

===

[00:00:00]

Introduction

this massive push for solar and wind has nothing to do with climate change. It has everything to do with the tax credits.

And the companies that are pushing for these projects are after one thing and one thing only. And that is the money.

His Docuseries on Energy

My guest today is Robert Bryce. And Robert, what's happening? Uh, what isn't happening, Tom? You know, I, I do a lot of public speaking and I'll go into these, you know, events and I'll say, well, I don't know what I'm going to talk about. There's not much happening in energy and power these days.

Um, uh, what is happening? Well, I have a new docu series out. It's called Juice, Power, Politics, and the Grid. We put it out in late January. I'm very proud of it. We've had now. Close to 750, 000 downloads. It's a five part docuseries. Uh, what are we doing? We're spotlighting the importance of the electric grid, why it's been fragilized and what we need to do to fix it and why it's being fragilized.

And in very few words is we're incenting the wrong kind of generation. We're adding a lot of weather dependent generation. [00:01:00] Um, and what do we need to do to fix it? We need weather resistant generation. And if we're going to be serious about Uh, the future, we should get serious about nuclear energy. So, uh, that's it in a nutshell, five parts, pro nuclear, uh, each episode about 20 minutes.

Um, I'm really proud of it. My colleague Tyson Culver directed it, produced it, did a great job and, uh, we're, we're giving it away. It's free. Uh, juicetheseries. com. Did I mention juicetheseries. com? Tom, I hope I mentioned juicetheseries. com. And that is on YouTube. Is it anywhere else too besides on your website?

Uh, it's all, well, Juiced series leaks directly to YouTube, but that's the easiest way to find it. Yes, but YouTube is, is where we're giving it away. Okay.

The Texas Blackout: A Catalyst for Change

And the opening episode is about the Texas blackout. Right? I watched that one. Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Uh, and that was the motivation for us to do this project was that, um, my colleague Tyson and Culver and I both got blacked out in Austin here, uh, in 2021.

And after the blackout, we started [00:02:00] understanding and Bill Magnus from ERCOT, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, then a few days later said that the whole grid in Texas came within four or five minutes of complete shutdown. Well, had that happened, tens of thousands of people would have died, and it would have been absolutely catastrophic.

And, um, so the more we looked into it, The more we realized that, well, there's a real story to be told here, and we were the ones to help tell it. So, uh, we were able to, you know, get support from different people. And, uh, uh, three years later, finally we got the project done. And, uh, I'm very proud of it.

We've had great reviews, we've had a lot of, uh, traction on the internet, and, um, and I'm, I'm, I really am hoping our objective with this is to get people to understand the fragility of the grid and understand why it's being undermined, and to pay attention to our mo, what I call the mother network, our most important energy network.

Exploring the Vulnerabilities of the Grid and Solutions

So do you have any elevator pitch or any short explanation of what you think the causes were of that 2021 blackout? Well, sure. The one problem was that it was just [00:03:00] insanely cold, right? This is obvious, right? You know, I have the steel trap mind for the blatantly obvious, Tom, but, um, so you had a lot of freeze ups of infrastructure of all kinds.

But fundamentally, we had if you're gonna boil it down, the Texas grid was too reliant on natural gas and too reliant on weather dependent generation. Uh, you know, my line on, you know, right after the freeze, you know, the wind and solar crowd said, Oh, don't blame wind and solar. Well, the reality is when when the grid was on the verge of collapse, wind and solar went to Cancun with Ted Cruz.

They weren't available. Um, and it's absolutely true as well that a lot of gas infrastructure froze up and some of that was and some of the gas infrastructure that was supposed to be delivering gas couldn't because it didn't have enough power. So the other big theme that's

often ignored in the freeze of winter storm Uri was that the natural gas grid and the electric grid have become very much interdependent and because of federal regulations in many [00:04:00] cases.

Natural gas producers were using electric pumps to move their gas to the power plants, but then to save power and Ercot and other pla uh, and other, uh, the, the, the grid operator cut off electricity to the natural gas power, uh, to the natural gas plants. So, you know, it, it, it revealed the many vulnerabilities in the grid in Texas, and those same vulnerabilities are obvious all across the country.

So if the exact same weather or worse happens next winter, is Texas ready for it or is this looming again to happen again? Well, of course it could happen again. Um, you know, just because we narrowly averted, you know, blackouts or brownouts in January of this year. But again, during the times when power demand was peaking and what we're seeing now in Texas and across the country because of, uh, heat pumps and the rest of it, a lot of the states now are becoming winter peaking states, right?

That we used to have. Peak power demand in the summers, and now we're going to a situation where winter [00:05:00] peaking is much more common. And during those peak times here in, in January in Austin, again, wind and solar were not available. And so we had to have that thermal generation.

The Importance of Diverse Energy Sources

And I guess if there's one punchline here, Amidst all of this, you know, we have these massive incentives now at the federal level and many cases in state and local levels to push wind and solar into the system.

But just because you're adding wind and solar doesn't mean you can do without the traditional forms of generation, the thermal generation, the coal plants, natural gas, nuclear plants, you have to have those. For the times when the wind isn't blowing and the sun isn't shining. So wasn't there a plan by Berkshire Hathaway, maybe, that they had this, uh, solution and, uh, if the bad weather comes back, that, uh, the power's not going to go out?

Is that happening or no? There were a lot of people who came to the table and said, Hey, we have a solution. Berkshire Hathaway wanted something like ten billion dollars. Um, and they were going to install a set of generators around the state and I don't know what the status of that is. I think it was rejected in the [00:06:00] early phases, but there is still a lot of focus on the grid in Texas legislature at the Texas Public Utility Commission about how we assure reliability.

