in the results of Board agenda items 15, 18, and 19, outlined below.



**Item 15 - Work Progress on Bio-solids Ordinance.** In a surprise move the Board determined to stop work on a permanent Bio-solids Ordinance. The vote to cease work on the ordinance and cancel the request for proposals (RFP) was 3/2, Hill and Gibson dissenting. There were a number of speakers who opposed further work on the project. Apparently, the interim ordinance is working fine and there has been no expansion of bio-solids applications for decades under the interim ordinance. It turned out that the costs of processing a permanent ordinance might exceed \$300,000. Moreover, a permanent ordinance could open a can of worms vis a vis recent State Legislation that could prohibit localities from totally banning spreading of bio-solids on open land. While the current interim ordinance does not totally ban such activity, it does make it difficult.

Emerging technology may also result in new methods of disposing of bio- solids. It may well be prudent for the County to stall for a few years to see what emerges.

**Background:** One problem for society is disposing of bio-solids (treated human waste). One way to dispose of it is to spread it on agricultural fields as a soil enhancer. Many farmers do not want to use this material due to the normal cultural aversion of consumers, super market chains, wholesalers, and so forth. A related problem is that large metropolitan areas do not have vacant land or agricultural land on which to spread the material and therefore seek to export it to rural counties. The rural counties do not wish to become dumping grounds for urban jurisdictions and

therefore adopt ordinances prohibiting waste importation. At the same time they realize they must deal with their own bio-solids.

SLO County is currently operating under an interim ordinance that it has renewed for several decades. Earlier this year the Board determined to develop a permanent ordinance for which an environmental impact report (EIR) is being prepared. There appear to be some citizens who feel that the draft ordinance and the proposed analysis in the EIR are not strict enough. There are others who feel it is unneeded. The action before the Board was to receive a status report on the development of the ordinance and EIR. No action to adopt an ordinance will take place.

**Item 18 - Black Lake Golf Resort Owners Given Permission to Roll the Dice on Processing and Application for Amending the Original Plan.** The Board voted 3/2 (Gibson and Hill dissenting) to allow the applicant to apply for a Specific Plan amendment, which if ultimately approved would revise the final configuration of the planned community per the list in the background section below.

**Background:** The developer had requested a determination by the Board of Supervisors on whether it would allow an application to be developed to revise the original approved plan for the Black Lake planned community in Nipomo. Thus, this was not decision to reject or approve an amended plan but a decision about whether the Board would even consider such an application to amend the plan.

The new proposed components include:

*Lodge with 84 resort units, including restaurant, conference space, various retail spaces, pro shop, café and event areas*

*o 30 cottages as a condo/hotel*

*o 20 cottages as a boutique hotel*

*o 36 villas as individual single family vacation rentals*

*o Re-location of the maintenance facility*

*o 2,500 square foot chapel*

*o 8,500 square foot tournament house and restaurant*

*o 1,800 square foot executive course clubhouse*

*o Recreational uses (swimming pool, tennis courts, bocce)*

A previously planned golf course and some open space would be eliminated to accommodate the changes. Reportedly, a small group of residents is opposed. Apparently many of the residents understand that some changes would be beneficial.

**Item 19 - Billboard Denial Reversed.** The Board voted 4/1 (Gibson dissenting) to reverse the Planning Commission's denial of the extension of the life of a billboard in Nipomo. There was no community support for removing the billboard. The MacDonal'd's Restaurant involved apparently serves both the immediate neighborhood and the highway 101 thru traffic.



**Background:** The Planning Commission had denied an application to extend a permit for a non-conforming billboard in Nipomo for an additional 15 years. The owner appealed. Many people find billboards to be intrusive to the natural environment. On the other hand billboards can provide valuable information to motorists seeking various local services.

The sign has been in the view corridor for 30 years and does not pose any traffic distraction. If the State and Federal governments are the sole entities permitted to erect signs next to highways, are citizens placed at a disadvantage in terms of first amendment expression? What if this sign read, “Repeal Obama Care” or “Elect Achadjian” instead of selling French fries?

**Item 13 - General Public comment For Matters Not On the Agenda – More Hill Bullying:**

This is one of the more shocking revelations we have heard related to Supervisor Adam Hill, not that there haven’t been enough already.

