

# Fisker Karma – Another Obama Boondoggle

☒ Everyone's probably heard of Solyndra but how many of you have heard of the Fisker Corporation?

Two years ago, Henrik Fisker got \$529,000,000 (yes, that's \$529 million) in government loan guarantees to start up his electric car company. All the money hasn't circled the bowl yet, but I'm predicting it will.

Let's start off with the price of this "green" car. Guess how much they cost.

Higher...higher...you're getting warm....\$97,000.00!

According to our ever brilliant Vice-President Joe Biden, spending \$529 million was seed money "that will return back to the American consumer in billions and billions and billions of dollars in good new jobs." That's a lot of billions. On the other hand, an article in Forbes didn't see it that way. At the same time, it was announced that Fisker was to re-open a former GM plant in Delaware for the less-expensive "Nina project." Delaware's Council on Development Finance approved a \$12.5 million loan which would become a grant if Fisker spent at least \$175 million renovating the old GM facility and showed that it created 2,495 jobs in five years.

Anyway, it turns out that Mr. Fisker decided to build the car not in the U.S. even though there are a countless number of auto workers in need of jobs. Instead, 500 assembly jobs were created in Finland! Yes, the car is being manufactured 4,000 miles away on our dime.

Fisker's plan was to build a cheaper, compact car in the United States beginning in 2013.

Well, it looks like there's already a problem with the luxury model. All 239 cars have been recalled because of a potential fire hazard.

There are recalls all the time by automobile companies but this is one helluva way to start a new company – with the help of U.S. taxpayers!

Nevertheless, our government is hellbent on shoving "green" technology down our throats whether we like it or not.

Now we're learning that Fisker is laying off 26 workers at the GM plant in Wilmington and another 40 contractors and employees working on design and development of the Karma in California.

The car's been delayed because of "regulatory delays" and "battery pack problems" which prompted a voluntary safety recall by Fisker.

"The Energy Department made loan availability for the Nina project contingent on Fisker meeting development and sales milestones for the Karma, which the company missed. Fisker is now negotiating with the DOE to modify the loan agreement so funds for that project can be released."

I read yet another story about a fire badly damaging the home of a new Fisker Karma owner, and the 60-day old electric car was the source of the blaze, according to the Fort Bend County, Texas, chief fire investigator Robert Baker. Fisker denies this of course.

In March, another Karma broke down in the middle of a Consumer Reports road test, a failure that Fisker later said was due to a faulty battery.

Yet another Fisker Karma went up in flames recently near Palo Alto, CA.

This is yet another one of President Obama's boondoggles he'd sooner sweep under the carpet than have it widely reported on

this year. So what about those billions and billions and billions of dollars Vice President Biden was expecting to see and the 2,495 jobs Delaware was hoping to see? Never happened; never will.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

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## Go Green, Pay More Green

✘ Earlier in the year, we received a letter from our City Manager and City Councilmember which included our “first personalized Home Energy Report.” The report compares our energy usage compared to our neighbors’.

Our “most” efficient neighbors are graphed in green, “all” neighbors are graphed in orange and we’re graphed in, oh my God! black! Yes, we spend 24% more electricity than our neighbors! We’re definitely horrible people. The only thing missing was the skull and crossbones insignia on the envelope to let our letter carrier know how despicable we really are.

I find this “big brother” mentality intrusive and truly disgusting.

When this program was initiated, our city government was teetering on bankruptcy so I’m wondering why the City Manager and City Councilmember aren’t focusing more of their attention on the City’s problems rather than peeping through my windows to see if I’m switching off a light? I run a fiscally-sound home and don’t need the government, on any level, to tell me how to run it.

How dare they audit my energy use and start comparing my usage to others? As long as I pay my bill each and every month,

it's no one's business how much electricity I use. When the government starts giving me money to pay my utilities, then it has the right to question how efficiently I'm using that money. Until then, I'd appreciate it if everyone would stop looking over my shoulder.

My home is being compared to approximately 100 occupied, nearby homes that are similar in size to mine. Other than square footage, it doesn't look as if any other factors were considered. I'm home all day. My computer, fax, scanner, printers and answering machine are vital to my work. Are the neighbors to whom I'm being compared work from home? Are they commuting to work in Seattle by using public transportation like my husband has for the last 16 years? Or are they commuting in gas-guzzling vehicles? Or are they leaving behind empty homes during the week?

This program is funded by Puget Sound Energy and a grant awarded to my Island by the Washington State Department of Commerce "to help provide innovative energy-saving solutions to local communities." It's a three-year community-wide effort designed to help island homeowners and businesses reduce energy use and costs. Sounds noble and good, right?

In Seattle, the cost of water is going up. Why, you ask? Because folks are using less of it. The utility is facing declining revenue as water usage continues to fall with the poor economy, successive cold summers and successful conservation efforts.