Addressing the Grid's Reliability and Future Challenges

And that's the other key point of our docuseries. Tom is that. Ultimately, in what we learned after ERCOT and the near disaster in ERCOT was that no one is responsible for reliability, right? And because, well, what happened? Well, the market failed. Well, why did the market fail? Well, it was badly designed.

Well, who designed it? A bunch of lawyers. Well, so why do that? You know, so we have a situation where with our electric grid more broadly across the U. S., Uh, and in attention to the importance of reliability and it's getting more attention, but not nearly enough. Okay, I'm still not quite understanding that there are some solutions in place to prevent what happened if the same weather comes back or is we're still as vulnerable or less vulnerable.

Well, I would say we're, I would say we're less vulnerable. I think there's been some efforts to weatherize some of the natural gas infrastructure. That's [00:07:00] positive. Uh, I think there have been some, uh, you know, there has been attention on the critical vulnerabilities in the Texas grid. Okay. But excuse me, but remember, Tom, what we're seeing more broadly across the U.

S. is not just about Texas, but look at what's happened in California, where California has had these blackouts because their system is becoming increasingly fragile. Or look at Winter Storm Elliott during Christmas of 2022, where the gas grid in New York City almost failed. Well, why was that? It's because they're not investing in that infrastructure either, so Obviously, I'm interested in, I want your, your people to listen to and watch our, our, our juice, the series, uh, you know, and, and all five episodes.

But what I'm focused on more broadly in my work on my substack, robertbryce. substack. com and others is just the overall vulnerability, overall reliability issues on the electric grid and our energy grid, and more generally the gas grid as well, and how important it is, and we [00:08:00] take it for granted at our extreme peril.

So there are a lot of threats to the grid, including maybe EMP and, uh, what, uh, terrorism and bad weather and all sorts of things. Uh, which ones do you think are the most, uh, pose the most danger? Ah, that's a good question. One that I haven't had before, Tom. You know, I don't want to make too much of this, but the grid is vulnerable on a lot of different levels, and weather is one of them.

And at EMP, I'm not as concerned about that. If some bad actor has a

nuclear warhead, you know, the electric grid is going to be only one of many concerns that we have, right? So, um, but make no mistake, we can also, an EMP could be for a naturally occurring event as well from the sun. Thank you. So that's always a possibility.

Um, but also we have to be very clear about the vulnerability of our energy and power systems to bad actors and You know, [00:09:00] we haven't. We've had a few incidents, including in California a few years ago, where some Yahoo's shot up a high power transformer station in Santa Clara County, California, and they were never caught.

There were no suspects ever identified. So that high power transformer infrastructure is very vulnerable and a lot of national security experts understand this. But it's a very, very large system and you can't protect every bit of it. So, um, yeah, I don't want to make too much of it. But yes, our way of life is, but we don't, we think we're okay and everything's great, but we depend on a very few, very, uh, very important, very sensitive networks that could be disrupted if people really want to really want to mess with us.

Do you think it's really important for individuals to try to sit down and think, okay, if the power goes out for three weeks, what am I going to do? How am I going to heat my house? All that type of stuff. Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Um, and you know, I wouldn't call myself [00:10:00] necessarily a prepper, but am I thinking about getting a standby generator?

You bet I am. Um, and we've had, I live in central Austin and we've had three extended outlet, uh, power outages at our house in the last nine months. Um, not necessarily even from extreme weather. Well, one day it was really hot and we had a, you know, a transformer went out. Um, but we were without power for eight or nine hours and we had one just the other day when the weather was just calm and not, you know, no problem.

So I'm thinking about getting a Generac. Hell yes. But I mean the because of we had freezing rain and we had sub zero sub freezing temperatures here in Austin for about six days in a row.

Now I've lived in Texas for a long time, about 40 years. I've never seen it stay that cold that long. But again, that doesn't mean it can't happen again, Tom. And so, you know, one of the things that's important to understand about how we make sure the grid remains reliable is you have on site fuel and [00:11:00] I'm pro natural gas, but Meredith Angwin, who's one of the stars of the podcast, or the stars of the docuseries, she underscores what she calls the fatal trifecta, which is over reliance on weather dependent generation, over reliance on imported electricity, and over reliance on just in time natural gas.

And I think it's a really sharp way to think about these issues that we are made. We've made ourselves vulnerable and that fatal trifecta is one of the ways we're vulnerable. So if it's just in time delivery of natural gas, how do you overcome that? You have on site fuel, whether that's oil fired generators, whether that's coal fired generation or nuclear power plants.

Those are your options.

Highlighting Key Voices in the Energy Conversation

Yeah, I was just going to bring up Meredith Angwin. It sounds like she is one of the voices or one of the people who really understands what's happening. And we should be listening to her. Who else is on that list that you can think of? Sure. Well, Emmett Penney, my, uh, my friend who's the editor of Grid Brief.

He's, he does a fantastic job, um, in his, uh, in his appearances on camera. Just a very sharp, [00:12:00] uh, you know, he's also just this appealing character, right? He's got a shaved head and he's in his 30s, he's got these big muscles. You know, he's a, he's an arm wrestler and, uh, you know, a very interesting cat. Um, but he's also very clear about the grid and the challenges facing the grid.

Uh, one of the other compelling figures is, uh, Chris Kiefer, uh, an emergency room doctor from Toronto, Canada, who's done a really remarkable job in catalyzing new support for nuclear power in Canada and particularly in Ontario. Um, and it's clear now that Ontario and Ontario Power Generation is going to lead the global return, global resurgence of nuclear power, and a lot of the credit for that is, uh, due to Chris Kiefer.

