

HOW TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - BY TOM DEWEESE

For the past 15 years my efforts against Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development have been single-minded – get the message out to tell people about what it is and why it is dangerous to our way of life. All of our materials, special reports, hand outs, speeches, radio and television interviews, and DVDs have been created for that purpose.

However, we have had so much success over the past year in getting that message out that we are now faced with a new problem. People are getting the message. They know what the problem is. So they are asking the next logical question – how do we fight back? It sounds like an easy question to be put to someone like me who has worked on the issue and sounded the alarm for so long. But in fact, actually having success in organizing people to fight Sustainable Development in their local communities is a very new thing.

I could blow smoke at them and pretend I know the answer. That would just be sending lambs to the slaughter. It's easy to stand in front of a friendly audience and dazzle them with facts and figures, get them riled and then tell them to charge down to city council as I make a quick exit from town. And I have done that many times. The truth is, however, I have never stood in front of city councils or county commissions and endured their sarcasm as I tried to question their policies or explain where it comes from.

So, now, as more and more call my office asking what to do next, I felt it was vital that I learn firsthand how to fight back and then share that experience to make our fight more effective and eventually successful in stopping Sustainable Development. That's what I've been doing in my local community for the past five months. I've also been traveling across the state of Virginia, working with local activists in their communities and learning from them. Recently, I joined fellow Virginia activist Donna Holt as we presented the case against sustainable development to the staff of Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli. We have also been successful so far in working with the Virginia legislature to move a bill that will end mandatory comprehensive development plans in local communities. The sustainabilists have been using legislation passed in Virginia in 2007 as an effective weapon to force the policy on local communities. It hasn't passed yet, but we forced it out of committee over the objections of the Virginia Speaker of the House. That alone was a victory in that it started debate on the issue, something that has been missing at the state level. Such legislative action can serve as a model for legislators around the nation.

The fight has only begun, but I and these fellow activists are learning a lot. So, to help all of the movement to take on the fight in their community, I want to share what we've learned so far.

Be Aware of the World in Which Your Elected Officials Live

To begin the effort to fight back against Sustainable Development, it is vital to first understand the massive structure you are facing. You need to know who the players are and you need to understand the political world your officials are operating in. This may help you to understand that they aren't all evil globalists, but, perhaps, good people who are surrounded by powers that won't let them see the reality of the policies they are helping to implement. I'm certainly not making excuses for them, but before you rush in and start yelling about their enforcing UN policies on the community, here are some things you should consider.

In most communities, your mayor, city council members, and county commissioners are automatically members of national organizations like the National Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, and the national associations for city council members, and the same for commissioners. Those in the state government also have

the National Governors Association and state legislators have their national organization. For the past 15 years or more, each and every one of these national organizations has been promoting Sustainable Development. The National Mayors Conference and the Governors Association have been leaders in this agenda, many times working directly with UN organizations to promote the policy. This is the message your local elected leaders hear – from the podium; from fellow officials from other communities; from “experts” they’ve been told to respect; in committee meetings; from dinner speakers; from literature they are given at such meetings. They are told of legislation that will be soon be implemented, and they are even provided sample legislation to introduce in their communities.

There is also a second horde involved in the sustainablist invasion: state and federal agency officials including EPA agents, air and water quality agents, Interior Department officials, HUD officials, energy officials, Commerce Department officials, and on and on – all targeting your locally elected officials with policy, money, regulations, reports, special planning boards, meetings, and conferences, all promoting the exact same agenda.

And don’t forget the news media, both locally and nationally, is also promoting the Sustainablist agenda and attacking anyone not going along, and is ready to quickly use the “extremist” label. The message is clear: Sustainable Development is reality – it is politically correct, necessary, unquestionable – and it has consensus.

Is your head spinning yet? Think of the effect all of this has on a poor local official who just thought he would run for office and serve his community. This is his reality. This is what he thinks government is supposed to be because, after all, everyone he is dealing with says so.

Now, as he is surrounded by all of these important, powerful folks, along comes a local citizen who tells him that some guy named Tom DeWeese says all of these programs are from the UN and are taking away our liberty. Who? He said what? Come on, I’m not doing that. And I don’t have time to talk about it. I have another meeting to go to.

If we are going to successfully fight Agenda 21, it is vitally important that we all recognize this reality as we plan to deal with it and defeat it. With that in mind, I offer the following ideas.

How to Fight Back

Research: Don’t even begin to open up a fight until you know certain details. First, who are the players in your community? What privately funded “stakeholder” groups are there? What is their agenda? What other communities have they operated in? What projects? What results? Who are their members in your community? Are they residents or did they come from “out of town?” (That could prove to be valuable information later in the fight). Finding this information may be the hardest of your efforts. They like to operate out of the spotlight. It’s not likely that the town will carry official documentation of who it is working with. It probably will require that you attend lots of meetings and hearings. Take note of who is there and their role. Do this quietly. Don’t announce to the community what you are doing. Don’t make yourselves a target. You may have to ask questions and that may raise some eyebrows. But stay out of the way as much as possible.

Second, get all the details on the plans your community is working on. Has there already been legislation passed? Most of this information can be found on the town website. Knowing this information will help you put together a plan of action. Once you have it, you can begin to take your fight public.

With the information you have gathered, begin to examine the effect the policies will have on the community and its residents. Find who the victims of the legislation may be. This will be of great value as you confront city council. People understand victim stories – especially if it is them. It is the best way to undermine the process.

You will find that Conservation Easements have raised taxes as much of the county land is removed from the tax rolls – someone has to make up for the lost revenue and the payment of easements. Are “stakeholder” groups helping to get landowners to sign up for the easements – and if so – do they get any kind of kickbacks? Who are getting the easements? You may find the rich land owners have found a great loophole to cut their own property taxes as the middle class pays for it.

Does the community plan call for reduction of energy use? If so, look for calls for energy audits and taxes on energy use. The audits mean that the government has set a goal to reduce energy use. It will follow that government agents are going to come into your home to inspect your energy use. Then they are going to tell you what must be done in your home to cut usage. That will cost you money. Don’t fall for the line that it is all voluntary – to help you save money. They haven’t gone to this much trouble to be ignored. Regulations are not voluntary.

These are just a couple of examples of what to look for as you do your research. There are many more, including meters on wells to control water use, smart meters on your thermostat to take away your control of your thermostat; non-elected boards and councils to control local development and implement smart growth, leading to population growth; Public/Private Partnerships with local and large corporations to “go Green”; creation of open space; pushing back live stock from streams; enforcing sustainable farming methods that restrict energy and water use in farming practices; and much more. It all leads to higher costs and shortages, in the name of environmental protection and conservation.

Your goal is to stop Sustainable Development in your community. That means to stop the creation of non-elected regional government councils that are difficult to hold accountable. It means to stop local governments from taking state and federal grants that come with massive strings attached to enforce compliance. And it means you must succeed in removing outsider organizations and Stakeholder groups that are pressuring your elected officials to do their bidding.

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