So what happens when we here on the Island achieve these innovative energy-saving solutions? Well, if we go the same route as Seattle did, the rates will go up because we're using less energy.

Supply and demand doesn't seem to apply. As someone in Seattle wrote, "demand for your product goes up, prices go up. Demand for your product goes down, prices go up."

My brother and sister-in-law, who live in Los Angeles, are the most environmentally-conscious people I know and they've done everything possible to be as "green" as they can be. They've installed water-saving toilets, two very expensive on-demand water heaters, a water-saving clothes washer and they wash all dishes by hand. They use environmentally-safe detergents and line dry and only use their gas clothes dryer when absolutely necessary. And what do they get for their awareness and environmental responsibility? Higher utility prices!

Seems as if you're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

Author's website: <http://www.idontgetit.us>

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## When Green Was Just a Lovely Color

☒ There was a time when I heard the word "green" and I'd think immediately of grass, trees, St. Patrick's Day and candies I usually didn't like. Now, when I hear the word "green," I immediately cringe.

I cringe because I'm sure that the reference to "green" is going to refer to some new-fangled idea which is intended to save hissing cockroaches or giant earthworms somewhere in the world but will not improve my life one iota.

Don't get me wrong. I'm all for saving the environment. Before I bought a used SUV which gets pretty good mileage, I drove a used 1990 Honda Accord for 15 years and my husband is very proud to tool around the island in his 1995 Geo Metro. I

defy anyone to get better mileage than he does in what he endearingly calls his "chick magnet." It is red after all.

We actually recycle more than throw out and we feed the wildlife with scraps from the table and use biodegradable garbage bags. I schlep my reusable cloth shopping bags to the supermarket and donate lots of stuff to Goodwill instead of throwing things away.

Overall, I think we do our part. I'm sure to some, we don't do enough. But, hey, what can I say.

Of course, we should have cleaner air to breathe; who doesn't want that? But I have to say that some "green" products make you stop and wonder, "is this really worth it?"

For example, last year I read an article about some synthetic reusable shopping bags. After a "local environmental group" found potentially unsafe levels of lead in them, Rochester-based Wegman's chain of 77 stores in several Eastern states stopped selling two styles of these bags but said that the 750,000 bags already sold did not pose a health threat. That's reassuring. The problem comes when the bags wear out and their eventual disposal will cause the toxins in them to accumulate in landfills and create an environmental hazard.

I guess Sen. Charles Schumer, a New York democrat, doesn't have enough to do because he called on the FDA to open an investigation into the shopping bags. (This is the same Senator who urged the FDA to force the makers of Four Loko to remove caffeine from its alcoholic drink.)

Did you know that there was a 1992 law that regulates our showerheads? I didn't but apparently the law says that a showerhead can deliver no more than 2.5 gallons per minute at a flowing water pressure of 80 pounds per square inch. But now the Department of Energy is saying that a showerhead may incorporate "one or more sprays, nozzles or openings" which are interpreted to mean that all nozzles count as a single

showerhead and could be deemed noncompliant.

The DOE, not surprisingly, says “when you waste water, you waste energy.” Barbara Higgins, Executive Director of the Plumbing Manufacturers Institute says “one person’s waste is another person’s therapeutic use of water.”

By 2014, the way we light our homes will change forever. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, thanks to GOP Rep. Fred Upton and Dem. Rep. Jane Harman, imposes restrictions on energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and will phase out incandescent light bulbs in favor of lower-wattage, energy-saving bulbs. One of the replacements will be a CFL (compact fluorescent light bulb) which works when electric current energizes argon and mercury vapor, which, in turn, causes a phosphor coating inside the bulb to emit light. Yikes, mercury? Even though the amount is not hazardous to the inhabitants of a home, if a bulb breaks it has to be disposed of in a very specific way. An accumulation of broken bulbs in a landfill definitely would cause a problem. So we solve a non-lethal problem with a lethal problem. What I find interesting is if Rep. Upton is so proud of this legislation, why doesn’t it appear as part of his achievements on his website?

So now, after I stop cringing when I hear the word “green,” I think, “Ok, how’s the government going to intrude on me today? What’s next? I’m already restricted to the type of light bulbs, refrigerators, toilets and showerheads I can purchase, what’s next?”

I think Sen. Rand Paul summed it beautifully during his questioning at an Energy & Natural Resources Committee meeting about the notion of “pro-choice.” He believed that most officials would probably be pro-choice when it came to abortion but not pro-choice when it came to the consumer’s right to choose what’s best for his household.

When I think of Al Gore's "green" money-making machine, and President Obama's pledge to spend \$150 billion over ten years to promote "green technologies," "green" still means one thing – "MONEY" and a lot of people will make a lot of it under the guise of saving the planet.

I don't get it, but I probably should.