Long time radio news reporter, public affairs host, and community resource Dick Mason came to the microphone and somberly and carefully read a prepared statement in which he alleged that Hill had intermediaries call his boss and request that he be fired. (He was shortly afterwards fired). Mason also reported that Hill and Hill’s wife Dee Torres accused him of hating Hill. If this were not bizarre enough, Mason stated that Hill had emailed his daughter and asked why he (Dick Mason) hates hill. Please open the link below to view Mason’s statement to the Board of Supervisors. The link is provided courtesy of Cal Coast News.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGmD0IH7I3I&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGmD0IH7I3I&feature=player_embedded)

Apparently Hill believes that Dick Mason is the voice in a “Fire Adam Hill” YouTube video. Mason denies that he is the voice in the video or that he has any animosity for Hill. Instead, any references to Hill were in the line of his normal reporting. The video can be accessed at the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OBwWk7BiDs>

The Cal Coast News had actually reported the incidents several days before and describes some of the details.

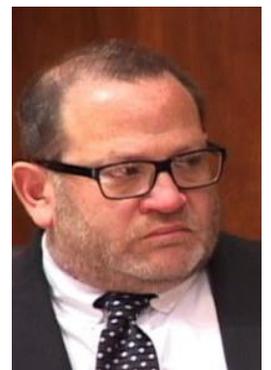
## ***Hill zeroes in on broadcaster Dick Mason***

*January 8, 2016*

*By DANIEL BLACKBURN*

*San Luis Obispo County Supervisor Adam Hill apparently has selected his next target for his unique brand of vitriol: veteran radio newsman Dick Mason. Mason is set to take over the morning news assignment at KVEC/920 on Jan. 18.*

*Mason, let go from station KKJL a day before New Years’ Eve, discussed his past, present, and future Wednesday on Dave Congalton’s Home Town radio show. Mason also revealed a series of disturbing incidents originating with Hill.*



Mason said his job as a journalist is to “objectively report the news.” Last month, Mason had reported on Hill’s walking out of the supervisors’ chambers while members of CAPSLO were being honored on the 50th anniversary of the organization’s formation.

“It started after a recent supervisors meeting,” Mason told Congalton.  
“He said, ‘Stop bashing me.’”

“I said ‘I’m not bashing you, I’m reporting the news.’ Now every time I see him, he continues. He had his secretary call and say, ‘We’ve had complaints that you’re bashing Adam.’ I’ve never experienced this,” Mason said.

Mason noted that the “coup de gras” came last week. He related how his 25-year-old daughter — now working in San Francisco — agreed to a recent Facebook “friend” request.

Congalton asked Mason whose name was on the Facebook profile attempting to contact Mason’s daughter.

“Torres,” Mason said.

“As in ‘Dee’ Torres, Adam Hill’s wife,” Congalton said.

An hour after Mason’s daughter accepted Torres’ friend request, she got what Mason described as “a bizarre email.”

Dick Mason



Dick Mason

“Why does your dad hate the Adam Hill family?” Torres wrote. In the email, Torres included a link to the [FireAdamHill.com](http://FireAdamHill.com) website.”

Mason told Congalton that he then received an email from Hill that read simply, “Voice-over.”

Mason wrote back asking Hill what he meant by the email.

“That’s you on the hit piece against me,” Hill responded.

Eventually, Mason said he saw a YouTube video of a 60-second commercial spot critical of Hill featured on [FireAdamHill.com](http://FireAdamHill.com).

“Adam is convinced it’s me voicing it, but it’s not my voice. It’s not me. A competent voice-analysis would prove it’s not me,” Mason said.

Congalton then referred to the [FireAdamHill.com](http://FireAdamHill.com) video as a “professionally-produced commercial.”

Shortly before Mason was notified of his imminent departure, Hill contacted management at KKJL to complain about Mason’s news reporting, Mason said.

Congalton then asked Mason if Hill’s call had anything to do with his departure from KKJL.

“I don’t think so,” Mason said. “And I’m appalled that Adam is so upset.”

Congalton responded by dubbing Hill a bully.

*“I wanted to have Dick on the show to prove that I am not making this stuff up,” Congalton said. “We have a supervisor who is a bully. And if he doesn’t get his way, he comes after you with everything he has, even going after your family.”*

This article first appeared in the Cal Coast News on January 8, 2016.

