

The Green revolution hits a democratic barrier

The Green revolution is a top down revolution. It is invented and enforced by governments and big companies. Whilst a majority of people say they think climate change is an issue, a big majority do not rush to change their own lifestyles in line with the requests and requirements of big government and the green revolutionaries. Most people are happy with gas or oil boilers and or solid fuel fires to heat their homes, and most of us still have diesel or petrol vehicles. Meat eating is still popular and people like flying abroad for their holidays.

Governments have understood that it is easier to force big business to comply with their green agenda than it is to get the public to accept the current approved products and changed lifestyles of green transition. Car companies queue up to undermine their successful past investments in making petrol and diesel vehicles, and to condemn their past products. They do however expect large subsidies to help pay for the very costly investment in making batteries and electric alternatives, and now expect governments to force people to buy these products as not enough want to buy them from free choice. Electricity generators rush to put in wind turbines and solar farms so they can close their cost efficient and reliable gas and coal power stations, but expect priority rules for interruptible renewable power and price structures that favour the new investments. Steel companies plan expensive electric arc recycling works to replace steel production in blast furnaces, but they too need large subsidies to try to get the sums to work.

Governments and companies need to work on how they could create affordable reliable good products that help them in their aim of cutting CO₂. They are going to need much more buy in from consumers to achieve their ambitious targets. Consumers are making it very clear they expect the products to be better and cheaper than they currently are. Government does not have to subsidise or regulate to get people to buy mobile phones or to switch to on line shopping, as those changes are popular with customers at market prices without intervention. Sales of electric vehicles to individual buyers are struggling in many places without large subsidies. Hertz has recently announced difficulties in renting out EVs and decided to sell one third of its present EV fleet to get more in line with public demand.

Worse still for governments and political parties that are keen on the drive to net zero is the growing evidence that parties in government that go too far in forcing unpopular net zero changes lose elections. The Netherlands government lost heavily in the last election because it was trying to cut down animal husbandry and meat eating faster than the public thought acceptable. President Macron's party has had some bruising encounters with public opinion over the level of fossil fuel taxes and diesel prices. The original gilets jaunes protests were about energy taxes which forced a climb down. Recently Macron has had to stop further taxes on agricultural diesel in the face of angry farmers.

When across Europe and the UK fossil fuel energy prices soared, doing the governments' work for them forcing less use, governments rightly saw the need to cushion people from the price impact on this essential. Germany has given into pressure to delay the ending of new diesel and petrol cars. In the US Presidential Candidate Trump is ahead of President Biden in the polls , His policy of withdrawing from the Paris climate change treaty and targets compared to Biden who wants to go further faster is clearly no barrier to his possible victory and may be helping him. Many people do not want to be told by government how to heat their homes, what car to buy, and where to have their holiday.