

Energy Is Now a Life and Death Matter

Imagine this scenario: pharmaceutical companies selling any drug they feel like, having no scientific testing to support their drug's efficacy, making any claim that's in their financial interest, and having no federal or state oversight (e.g. FDA) regarding any of these matters.

Would that make any sense at all? Would we consumers be healthier under that setup? Would you be surprised if bogus products proliferated? And despite platitudes like "consumer beware," exactly how would citizens possibly be able to assess the merits of these specious claims in the highly technical area of modern medicines?

Well that is EXACTLY the absurd situation we currently have with electrical energy.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rightly exists because health is a top priority — but energy and health now significantly overlap. For instance some energy pollutants (e.g. from coal power facilities) are known carcinogens. More importantly, many believe that the sum effect of these energy contaminants will result in the human species' demise. *What trumps that?*

Right now electrical energy profiteers can sell essentially any "alternative" source of energy they feel like, have no independent scientific testing to support it's efficacy, and make almost any assertion that's in their financial interest. Wind power is an example of this charade.

Since this fiasco exists due to the lack of adequate federal and state oversight, the best solution is to create the **EEA (Electrical Energy Administration)**, which would be given FDA-like responsibilities.

In short, companies wanting to sell an alternative that garnered tax breaks, incentives, etc., would be required to submit extensive, independent, objective scientific testing to verify that their alternative was at least equal to conventional electrical power sources. This is what's called using "Scientific Methodology." [This screening would also apply to any alternative that wanted to "count" in any Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).]

"Equal" would mean that an alternative electric power source must meet the six critical grid criteria **before** being released to the public. These are that it: **1)** provide large amounts of electricity; **2)** provide reliable and predictable electricity; **3)** provide dispatchable electricity; **4)** provide base load, load following, and/or peak load; **5)** be capable of being a compact facility near high-demand areas; and **6)** provide economical unsubsidized electricity. Additionally, alternative sources would have to submit proof that for every MWH of electricity they generated, that at least 8/10 MWH of fossil fuel generated electricity would be eliminated. [See "WindPowerFacts.Info" for more details.]

Again, what citizens need to know is that NONE of this is done today.

The EEA wouldn't do testing themselves, but rather would be a panel of independent scientific experts who would evaluate the evidence presented, and approve or reject proposed alternatives based on its technical, economic and environmental merits. Additionally the EEA would have the authority to subsequently see that there wasn't false advertising, and would be able to pull an alternative power source if new adverse information was revealed.

In an ideal world, the EEA would also take on the better aspects of the formerly successful Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). The EEA could be a perfect watchdog over the huge amount of economic stimulus dollars that will undoubtedly be going into the electrical energy sector.

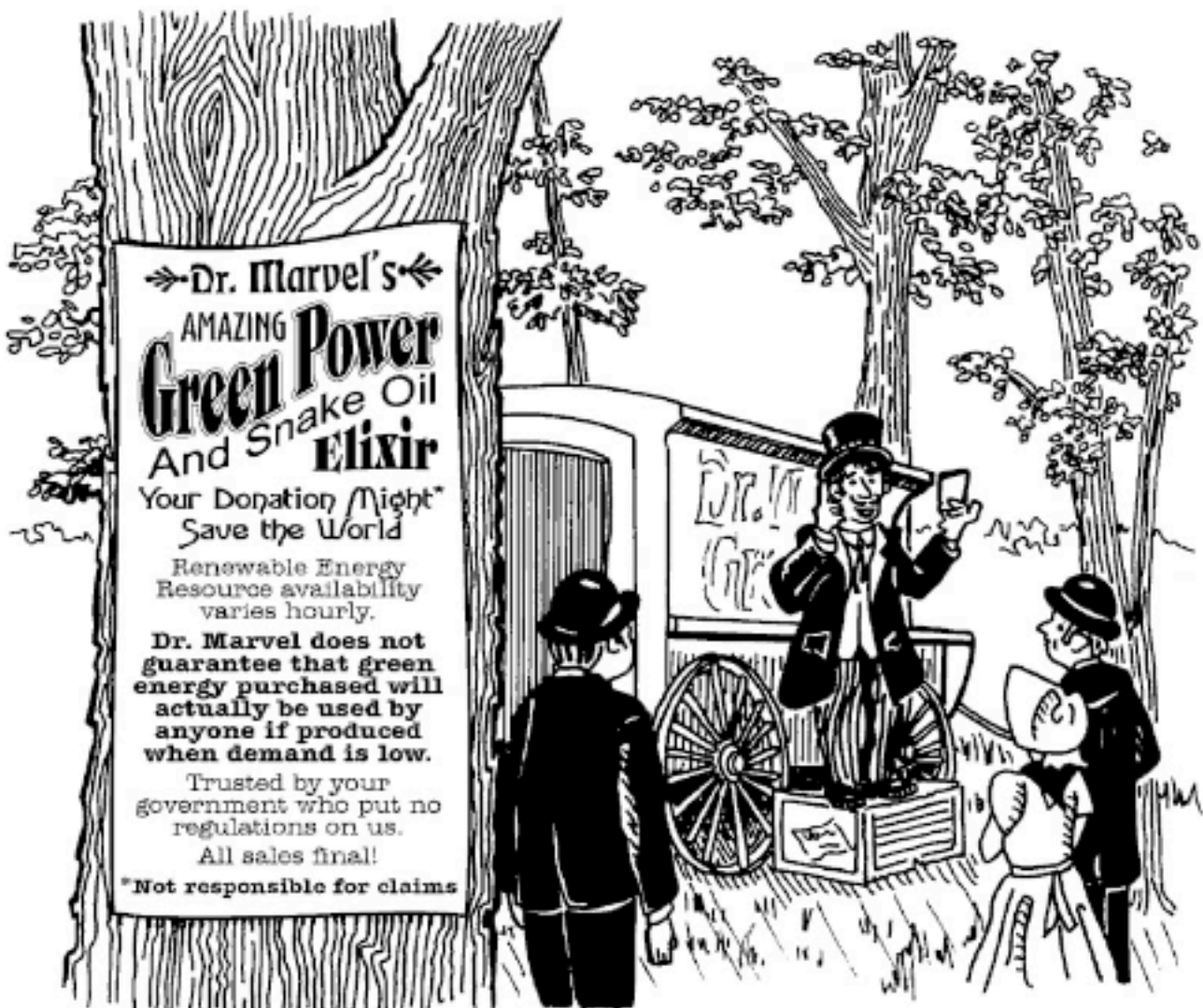
I realize that other federal agencies (e.g. DOE, FERC, EPA) handle various energy issues. That's actually part of the problem, though, as there are overlaps and serious gaps in this coverage. Most importantly, none have FDA-type authority over electrical energy sources.

Since I'm against bureaucratic growth, my recommendation is that for every person added to EEA that one person will be removed from both DOE and FERC. This will result in personnel cuts, so a net savings should be realized.

If done correctly (particularly learning from FDA and OTA experiences), the economic and environmental benefits to consumers, taxpayers, ratepayers, and the country as a whole would be profound.

The alternative is to continue down senseless street: essentially a completely unregulated wild west bonanza, where smooth talking lobbyists and their skills are peddling snake oil, where no claim is too outrageous, and over a trillion dollars will be sucked out of the pockets of us unsuspecting marks — with miniscule merits.

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