

A CEO With A Spine

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The New York Coal Trade Association, headquartered in New York City, recently held its 94th annual banquet and meeting at the New York Hilton. One of the guest speakers was Bob Murray, founder and CEO of Murray Energy Corporation and probably one of the few CEOs brave enough to challenge the militant climate control movement that threatens the future of America's economy. In his speech, he dared to say that he regards Al Gore as the shaman of global doom and gloom. He is not joking when he says, "He is more dangerous than his global warming."

Unlike many heads of corporations who are taking their companies on that long green mile and caving in to the demands of environmental militants, Mr. Murray is fighting tooth and nail for what he says is, "the little guy that nobody cares about."

"Some wealthy elitists in our country," he told the audience, "who cannot tell fact from fiction, can afford an Olympian detachment from the impacts of draconian climate change policy. For them, the jobs and dreams destroyed as a result will be nothing more than statistics and the cares of other people. These consequences are abstractions to them, but they are not to me, as I can name many of the thousands of the American citizens whose lives will be destroyed by these elitists' ill-conceived 'global goofiness' campaigns."

Mr. Murray was a coal miner in Ohio who survived two mining accidents and built funds from a mortgaged house into a private coal mining company with more than 3,000 employees. He expresses concern about the proposals in Congress that will ration the use of coal, warning of much worse adverse consequences to Americans than those experienced after the 1990 amendment of the Clean Air Act.

Mr. Murray told me that he had seen the effect of the drastic reductions in coal production, and the wrenching impact on hundreds of communities, as a result of that legislation. In Ohio alone, from 1990 to 2005, about 118 mines were shut down, costing more than 36,000 primary and secondary jobs. These impacted areas have spent years recovering, and some never will. He spoke of the families that broke up, many lost homes, and some were impoverished, because of legislation that the environmentalists call a "success."

"I don't need a computer graphic like in Gore's movie, to learn about this havoc," he told me, "I lived it and saw it firsthand."

To Mr. Murray, so-called "global warming" is a human issue, not just an environmental one. In his speech, Murray said, "The unfolding debate over atmospheric warming in the Congress, the news media, and by the pundits has been skewed and totally one-sided, in that they have been preoccupied, speculative environmental disasters of climate change."

Mr. Murray told me that the Democrats had tried to stop his scheduled testimony on March 20 before the House Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee, titled "Toward a Clean Energy Future: Energy Policy and Climate Change on Public Lands." But after Mr. Murray was interviewed by Bloomberg News and by the Wall Street Journal, they relented. The chairman refused to hear his testimony and left Rep. Patrick Kennedy, a Democrat of Rhode Island, in charge.

In his testimony, Mr. Murray explained: "America is dependent on our coal because it is abundant, with some of our best deposits located on public lands; it is affordable; and it is critical to our energy

security to protect all Americans from the hostile and unstable governments from which much of our country's energy is currently imported."

Right now about 52% of the country's electricity is generated by coal. In the coastal cities we tend to forget about that because we get most of our electricity from oil, natural gas, and nuclear power plants. But the farms that grow our food and many other industries around the country can't afford these more expensive sources of energy. Manufacturers will outsource jobs to foreign countries that will not subscribe to emission caps and controls. China is building 50 new coal-fired power plants, and Beijing has stated it will not agree to mandatory emission constraints in the post-2012 Kyoto treaty. Why are we being so stupid about this issue?

The irony is that these caps and controls will do little to affect climate. Timothy Ball, a renowned environmental consultant, testified before the committee that global warming is more likely to be caused by sun spots rather than human activity. Mr. Murray's passion for saving the "little guy" is truly admirable. Too bad that fervor is completely absent in Congress.

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