If I can also just point out one other episode, Tom, that's a favorite of mine, which is episode three called Green Dreams. Um, I'm from Oklahoma. I have deep roots in Oklahoma. Um, on my mother's side and my father's side. My great grandfather on my mother's side participated in the Cherokee Strip Land Run of 1897.

Um, and my great uncle, [00:13:00] Ernie Rapp, was a member of the Osage Tribe. And he was born in Fairfax, Oklahoma in 1909. So he had a front row seat to the Reign of Terror in the 1920s. Um, he never talked about it when we were kids, right? That wasn't, you know, that part of Oklahoma history wasn't taught. But I bring that quick bit of background up because in the third episode we focus on the Osage Tribe's fight with Enel over a wind project.

It's the longest running legal battle over wind energy in American history. And we, I started reporting on that project and that, that

controversy now four or five years ago. It's a key part of our film. We interviewed five members of the Osage Tribe. Um, and if you followed the news on that, the tribe won a massive court ruling in December in Tulsa that will require NL, the Italian company, to take down all 84 wind turbines that put up in Osage County, Oklahoma.

So it's a compelling story, one that's close to my family and one that I'm really proud of. So that's actually happening. They are taking those down or they're planning to take them down. [00:14:00] The court has ordered them taken down. Now there's legal wrangling over, you know, how that's going to happen and when.

Um, but my impression and understanding from the people in the tribe is that, They are very solid and united in their desire to get those those turbines taken down. Uh, and the tribe is also going to speak, seek compensatory damages for, uh, the violation of their mineral estate by Enel. Um, and one of the key parts of the story, Tom, is that the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2014, when the project was being built, ordered Enel to stop and to get a permit from the tribe for Uh, for mining on the on the tribes mineral estate and, uh, and now instead of stopping sped up work.

And so now the tribes are going to seek compensatory damages. And I asked, uh, the head of the Osage Minerals Council ever at Waller. What? Well, how much you going to ask for? And he said, I'm not going to tell you, but it rhymes with millions. Very interesting. Um, I'm just looking down to your list of podcasts, uh, the power hungry podcast.

You have had Meredith Angwin. She might be your [00:15:00] most, uh, common or you've had her on five times, something like that. Um, and, uh, you mentioned, uh, Doomberg's been on there, uh, multiple times and, uh, Isaac or all sorts of people. Uh, that's quite the lineup you've, you've got. How many have you done so far? Is it 200?

Over 200. Yeah. 220 some odd. Yeah. Yeah. Very impressive. Chris Kiefer is the one that you just mentioned. Yeah. Jasper Machogu on there as well. I'm a big fan of him. So yeah, sure. Yeah. Yes. So you're all across the board on energy and on climate. Right. Judith Curry, Richard Linton. Yeah. And I, I, I, I want to have a variety of guests and I've done that and, uh, uh, but I'll tell you, you know, as well, Tom, as you know, the podcast, it's a lot of work and, uh, actually Uh, I'm going to give it a, a, a, a break.

I'm going to go on hiatus for a little while on the podcast because I'm just so busy with my speaking and, uh, other writing projects. But, uh, you know, I've been, I don't want to seek advertisers. I didn't want to get, uh, you know, sponsors because I [00:16:00] don't, uh, that's not how I, that's not my jam, but, uh, but I'm very proud of the podcast.

I've had a lot of fun with it. And I, you know, I really enjoyed talking with a lot of these people and I hope have helped. I hope my, Podcasts help broaden the conversation. Yeah, you talk about a wide range of guests. You also had Bill McKibben on there. I'm very impressed that you got him to come on there.

How did that go? Uh,

Tom, I, I, I, it was an interesting discussion. Um, I, uh, I, I feel like, uh, Bill has been, uh, very active and he's raised a lot of money. And I think he is, uh, you know, give him due credit for his activism, but I disagree with him on pretty much everything. Okay. Yeah. It's good to have these open conversations though.

I'm glad you had that one. So let's see. What else would you like to mention here?

Robert Bryce's Journey and Public Speaking Engagements

Well, I think that more broadly, you know, I've been changing kind of the focus in [00:17:00] my career and what I've been talking about and what I'm doing. And, uh, I've gone, I've gone to sub stack. I've, you know, I've written six books and, uh, my latest is question of power out in paperback now, electricity and the wealth of nations.

And so I'm really, my purpose and my passion, Tom, has been to focus on energy and power and to get people to understand them better. And so what I've done, um, uh, really in the last, now almost year and a half, is focus almost all of my writing on Substack because After many years of writing pieces for other outlets, uh, you know, whether it was The Hill or The Wall Street Journal or, you know, Real Clear or elsewhere, I always was feeling like I had to try and please an editor, someone else who, you know, could approve and say, Oh, well, this is good.

We'll take this or we don't like it. They'll go somewhere else. And with Substack, I don't have to do that. All I have to do is please myself. And that. There's a real deep, deeply rewarding aspect to that, Tom, that I [00:18:00] find has been very liberating and really helping me find exactly my own voice and write it in the way that I want to write it, not the way someone else thinks it should be written.

And that has been really gratifying. So as you're going around doing your public speaking, who are you speaking to? Oh, gosh, I mean, uh, this year I have, uh, it's only March and I have 28 engagements on my calendar. So, uh, oh, I'm, I'm speaking at an event in Tyler, Texas,

uh, At to the Tyler Chamber of Commerce.

