

## SPECIAL REPORT

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## THE ASSAULT ON CARS

Try to name another consumer product that Americans have come to rely on more than the automobile. Without our cars, there would be no freedom to travel, no freedom to earn a living and no freedom to visit loved ones. In short, America as we have come to know it would not exist without the automobile. And that's just how environmental extremists would like to see it-- a nation where private automobile ownership is not allowed.

It's more than a bit ironic that as America observes the 100th anniversary of the automobile, we have a White House that is committed to taking your car away from you. The government agency charged by Bill Clinton with doing the dirty work is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Like all bureaucrats, the folks in charge of EPA hate freedom like the devil hates holy water. In fact, a bureaucrat's entire mission in life is to destroy freedom. That's why bureaucrats always seek to control your way of life.

Still, you can't control someone who has the freedom to get in a car and go wherever he or she pleases. For the EPA bureaucrat there's a simple solution: confiscate your automobile and eliminate a huge measure of the personal freedom you enjoy. So far so good. But even an environmental bureaucrat needs some justification to take your car away. One of Clinton's regional EPA Administrators (William Yellowtail) puts it this way: "Cleaning up cars and the roads is only half the solution. . . *the much more difficult half involves getting people out of their cars.*"

Naturally, environmental extremists have been only too happy to provide the necessary justification with questionable science and so-called evidence that doesn't hold water. It matters not at all that due to advances in technology, today's cars actually contribute very little to air pollution. What does matter is that Bill Clinton owes a huge political debt to the Green lobby and they expect to be paid back.

Soon after Clinton was elected, pay-back time began. EPA announced strict enforcement of near impossible emission standards mandated by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Any state that did not comply would stand to lose millions of dollars in federal highway funds-- a powerful incentive for states to toe the line. Not only that, but EPA wanted to make sure states complied with the new rules in a manner dictated by Washington.

To insure the outcome, EPA favors an emissions testing system so strict that at least 50% of cars four years old or older are guaranteed to fail it. And NEARLY ALL cars ten years or older would fail. It's no accident these failure rates are so high. The testing equipment (developed by an Arizona company called Envirotest Systems) recreates driving conditions by strapping the car to a treadmill-type device. Traditional methods of testing exhaust were performed with the car in neutral or park. Vehicles more than four years old have enough wear and tear to increase their emissions just enough to fail the very strict EPA standards.

#### New Jersey, California Knuckle Under; Is Your State (and Car) Next?

New Jersey passed a law in 1995 mandating the strict emission levels demanded by the EPA. If you live in New Jersey and your car fails the test, the state can reject the registration on that car when it comes up for renewal. But the worst thing may very well be this. Let's say you cannot afford the \$700 or so it will cost to bring the car into compliance. In New Jersey it is illegal to keep an unregistered vehicle-- even if it remains parked in the driveway of a private home. Since an unregistered car is considered an illegal object, the state has the authority to confiscate the car outright and sell it for scrap.

Literally millions of roadworthy vehicles will be subject to government confiscation should anything like the New Jersey law be implemented in the other 49 states. Can you afford to buy a brand-new car every two or three years? If not, then you can't afford to have the New Jersey nightmare repeated in your state. But that's the problem. If Clinton's EPA gets its way, the New Jersey auto emissions test will be forced on every American driver. In fact, California is preparing laws even worse than the one in New Jersey. These guys are like the aliens in the big hit movie "Independence Day." The intent of both is very clear: take no prisoners.

Whether or not it was intended, centralized auto emissions testing is going to make some people very rich. Yes, "saving the environment" has become big business. The standardized test equipment alone will cost states hundreds of millions of dollars. In fact, the contract to supply the equipment has been aggressively pur-

sued by Envirotest Systems, and its lobbyists in New Jersey and other states. Two of the New Jersey lobbyists hired by Envirotest were at one time top aides to New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman-- herself a strong supporter of the state's emission test law. Apparently, the New Jersey media has been out to lunch in its investigating this obvious conflict of interest.

Just to give you an idea of how much money is at stake, consider what recently happened in Pennsylvania. Envirotest Systems sued Pennsylvania when the state legislature decided to back out of a contract with Envirotest to supply the state's emission test equipment. Pennsylvania settled the Envirotest lawsuit for \$145 million. If Envirotest can get \$145 million just for settling a lawsuit, it would be reasonable to expect that they'll collect at least that much in other states where the testing is going forward-- and probably a lot more.

EPA bureaucrats and Envirotest Systems are not the only ones who stand to be the big winners under auto confiscation. Scratch the surface and you also find the hidden hand of the United Nations. Private automobile ownership was condemned in the recent Department of Housing and Urban Development's report to the U.N. Habitat II summit. It is also a major plank in the U.N. Biodiversity Treaty that is being illegally implemented by the Clinton administration. And President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development (another creature of the U.N.) would love nothing more than to consign your car to the automotive scrap heap.

Maybe the biggest scandal of all is that automobile confiscation will be carried out in the name of "environmental protection." But this issue has nothing at all to do with air quality. It is about a powerful special interest group of environmental extremists who want to force you out of your car in order to make it easier for the state to control you and dictate your actions. It is about a big company looking to corner the market and cash in big time. Yes, this is the real "Green" agenda. What a sick joke. Which color of Green do you suppose is more important? The color of the grass and the trees they claim to protect so selflessly or is it the color of the money they stand to rake in hand over fist? Either way, I happen to be one of those quaint American citizens who believes you can't put a price on freedom. This whole fight is about saving our way of life. It's a fight we will lose unless a lot of people wake up. Fast. **S**