**What Will the Board Of Supervisors Do?** Here the Board has a harassment and bullying complaint delivered personally in public by the victim. Will the Board again ignore its promises in its officially adopted anti-harassment policy to conduct an investigation? Or are members of the Board of Supervisors above and immune from the County regulations and laws? Is Hill simply a loaded gun ready to commit more offenses? When the County is sued, it will be unable to provide any evidence that it attempted to take corrective action and mitigate future damages. The Board’s failure and its administration’s failure to take action will end up as a huge bill to the taxpayers. Remember, the Board has done nothing in regard to the previous threat of violence against Dan Carpenter.

**Violation of County Organizational Values:** How can the Board sit by and allow one of its members to repeatedly and flagrantly violate its organizational values?

#### Organizational Values

##### Integrity

- We are dedicated to high ethical and moral standards and uncompromising honesty in our dealings with the public and each other.
- We behave in a consistent manner with open, truthful communication, respecting commitments and being true to our word.

##### Collaboration

- We celebrate teamwork by relying on the participation and initiative of every employee.
- We work cooperatively within and between departments and the public to address issues and achieve results.

##### Professionalism

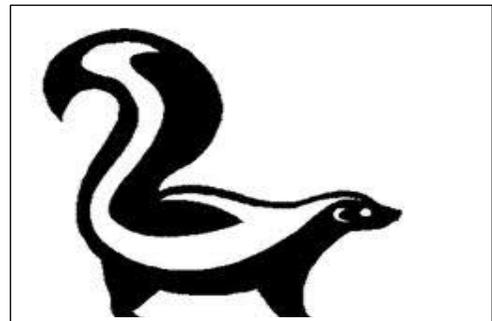
- We are each personally accountable for the performance of our jobs in a manner which bestows credibility upon ourselves and our community.
- We consistently treat customers, each other, the County, and the resources entrusted to us with respect and honesty.

##### Accountability

- We assume personal responsibility for our conduct and actions and follow through on our commitments.
- We are responsible managers of available fiscal and natural resources.

##### Responsiveness

- We provide timely, accurate and complete information to each other and those we serve.
- We solicit feedback from customers on improving programs and services as part of a continuous improvement process.



**Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, January 14, 2016 (Completed)**

**Item 7 - Templeton Mental Health Facility and Assisted Living Facility.** The Commission approved the project 5/0. There was considerably less public comment than we had expected. The Commissioners focused on technical matters such as drainage, parking, the ability of trailer trucks making deliveries to maneuver, flooding, size and massing of the buildings, current traffic, and future traffic resulting from future development. County Counsel cautioned the Commissioners not to wander into social issues such as potential impacts of mentally impaired people escaping and committing crimes. Under state law mental illness is a disability and therefore the patients are a protected class. Public bodies are forbidden from considering such matters as a matter of law.

A petition containing 1300 signatures was submitted in opposition to the project and a petition containing 990 signatures was submitted in support. A number of law enforcement, mental health, social services, and other professionals support the project.

The project will provide a secure mental health treatment hospital and an assisted living facility. There will be an estimated 200 employees. It will be interesting to see if these new jobs leverage additional new jobs as a multiplier effect (usually 3 to 5). Will Templeton experience new housing demand and concomitant development? This may come up against drought and other water regulations.

**Item 10 - Proposed Laetitia Agricultural Cluster Subdivision.** After hours of deliberation, the Commission continued further consideration of the project to its February 11, 2016 meeting. It may not be a slam dunk because there are some emergency access (and evacuation) conditions that require the applicant to obtain signoffs from both Caltrans and Cal Fire, which could be problematic. Also the applicant is saying that it would prefer the 102-lot version as opposed to the 83 lots, which Commission seems inclined to approve.

Four of the Commissioners support the 83-lot version. Commissioner Harrison supports 102. Some of the Commissioners are beginning to display annoyance, because they thought the 83 had been agreed upon. As we noted last week, this issue had never been formally agreed to in writing by the applicant. Surprisingly, there were only 3 public commenters and no large crowd.

**Homes similar to the one below are contemplated.**



# SLO COLAB IN DEPTH

In fighting the troublesome local day to day assaults on our freedom and property, it is also important to keep in mind the larger underlying ideological and political causes and forces. To this end, a video and several articles are presented below.