I'm the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, talking to an infrastructure company called Centuri. I'm doing a debate on nuclear power at Colorado Mesa College. Then I'm going to Benedictine College to talk about energy humanism in the age of climate catastrophism. Uh, Garfield County, uh, Colorado, Illinois Municipal Electric Agency.

A lot of public power, public [00:19:00] entities that, and I like talking to them, Tom, because, uh, I'm a big believer in public ownership of energy infrastructure. I think it's important and it's, uh, something in a lot of countries, you just have gigantic corporations that are, you know, that are controlling the entire electric and energy infrastructure.

And I really think the American model of having diffused ownership is important. So as you are speaking in public, you get a lot of protesters showing up that they don't want to hear anything about energy. They don't agree with it. Well, interesting. I spoke a couple of weeks ago now in Washington at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, which was a great opportunity for me.

And these are, of course, state level regulators like public service commissions, public utility commissioners. And, uh, 1800 people or so a standing room only audience. Um, and I just gave him, you know, exactly the same same presentation I've given to a lot of [00:20:00] other groups talking about the energy transition, what energy transition and afterward I had.

I'm not bragging here, but several dozen people who are regulators. With utility commissions come up to me and say, Thank God you were here. We've never heard this kind of messaging before. We never heard your numbers before. We've had a lot of other people talking about, you know, energy transition, but you really gave us numbers on Twitter.

Oh, my gosh. A few of these NGOs just had an absolute hissy fit, Tom. I mean, they were just no, no protesters in the room. And if they were there, I would have been happy to say, Come on up here. Let's explain to me how you're going to run the world on unicorn farts and fairy dust, right? You know, but yeah.

That hasn't happened because, and I think it's partly because I'm an independent journalist now, you know, I don't, what are you going to say about me? Yeah, I don't work for anyone. I work for myself. And you can dislike the message, but your protest is going to ring hollow because I'm not carrying water for anyone.

I'm presenting the numbers and but anyway, it was [00:21:00] just

funny these Twitter, these Twitter guys, you know, having a hissy fit because one of the guys who was having the biggest hissy was from Earth Justice, which is a dark money outfit based in where else San Francisco. They operate on a budget of 150 million a year.

And they're suing all these industrial plants suing coal fired power plants, you know, they're They are, in my view, the an, the epitome of the anti-industry, industry and the anti-industry. Industry is absolutely enormous. And they don't get any kind of scrutiny. I've written about 'em a lot on Substack, but to me, in fact, I'm gonna write another substack about, you know, the, these are the slides that cause the hissy fit at Naru and uh, uh, because I wanna go straight at it.

Confronting Misconceptions and the Reality of Energy Policy

Do you think there are just tons of people who have really strong opinions on energy or maybe they are in positions of power to make decisions about energy and they have no idea what's going on? I get that sense myself. Oh, I think that's definitely true, but I, I, I, I, there's no doubt a lot of these policymakers and I, I [00:22:00] heard it myself, right?

With them coming up to me and talking to me and saying, this is amazing, right? We'd never heard your numbers before and I made it clear over and over. In my slides. These are not my numbers. These are the numbers. I'm not the these are all from readily available public sources. I'm not making any of this up.

These aren't my data sets. These are public data sets that I am converting into easily digestible, uh, comparisons that let you see what's going on. So there was a very clear to me a very sincere desire by policymakers to understand better what's going on. And that gives me hope. But, you know, I also, you know, got that sense, too, from these NGOs, including Earth Justice and Energy Innovation LLC, which is also based in San Francisco, that they do not want their narrative to be challenged, right?

They don't want to have to debate these issues in public [00:23:00] with numbers. Instead, they want to continue this conversation. You know, this media barrage around the fiction that we're going to suddenly change everything over to renewable or to wind and solar and batteries, and it's not going to happen. It can't happen.

It won't happen because it can't happen. But they have a lot of support in the media and it's staggering amounts of money behind them. I mean, truly staggering amounts of money. But you do think there are a number of politicians who believe in this utopian future where we

all drive Teslas and, uh, they provide a battery backup at night.

We're going to charge our Teslas at night using solar panels somehow. The whole thing doesn't make any sense. They haven't really thought it through. Is that still true? Oh, I think there's a large cadre of, of politicians and more, more importantly, policymakers, remember? Because a lot of this This this agenda isn't being pushed through actual state assemblies.

It's and state legislatures. It's being decided by the bureaucracy by the administrative [00:24:00] state, and they're being swayed by these NGOs who have a lot of money. So is there a belief system around this, this faith in this fiction around the faith in the fiction? That's the right way to think about it. But it's faith in this fictional utopia, or I would say it's a dystopia of massive amounts of wind and solar, you know, carpeting rural America and to drive this kind of vision of a, uh, of an alternative energy future.

It just can't happen. It can't happen because of the physical constraints on the system. But just because it can't happen doesn't mean a lot of people still don't believe in this, uh, this narrative. So you make a distinction there, an important one, between policy makers and the politicians, that there are unelected people that are making policy and they're kind of handing it over and the politicians are rubber stamping it in some cases?

Well, or ceding their responsibility to the administrative state. So remember, Tom, in California, this ban on internal [00:25:00] combustion engines that went through just a few years ago, I guess two or three years ago, that will take effect, I think 2030 or 2032, something like that. That didn't go through the California Assembly in the California Senate.

That was a that was a measure that came from the California Air Resources Board and unelected bureaucracy.

The Power Struggle: Administrative State vs. Democracy

The Environmental Protection Agency has the similar rule on automakers that would require them to sell two thirds of their vehicles as all electric by 2032. That didn't go through Congress that came from the EPA.

