

California's 'war on suburbia' draws Obama's approval

by Randy Bright <http://www.tulsabeacon.com/?p=5982>

Wendell Cox always takes a beating from liberals when he expresses his opinions, and his recent essays regarding the state of California's dogged pursuit to ruin itself is no exception.

Cox is a visiting professor at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers in Paris, and was the author of the book *War on the Dream: How Anti-Sprawl Policy Threatens the Quality of Life*. Cox wrote two essays, "California Declares War on Suburbia" I and II in April of this year. He pointed out that California is adopting plans that will virtually eliminate the construction of single-family homes in suburban settings by the year 2035.

The reason? To save the planet from global warming.

Cox wrote, "Metropolitan area governments are adopting plans that would require most new housing to be built at 20 or more to the acre, which is at least five times the traditional quarter acre per house.

State and regional planners also seek to radically restructure urban areas, forcing much of the new hyperdensity development into narrowly confined quarters."

This would, as Cox points out, mean that "68 percent of new housing in Southern California by 2035 would be condos and apartments," despite the fact that census data shows that 80 percent of that region's housing increase between 2000 and 2010 were single-family homes, indicating a clear preference for less dense housing.

Planners believe that forcing people into a high-density housing will alleviate global warming by reducing the use of cars, but Cox points to a study that indicated that if the same number of miles were to be driven, reduction of (so-called) greenhouse gases could be reduced by downsizing cars, houses and other buildings.

California's "smart growth" policies of urban growth boundaries and construction moratoria have caused its home values to increase by two to three times the national average. As the recession causes wages to drop, many of California's residents simply cannot afford to live there anymore.

The result has been a mass exodus of about four million people over the past twenty years, and the state is, for all intents and purposes, bankrupt. Yet despite the obvious, government in California is still pursuing a fantastically expensive high-speed rail system that it can't afford and imposing higher income taxes, in addition to high-density housing policies.

Cox points out in another essay, "The Export Business in California (People and Jobs)," that the state lost a net 1.5 million residents (who moved to other states) between 2000 and 2009, and

that between 2000 and 2008 it lost 370,000 jobs that paid 25 percent or more of the average wage. California currently has the third highest unemployment rate and the second highest underemployment rate in the nation.

Why is all of this relevant to us in Oklahoma and the rest of the country? First, we need only to look at Europe to see a preview of what is coming. If California does not make drastic changes in its direction, it is going to go functionally broke; and when it does, the rest of the country is going to be forced by the federal government to bail them out.

Secondly, the Obama Administration's "Partnership for Sustainable Communities" will force the same economy-killing policies on the nation as California has placed on itself. According to an article by Joel Kotkin entitled "As California Collapses, Obama Follows Its Lead," he states, "from his first days in office, the president has held up California as a model state" and that "Obama regularly asserts that green jobs will play a crucial role in the future of the economy, but California, a trendsetter in the field, has yet to reap such benefits."

While California languishes in its debt and crumbling economy, Kotkin points out that it steadfastly refuses to exploit its vast oil and gas resources. "Texas has created 200,000 oil and gas jobs over the past decade; California has barely added 20,000... instead, California has forged ahead with ever-more extreme renewable energy mandates that have resulted in energy costs roughly 50 percent above the nation average..."

California is a classic case of how not to conduct business and form policy, yet according to grist.org, Obama is working to streamline efforts between DOT, HUD and the EPA to "take an all-hands-on-deck approach to smart growth," providing "federal support for localities that want to offer more walkable neighborhood and cleaner commuting options than the car".

When is smart growth not smart? When it produces the results that California has and when it will force the rest of the country to take the same path.

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