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Corrupt parties are selling us the wrong energy future

NINO COCCHIARELLA, Columnist
Sunday, July 2, 2006

Nowadays, everyone in politics seems to have an answer for our energy/climate crisis. Democrats and Republicans alike are trying to look informed, look proactive, but they're all too far from the real world. They're all corrupt. And now, along with millions from big energy, they're selling us the wrong future.

The hydrogen car: Now, this is amazing! These cars are driven just like one with an internal-combustion engine, but their only exhaust is water vapor. Wow. That's great - on paper.

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The real problem is on the other side of that hydrogen fueling station. Where do we get this kind of hydrogen fuel?

Thought you'd never ask!

Fossil fuels. Yup, fossil fuels yield hydrogen when heated and chemically reacted with steam. This process gives off practically the same amount of CO2 as the cars we have today. Plus, a fuel cell ends up using only 45 percent of the original energy used to make the hydrogen. So, here we have a whole lot of extra work, extra expense and no real ecological or energy gain.

Ethanol fuel: Ethanol is most commonly made from sugar cane or corn and is mixed with gasoline. In the United States, ethanol is produced from corn. Corn is not an energy-efficient product. In fact, it takes 29 percent more energy (from CO2-producing fossil fuels) to make the ethanol than the energy you get from it. And we are putting billions into this? But here's the thing that really gets me: If we can grow enough corn to fuel our SUVs, why are there people going hungry around the world?

Both of these still have the same problem. They are still dependent on finite natural resources that have to be dug up, pumped, piped, trucked in and burned (adding to our climate crisis).

They are subject to the same supply-and-demand market fluctuations. These two "green ideas" don't reduce CO2 gases any more than simply conserving.

They will not reduce our dependency on oil, and soon no one will be able to produce enough energy without blackening the sky or making us glow in the dark.

So what can we do?

We have to change. There's no way we can continue this feverish level of growth and consumption. Like a cancer eating away at a living body, we're devouring the planet's life, discharging toxic waste and killing each other for control, literally, of energy.

Technologies available today (solar, wind, electric cars, etc.) can produce and use electricity and are not dependent on a fossil fuel, commodity-based world. You don't have to fill up every week. You don't have to pay, pay, pay without end. Right now Asia and Europe are installing these technologies. Why not us?

Can you say "Big Oil"?

We need real leaders in Washington, not politicians beholden to big oil and the traditional energy companies (\$148 million to solar initiatives; \$6 billion for oil and gas subsidies). You see, they want

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Posted by hardestnose (Dan Coulter) on July 2, 2006 at 8:59 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Nino paints with a broad brush. (And this guy is on the editorial advisory board of the CPI) Regarding Democrat and Republican politicians, he says, "They're all corrupt." Come on, Nino, you know better than that. I will give you credit, though, for correctly pointing out the present impracticality with hydrogen and ethanol fuels. But, then you worry about glowing in the dark, yet I'm convinced that nuclear energy is clearly the best way to go. Then you again want to push the unsightly solar and wind mill concepts, which should be a limited part of the energy solution (if the wind blows and the sun shines). And you finish with your usual anti- "Big Oil" bias, your extreme environmental beliefs, and even the Iraq war. In one column you get in a plug about all your pet peeves. Can you write about anything else?

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