Look at New York with the Climate Act. I just interviewed Ken Girardin. He has a, from the Empire Center, has a great, uh, report on the Climate Act. Well, the, the rules and the regulations in the Climate Act were promulgated in New York by the bureaucracy. Now the Assembly, the California, the New York Assembly and the New York

Senate, gave authority to do that, but not to the extent that it was taken up by the bureaucracy.

So it's very clear that [00:26:00] the seating of administrative power to the administrative state.

The Deep State Debate: Separating Fact from Fiction

This is a very clear threat, I believe, overall to democracy in America because we're we're giving so much power is being taken by the administrative state without proper oversight So when you say administrative state, is that what some people call the deep state at least there's some overlap there or no?

Um, Well the deep state, you know from what I my understanding of what how people consider that it's a You know kind of a cabal of people who are in uh NGOs and maybe in, uh, you know, I don't know, Bohemian Grove or somewhere else. I don't know the Rothschilds, the Bilderbergs. I don't know the Rockefellers all making these decisions.

Somewhere else, they, the deep state may overlap with the administrative state, but I don't think they're the same thing. Okay. So how do we solve this problem of the administrative state making these ridiculous decisions and harming us? What [00:27:00] do we do?

Tackling the Administrative State: Supreme Court's Role

Well, what we're seeing now, of course, is the Supreme court taking up the Chevron doctrine, right?

Which is this, this idea around allowing the administrative state to take. This kind of bureaucratic power without being checked by the legislature. So this is top of mind, uh, in terms of the regulatory scheme in America and what the Supreme Court is going to do about it. So that is one of the things that's underway now.

And, um, I think there is a broader recognition and Ken Girardin's latest report called Green Guardrails. He underscores this as well, that the New York legislature has to be Has to recover some of the power that it's ceded to the to the bureaucracy to make sure that the people are represented, because in many cases they aren't.

And in many cases, like with this Climate Act, the cost the state's own estimates of the cost are 4.9 trillion to achieve [00:28:00] this net zero claim that their goal that they have laid out for 2050. That's just a staggering amount of money, Tom.

Election Hopes and Political Realities for 2024

So do you think there's some hope then in the 2024 elections that, uh, we can elect people that will help solve this problem you're talking about?

Well, sure. I mean, I'm insanely hopeful. I'm optimistic to the point of idiocy, um, as to quote the late Molly Ivins. But I also, you know, I thought a fair amount about the election and I had Peter Zion on my podcast a while back. He thinks Biden is going to win in a landslide. Well, I don't think it's going to be a landslide.

I think it's going to be close and I think it's going to be messy because they're always close and they're always messy. Um, but, you know, if Biden wins, you know, if he's going to be on the ticket, I don't know. I don't have a crystal ball. Then we're going to get an accelerated push for, you know, efforts by the administrative state to impose more, uh, more radical [00:29:00] hydrocarbons and alternative energy.

But if Trump wins, don't doesn't necessarily mean any of this goes away or that the the N. G. O. The N. G. O. Corporate climate complex is diminished. In fact, if Trump wins, they probably will undoubtedly raise even more money than they're raising now. Because they can run against Trump as this, you know, the bogeyman and push their agenda and they'll push their agenda, of course, the federal level, but also at the state and local levels.

And one more quick point on this.

The Billionaire Agenda: Bloomberg's Beyond Carbon Campaign

Um, I mentioned NARUC, I mentioned Earthjustice, and I wrote about this on my Substack, robertbryce.substack.com, uh, just the other day. Was that Michael Bloomberg, one of the richest people in the world, has given 500 million to this Beyond Carbon campaign. And what is their goal?

Shut down all the coal plants in America and half of the natural gas plants. Tom, this is incredibly radical agenda, and yet it's being pursued by these NGOs that will have effectively infinite amounts of money to sue, uh, utilities, to sue power plant operators, [00:30:00] to force them to shut down. Well, they're talking about shutting down 40 percent of all the power generation in America in the next five years.

I mean, it's a really dangerous agenda. It's a national security threat.

The National Security Threat of NGO Agendas

Now, and I made this point at NARUC and oh my gosh, you'd think I'd, you know, spoken the, you know, that, you know, I'm a devil worshiper or something, but underscoring the fact that these NGOs are in fact a threat to national security, that is an absolute fact.

Um, but they don't get that kind of scrutiny because legacy media outlets just, you know, the reporters are lazy and they don't know what the impact of what, you know, what, what is actually being discussed here, what it will mean.

The Politics of Climate Change and Renewable Energy

So these administrative state people who are making these crazy rules, are they doing that because they sincerely believe that CO2 causes bad weather and we got to do all this crazy stuff to prevent bad weather?

Or is it because there's financial motivations and someone else, uh, there's a financial reason for them to do this or why are they doing it? I think it's simple politics, Tom. I think it's just, you know, [00:31:00] that these ideas are very popular politically. And so politicians, I live here in Austin, Texas, the mayor, Kirk Watson, who's nominally is a Democrat.

I heard just the other day, they want to close one of the coal plants. It's the last coal plant that the city owns. It's out in Fayette, Texas. Um, very reliable, fully paid for, uh, an important part of the city's power mix. And the other day, the mayor, Kirk Watson, said closing that power plant was one of the most important things he could ever do in his political career.

Well, you know, what about picking up the trash? What about making sure the cops, we have enough cops? We have a drastic shortage of cops on the street in Austin. And instead he's saying, no, the climate is the most important thing he can possibly deal with. Well, he's, I don't, I can't read his mind, but I think he's just playing to the crowd, right?