## WATER TRUTH

Please take a look at the video **DEAD HARVEST** at the link below. It describes the terrible toll on farmers, communities, and people being taken by the enviro-socialist policies of the Federal Government in the San Joaquin Valley. It also puts the State Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in realistic perspective as a consequence of the Federal laws inspired by radical environmental group lawsuits.

<https://vimeo.com/149917045>



**MORE ON THE NEXT PAGE**

# THERE IS NO CALIFORNIA

There is no California

[Victor Davis Hanson](#) | Aug 16, 2012

Driving across California is like going from Mississippi to Massachusetts without ever crossing a state line.

Consider the disconnects: California's combined income and sales taxes are among the nation's highest, but the state's deficit is still about \$16 billion.

It's estimated that more than 2,000 upper-income Californians are leaving per week to flee high taxes and costly regulations, yet California wants to raise taxes even higher; its business climate already ranks near the bottom of most surveys. Its teachers are among the highest paid on average in the nation, but its public school students consistently test near the bottom of the nation in both math and science.

The state's public employees enjoy some of the nation's most generous pensions and benefits, but California's retirement systems are underfunded by about \$300 billion. The state's gas taxes – at over 49 cents per gallon – are among the highest in the nation, but its once unmatched freeways, like 101 and 99, for long stretches have degenerated

into potholed, clogged nightmares unchanged since the early 1960s.

The state wishes to borrow billions of dollars to develop high-speed rail, beginning with a little-traveled link between Fresno and Corcoran – a corridor already served by money-losing Amtrak. Apparently, coastal residents like the idea of European high-speed rail – as long as noisy and dirty construction does not begin in their backyards.

As gasoline prices soar, California chooses not to develop millions of barrels of untapped oil and even more natural gas off its shores and beneath its interior. Home to bankrupt green companies like Solyndra, California has mandated that a third of all the energy provided by state utilities soon must come from renewable energy sources – largely wind and solar, which presently provide about 11 percent of its electricity and almost none of its transportation fuel.

How to explain the seemingly inexplicable? There is no California,

which is a misnomer. There is no such state. Instead there are two radically different cultures and landscapes with little in common, each equally dysfunctional in quite different ways. Apart they are unworldly, together a disaster.

A postmodern narrow coastal corridor runs from San Diego to Berkeley, where the weather is ideal, the gentrified affluent make good money, and values are green and left-wing. This Shangri-La is juxtaposed to a vast impoverished interior, from the southern desert to the northern Central Valley, where life is becoming premodern.

On the coast, blue-chip universities like Cal Tech, Berkeley, Stanford and UCLA in pastoral landscapes train the world's doctors, lawyers, engineers and businesspeople. In the hot interior of blue-collar Sacramento, Turlock, Fresno and Bakersfield, well over half the incoming freshman in the California State University system must take remedial math and science classes.

In postmodern Palo Alto or Santa Monica, a small cottage costs more than \$1 million. Two hours away, in premodern and now-bankrupt Stockton, a bungalow the same size goes for less than \$100,000.

In the interior, unemployment in many areas peaks at over 15 percent. The theft of copper wire is reaching

epidemic proportions. Thousands of the shrinking middle class flee the interior for the coast or nearby no-income-tax states. To fathom the state's nearly unbelievable statistics – as the state population grew by 10 million from the mid-1980s to 2005, its number of Medicaid recipients increased by 7 million during that period; one-third of the nation's welfare recipients now reside in California – visit the state's hinterlands.

But in the Never-Never Land of Apple, Facebook, Google, Hollywood and the wine country, millions live in an idyllic paradise. Coastal Californians can afford to worry about the state's trivia – as their legislators seek to outlaw foie gras, shut down irrigation projects to save the 3-inch delta smelt, and allow children to have legally recognized multiple parents.

But in the less feel-good interior, crippling regulations curb timber, gas and oil, and farm production. For the most part, the rules are mandated by coastal utopians who have little idea where the gas for their imported cars comes from, or how the redwood is cut for their decks, or who grows the ingredients for their Mediterranean lunches of arugula, olive oil and pasta. On the coast, it's politically incorrect to talk of illegal immigration. In the interior, residents see first-hand the bankrupting effects on schools, courts

and health care when millions arrive illegally without English-language fluency or a high school diploma – and send back billions of dollars in



remittances to Mexico and other Latin American countries.