And that there's a very strong. political base of operations in Austin that is these, you know, these [00:32:00] hard left climatists and he wants to appeal to them because he knows they can give him money and

political support. So, um, you know, it's, it's a very easy agenda to support, Tom, but the, but the results of this agenda could be just incredibly ruinous.

So from my perspective, I think that the faith in the narrative and that climate crisis narrative is crumbling And I think it's not going to be politically popular for much longer. Do you agree with any of that?

The Future of Nuclear Power and Climate Narratives

I see I sense a a shift now I sense a shift on a couple of different fronts. One is a shift toward more nuclear power I see a change in the conversation around it in congress.

I see a change In the in the belief in nuclear among younger people. And so that's very heartening. Some of that belief is motivated by concern about climate change, which is fine. And, you know, in my view, you know, you could be pro nuclear, despite whatever you think about climate change. And so, you know, my view on climate change, climate [00:33:00] change is a concern.

It's not our only concern. And if we're gonna be serious about protecting the environment, I'm all for nuclear power, because it has a small footprint. So there are many reasons why more and more people are focusing on it. The the virtues of nuclear. And let me be clear. I'm very sober about the future of nuclear.

It's not gonna be cheap, quick or easy. And we make that point in our docuseries juice, the series dot com. Did I mention juice, the series dot com, Tom? I hope I mentioned juice, the series dot com. Um, but I as far as the narrative and the politics around climate itself. I heard what you're saying, but I also watch this administration and their their paws on LNG exports.

And to me, that's an example of the the climatists flexing their political muscle at the federal level. And I think it's just that. Uh, just that, uh, clear about what that was about. It's about Biden seeking more campaign donations and appealing to a very narrow segment of the electorate that's going to [00:34:00] help him fund his re election campaign.

So how about this whole, uh, rate of renewable rejections?

The Growing Resistance Against Renewable Energy Projects

I think you had been keeping a database and maybe you still are about people fighting back against local projects successfully. How's that going? Well, the the fight is raging all across America, Tom. I mean, it's amazing to see how many rural communities are fighting back against these solar and wind projects.

They're also fighting back against high voltage transmission. But, uh, yes, thank you for mentioning it. The Renewable Rejection Database. I've done this on my own on my own time on my own dime now for about a decade. The numbers now we have over 620 rejections or restrictions of wind or solar projects in the U.

S. since 2015. Uh, some of the latest ones, uh, oh, I could look them up on the other day, Pottawatomie, Pottawatomie County, Iowa, uh, placed very severe restrictions on new wind and new solar. Um, solar projects are now becoming much more, uh, are [00:35:00] facing much more resistance all across America. Um, and local people are saying we don't want these.

A year ago, in March of 2023, I was in Christiana, Wisconsin. It's about an hour west of Milwaukee, about 25 miles southwest of memory serves our southeast of Madison. It's a small town, a small township. In fact, Christiana Township. Uh, some of the best farmland in Wisconsin, and so therefore some of the best farmland, most fertile farmland in the world.

And that township is facing the prospect of having seven square miles of their township covered with solar panels. And the narrative that's being pushed by a lot of these NGOs and now legacy media outlets is, Oh, these rural rubes, you know, they're being influenced by hydrocarbon money. The fossil fuel sector is.

Humping all kinds of money into these rejections and that they're leading these people astray and, you know, wind and solar, they're so great. It has nothing to do with hydrocarbon [00:36:00] money, Tom. This is local people looking out for their local interests, their neighborhoods, their view sheds, their property values, and they're pushing back.

And it's all about the money. I couldn't be more cynical about this in terms of what was really at play here, which is big, big money, big corporations, big law firms, big NGOs, big academic, uh, outfits pushing wind and solar and trying to just inflict it on rural America. It's all about money. It doesn't have anything to do with climate change.

So how about these cases where, uh, solar companies come in and they want to sign you up for 20 years, maybe at some big number of dollars per acre? What happens if they do that, they put up the solar panels and in year three they go bankrupt? Is that the, then what? I, yeah, I

think that it, you know, that there, there is the, the key issue.

And it's one that landowners and local communities are looking at very closely because they are saying, well, what happens after decommissioning? And I was in, uh, Ida Township in Michigan, [00:37:00] uh, in April of last year. Again, talking with local people, farmers, local landowners, local merchants. And again, a massive solar project that was proposed for that township.

And the, this is again, an ag area. And the farmers all across America are saying, you know, and farm communities are saying, we need to be preserving ag land. Well, in this case in particular about the remediation. So the leases, as you say, for for 20 years or so, but the farmers that I was talking to were saying, look, once they put those projects in place and they drive these piles into the ground for to support the solar projects or solar panels, it's going to mess up the drainage in that land for generations.

It's not something you're going to be able to fix anytime soon. So there's this short termism that is very apparent with a lot of this. Uh, very fragile, I would say, infrastructure of weather, weather dependent generation. You know, Tom, I know your take on climate change, my view on [00:38:00] this in terms of the grid is very simple.

If we're facing more extreme weather because of climate change, hot or colder, more extreme for longer, it's a height of idiocy to be making our most important energy network dependent on the weather. We need to make it weather resilient, not weather dependent, and yet all of the incentives out there, including under the Inflation Reduction Act, are to build infrastructure that is weather dependent.

And I mean, it's just, uh, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation has pointed this out. We're making our grid more dependent on the weather. This is just madness from a pure, just a societal resilience standpoint. And I, and yet it's getting very, very little attention. So when people want to fight one of these crazy projects in their neighborhood, they don't have to reinvent the wheel, right?

Or there's a guy that was on my podcast named John Droz. I think he, uh, maybe gets consulted on something like that. Or what, what should they do or what's the first thing they should do if they want to fight something? Well, obviously it's do their homework and understand the, the first thing I would say is make sure you understand [00:39:00] you're not alone.

And I was in Knox County, Ohio, Ohio about two weeks ago, giving a speech to a group of people fighting a solar project in Knox County, Ohio. Um, and that solar project is being pushed by a company based here in Austin, Texas called Open Road Renewables. Well, these guys

here, these cats here in Austin, don't give a flip about Knox County, Ohio.

They're trying to build that solar project because they're in it for the money, right? And it's a very small outfit, this company here in Austin. It's only, you know, a handful of people. But if they can get that solar project built, oh my gosh, the return on capital invested for them is just going to be enormous.

But the local people in Knox County are saying we don't destroy it. We don't want to destroy the character of our neighborhood. So that was one of the main messages I meant to set to them when I was there was you're not alone. Look around their communities like you all across America, in fact, all around the world who are fighting these projects because they want to retain the character of their neighborhoods.

And, you know, there's this [00:40:00] slur that's used, Tom. They called them NIMBY's. I effing hate that term. I hate it with a dying passion, undying passion like, you know, I hate lima beans and cauliflower. Nimbys, not in my backyard. Everyone everywhere cares about their neighborhood. And the idea that these people are just, oh, well, you know, they're just a bunch of troglodytes, a bunch of knuckle draggers because they don't want their whole township covered in solar panels or their view sheds destroyed with, you know, ocean with, you know, forests of wind Hell no, they don't want it.

And, and yet there's this bias against them and it's, and it's, it's a cultural bias, it's a political bias, you know, let's be clear, Tom, because you know, rural America is largely Republican and, but they're not in the Democrats, Democratic voters by far and away prefer. Uh, alternative energy to a much greater degree than, than Republicans, but the Democrats want all this stuff, but they don't want it built in their Nantucket.

They want it built, you know, out there in, in flyover country. Yeah. That's [00:41:00] actually a thing, right? So is it Nantucket where they're going to do offshore wind, something on the East coast? And of course the people who would be the number one proponents of stuff like that, they don't want it in their backyard either.

Right. Well, and I'm, you know, I'm actually speaking in Nantucket, and so I'm not speaking, I'm going there this summer to talk, uh, and I'm not saying anything bad about the people in Nantucket, but it's just that people everywhere, whether they have a beachfront home, whether they live out in, you know, in farmland in middle of Nebraska or the middle of Iowa or in, in rural Ohio, They care about where they live and they don't want to look at red blinking lights all night, every night for the rest of their lives.

They move to those locations because they want that serenity. They

want that view. Shit. They want the natural quietude of the of rural life. And so they're looking at the prospect of these massive projects coming into their areas. And they're saying, you know, Go put it where the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow.

We don't [00:42:00] want it here. And you know, I I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I said before, I'm cynical about it. I don't think I'm cynical at all, Tom. I think I'm very realistic about what is happening here. And this has, again, this massive push for solar and wind has nothing to do with climate change. It has everything to do with the tax credits.

And the companies that are pushing for these projects are after one thing and one thing only. And that is the money. So one development that I really enjoyed in the last year or so was Greta Thunberg participated in an anti wind protest. So that was pretty rich that we have to go to wind power because otherwise CO2 is going to kill us all.

But then she's protesting that as well. I don't know how she can square those two positions she took. Yeah, I try to ignore her. I don't, uh, you know, I think it's a lot of media hoo ha for someone who doesn't deserve a platform really. Um, uh, but you know, I, there are some things that are happening that are real, really are quite [00:43:00] interesting.

And, and one of them is in Sweden. I think it was the, uh, uh, the reindeer herders there. The name is escaping me at the moment, but they want a judgment to get the wind turbines that have been put in their traditional land taken down. Uh, they're also in Alberta, Canada. There was a recent, uh, decision by I think the Alberta Utilities Board that requires a 35 kilometer setback for all wind projects from any scenic natural areas.

I mean, this is an enormously important decision coming out of Canada. So, you know, this idea that it's, oh, it's just a few, you know, locals and people, people that are being, uh, you know, and, you know, being convinced by, Big bad oil companies to oppose these projects. There's one. There's no proof of this. I mean, and whatever scant proof there is, is like, you know, one or two examples and very isolated where you've got some hydrocarbon money.

But you know, what about Alberta here? It's yes, it's the Alberta Utilities Commission. [00:44:00] This is from Norton Rose Fulbright, which is a law firm that does a lot of work for the alternate alternative energy business. Uh, there's a new administrative companies. Processes for multiple departments, most notably designating pristine viewsapes and other locations that are subject to the 35 kilometer setback 35 kilometers.

I mean, this is this is unprecedented. Anything that I've seen before.

Right. It's the province is going to develop legislation establishing 30 minimum 35 kilometer buffer. Around both were protected areas and other pristine view scapes for wind projects. Other types of renewable development within the buffer may trigger the need for visual impact assessment.

I mean, this is just the reality. You know, it's not my reality. Not my numbers is the numbers and, you know, it's being there's a very clear effort afoot to try and minimize and and diminish this opposition to these projects all around the world, but particularly here in the U. S. Because again, The money at stake is so, is so [00:45:00] enormous.