The drive from Fresno to Palo Alto takes three hours, but you might as well be rocketing from Earth to the moon.

*This article first appeared in the Publication Real Clear Politics on August 16, 2012. Dr. Hanson has been a speaker at COLAB events and appears on the Andy Caldwell Radio Show AM 1440.*

**JERRY WEINBERGER**

## **The Earth Is Not a God**

*The false theology of radical environmentalists*

February 23, 2015

PHOTO BY [CHRISTIAN](#)

[\*The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels\*](#), by Alex Epstein (Portfolio, 256 pp., \$27.95)

The seventeenth-century philosopher Sir Francis Bacon argued that the human mind had been squandered on superstition: metaphysical speculation, theological disputation, and violent political delusions. Bacon's greatest American disciple, Benjamin Franklin, agreed. It would be better, both believed, to focus on the conquest of man's common enemy: nature. Bacon and Franklin were right, but they misjudged superstition's staying power. Fast-forward to a conversation I had with the late Arne Naess, the Norwegian father of "deep ecology" and guru of the European Green movement. With a straight face, Naess told me that the eradication of



smallpox was a technological crime against nature. For Naess's deep ecology, the smallpox virus "deserved" and needed our

protection, despite having maimed, tortured, and killed millions of people.

In his sprightly recent book, *The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels*, Alex Epstein takes on Naess's American progeny—people such as Bill McKibben and David M. Graber—who have become influential opinion-makers on the environment, fossil fuels, and technology. Epstein asks us to imagine someone transported to the present from a virtually fossil fuels-free England in 1712, when the [Newcomen steam engine](#) was invented. What would that person think of our world, where 87 percent of all energy is produced from fossil fuels? In short, he'd be amazed to find clean drinking water, sanitation, enviable and improving air quality, long life, freedom from much disease, material prosperity, mobility, and leisure.

Epstein makes a compelling “big picture” case that the interaction of technology and fossil fuels provides everything we take for granted today. He also reminds us of earlier hysterical predictions of doom concerning fossil-fuel use. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, environmentalists such as Paul Ehrlich predicted mass starvation by the year 2000 because “world food production could not keep up with the galloping growth of population.” Flat wrong: the world's population doubled, and the average person today is far *better* fed than when the starvation apocalypse was announced. That's because the other apocalypse proclaimed back then—the depletion of oil and natural gas by 1992 and 1993, respectively—also proved wrong. Since 1980, worldwide usage of fossil fuels increased massively, yet both oil and natural gas supplies have more than doubled, and we have enough coal to last 3,000 years.

Epstein explains what the environmental doomsayers could not or would not see: first, that “fossil fuel energy is the fuel of

food”; and second, that the human mind is as powerful as Franklin and Bacon said it was. Humans discovered more fossil fuels, and technology used those fuels to industrialize food production. Moreover, fossil fuels enabled [Norman Borlaug's Green Revolution](#) in food science, which, unlike the political movement of that name, actually did something to improve world nutrition and relieve the suffering of millions. Ehrlich was also wrong about fossil-fuel pollution in the developed world. In the U.S., though the use of fossil fuels climbed steadily since 1970, emissions of pollutants decreased dramatically—thanks to technology.

Predictions of starvation, depletion, and pollution didn't pan out. What about global warming? Epstein's warming discussion should be required reading. He acknowledges the greenhouse effect of carbon dioxide, which can be demonstrated in a laboratory. But the effect is not linear; if it was, every new molecule of carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere would add a unit of heat equivalent to the one preceding it. Rather, the greenhouse effect is decelerating and logarithmic, which means that every additional molecule of carbon dioxide is *less potent* than the preceding one. Many theories of rapid global warming are based on speculative models of carbon dioxide interacting in positive feedback loops with increases in atmospheric water vapor. Most climate models are based on so-called “hindcasting,” coming up with explanatory schemes that predict what has happened in the past. There's nothing inherently wrong with this, since the only alternative would be clairvoyance—but predicting the past with a computer model is not the same as accurately predicting the future.