And there still is a push to put up a lot of solar facilities here in Minnesota above the 45th parallel. And do you agree that's completely crazy? And nobody would do that unless they're, uh, there were subsidies, right? I don't see how that can make any sense, uh, cost benefit wise to do that. Yeah, well, uh, in fact, when in the docuseries are in juice power politics in the grid, we have Emmett Penney on camera saying that talking about that the these incentives for, you know, the production tax credit, the investment tax credit.

They're so lucrative that I can quote him almost directly said the utilities aren't going to fight to keep up with their old coal plant to keep it operating and keep it functioning. Instead, they're going to close it down because they can get, you know, these lucrative subsidies to build solar in Minnesota.

And he says, solar in sunny Minnesota, you know, it's a laugh line. Obviously, But he's right on target. I mean, it's just exactly right. Why in the name of Peter, Paul, and Mary would you do [00:46:00] that? Well, follow the money. Yeah, I was just up in Duluth, uh, not this year, but the year before. And the snow was like, uh, five feet deep in the drifts.

And we drove past the facility. It's like a foot deep on the solar panels and nobody's clearing it off. It's just sitting there till spring. Completely crazy. Yeah. I mean, but again, it's If you if the government is going to give you money to do this, then people are going to stand up and they're going to do it.

If, uh, we have a, you know, in the in the in the docuseries, we, uh, use that great line from Charlie Munger, the late, uh, co chairman of Berkshire Hathaway. Show me the incentives and I'll show you the outcome. So if the incentives are to build solar. Somebody is going to build solar, even if it's in Duluth, they're going to build solar because there's so much money to be had.

But I think I just to return to the, you know, the, the key points that in, in the docuseries and the, and also the work that I'm doing

is I'm, I'm. My goal, I've turned 64 this year, is to [00:47:00] help people understand what's actually happening, right? And give them the numbers and give them the perspective without spin, right?

But here are the numbers, here's the perspective to understand what's really happening in the world. Because These are energy and power systems are too important to be left alone as Chris Kiefer says on camera that the electric grid is a civilizational life support system, and it's not getting the kind of attention that it needs.

And so that's my motivation for the docuseries. It's a motivation for what I do on my sub stack, you know, and I'm all in I'm not I don't play golf. Golf sucks. This is what I do. Okay, so sounds like over the next year or so you will be concentrating on your sub stack or do you have other any other books or any other series in the works here?

No more documentaries. I've done two now. And, uh, you know, I'm proud of what, what I did with that project. And again, a shout out to my colleague Tyson Culver, who directed and produced both the first film juice, how electricity explains the world. And then this [00:48:00] docuseries juice power politics and the grid.

Um, it turned out great and I think they look great. They sound great. We have original animation, original score. We have over 30 interviews on camera with different people from, as I mentioned, Meredith Angwin, Chris Kiefer, Nabulu Tanaka, the former head of the IEA, uh, uh, people from all over the world. But yes, I'm going to be focusing on my substack, robertbryce.

substack. com, because I find that, uh, to be very rewarding. I also, my subscriptions are growing. I, you know, a year and a half ago, I had maybe 2, 000, 2, 500 subscribers. Now I have on substack nearly 16, 000. Uh, so I, I've found an audience there and, uh, an appreciative one and it's. I'm not charging for it.

It's free. Um, so I, I'm, I'm enjoying that. I'm enjoying the heck out of that. And I also like speaking. I like being in front of the audience and telling people, you know, what's going on in the world. And I'm, and I'm good at it. I practice, I work at it. You are very good at it. Any other points you want to make here before we finish [00:49:00] this one up?

Uh, did I mention juice? The series.com? I hope I You did. You did not. No, you did. You did. I, I heard that .

Engaging with Audiences: The Power of Media Platforms

Um, and my substack, of course is Robert Bryce, uh, dot substack.com.

I'm on Twitter, although I don't spend, uh, I'm paying less and less attention to Twitter anymore because I find it to be, uh, less than, uh, civil many times.

And, uh, and oftentimes just flat, useless. Um, but I'm having great fun and I'm on YouTube, by the way, as well. I'm on, uh, TikTok. Yeah, I'm on TikTok, Tom, and I'm gonna start doing some dancing on TikTok. So I'm trying to hit all these different media platforms because I want to reach my goal is to not just speak to the same people.

I want to reach more people, right? I want to reach a different audience. I want to particular want to reach younger audience. So I'm I'm I love what I'm doing. I'm incredibly fortunate to do what I do. And I'm, you know, flattered that you asked me to come on. So you are doing a bunch of short videos, right?

They come up. I don't know where they come up for me on Twitter. I think, I don't know if I'm seeing them there or on YouTube, but somehow I'm seeing you, uh, doing 60 minutes, uh, little bits of a video that are quite effective, I think. [00:50:00] Yeah, there it is. Right. You know, just, you know, like this, you know, 60 seconds, I call them about a minute and because I thought, well, you know, content is getting shorter and shorter, let me do about a minute.

And so I did one. Uh, you know, I'm proud of the docuseries, right? We've had about three quarters of a million views of our of our five episodes, but I did one, uh, like a two minute video when I was in the Omaha airport talking about electric vehicles and auto dealers, and it had nearly 300, 000 views on tick tock, you know?

So, you know, the world is changing. And so I'm trying to be adaptable and change. You know, the, these short videos, they're, they're quick, they're, you know, I try to make them entertaining and try to make them easy, but people are busy and so yes, I, I put them on LinkedIn as well. That's where I do a, i, I post 'em on LinkedIn.

That's, which is also I think a, been a very effective platform for me. All right. Very good. Thanks for taking the time. You're an entertaining guy to talk to. I, I appreciate it and we'll talk to you next time. [00:51:00] Thanks, man, to see you soon. Alright, bye. Take care.