Most climate models, says Epstein, have consistently and dramatically [over-predicted](#)

mid-tropospheric global warming. We haven't "burned up," as McKibben predicted we would in 1989. Some suggest that the warming is occurring in the oceans; but mean sea levels around the world have been stable or declining for the last 100-plus years. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, atmospheric carbon-dioxide levels [have increased](#) by .03 percent to .04 percent and since 1850, temperatures have risen less than one degree Celsius (an increase that has happened in many [earlier time periods](#)). And for the past 15 years—a period of record emissions—there [has been little to no warming](#).

The warming models may prove correct in the long term, of course, so Epstein asks a reasonable question: What if it becomes clear that, in the next 100 years, the seas will rise by two feet and the globe will warm by 2 degrees Celsius, as predicted by many climate scientists? The answer is simple, though often ignored by climate alarmists: we'll adapt. Since the Industrial Revolution, and especially in the last 30 years, the human race has become progressively better at remediating the harmful effects of storms, heat, cold, floods, and so on. It's irresponsible, says Epstein, to trivialize the power of technology to solve the problems generated by fossil fuels. Much of that technology could consist of fossil-powered techniques to capture and recycle or sequester carbon dioxide.

Epstein exposes the profound misanthropy motivating much contemporary environmentalism. He quotes Graber: "Human happiness, and certainly human fecundity, are not as important as a wild and healthy planet . . . human beings have become a plague upon ourselves and upon the Earth . . . and until such time as Homo Sapiens should decide to rejoin nature, some of us can only hope for the right virus to come along." Alexis de Tocqueville noted

that democratic peoples have a tendency toward pantheism in religion: given their passion for equality, they come to think that *everything* is God. To radical Greens like Naess, Graber, and McKibben, everything is God, with one exception: the human being, whose "impact" spoils the "independent and mysterious" divine.

Why do hysterical warnings about sustainability and depletion persist despite the failure of the crackpot 1960s and 1970s predictions? Because the non-impact standard—conceiving of the environment as a loving but finite God—sees the environment as having a limited "carrying capacity" of gifts, such as arable land, water, and crucial minerals, in addition to fossil fuels. The more people on the planet, the closer we are to maxing out that carrying capacity, the thinking goes. Thus the urgent call, [made in 2010](#) by White House Office of Science and Technology director John P. Holdren, to "de-develop the United States." This notion of a finite carrying capacity discounts the powerful role of human ingenuity in *finding* natural resources. But the deeper problem is rooted in the divinization of the planet as something that simply is what it is.

Epstein argues brilliantly that the carrying-capacity superstition amounts to a "backward understanding of resources." The fact is that nature by itself gives us very few directly supplied energy resources: most resources "are not *taken* from nature, but *created* from nature," he maintains. Every raw material in nature is but a "potential resource, with unlimited potential to be to be rendered valuable by the human mind." Right now we have enough fossil fuels and nuclear power to last us thousands of years. "The amount of raw matter and energy on this planet," Epstein writes, "is so incomprehensibly vast that it is nonsensical to speculate about running out of it. Telling

us that there is only so much matter and energy to create resources from is like telling us that there is only so much galaxy to visit for the first time. True, but irrelevant.”

Bill McKibben says that the post-Ice Age Holocene period is the *only* climate that humans can live in. Epstein responds that the Holocene is an abstraction that summarizes “an incredible variety of climates that individuals lived in. And in practice, we can live in pretty much any of them if we are industrialized and pretty much none of them if we aren’t.” Until the Industrial Revolution, the climate was dangerous for all human beings. Since then, we have marched steadily toward “climate mastery.” Fewer people die today from the weather than at any time in history. “We don’t take a safe climate and make it dangerous,” according to Epstein. “We take a dangerous climate and make it safe.”

*Jerry Weinberger is University Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University.*

The non-impact standard is a pervasive but irrational prejudice—irrational because it’s a neo-pagan faith that the earth is in effect an uncreated God, and a prejudice because it’s asserted dogmatically by those who profess it and taken for granted by a public unaware of being in its grip. The default position on environmental matters is “respect” for the planet. It tilts opinion to focus only on the harms of fossil fuels and technology, not their benefits. The bottom line is always the same: humans should minimize their impact on nature.

Alex Epstein’s book is a breath of fresh air in this polluted opinion climate. *The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels* shows why fossil fuels are good for human flourishing in general and good for the world’s poor in particular. Epstein is a true friend of the earth—an earth inhabited and made better by human beings.



ENVIRO GODDESS DEPICTION