

# The Gorbachov Clean Air Act will wreck America's industry

The much-publicized amendments package to the 1990 Clean Air Act, recently passed by the Senate and now being rushed through the House of Representatives, has been characterized by congressional candidate Lyndon LaRouche as the worst piece of legislation ever seen on Capitol Hill. If signed into law, the act will create a national economic emergency so staggering as to end technological progress in the United States for years to come.

Such an economic catastrophe in America is much to the liking of the generals in the Kremlin—hence, it's been nicknamed the Gorbachov Bill by LaRouche. He has called for a fight to stop its passage in the House of Representatives, and, if the Congress is foolish enough to vote it up, a redoubled effort to repeal it immediately.

Here, in brief outline, is what is at stake, if the act becomes law:

- Some 750,000 jobs will be immediately threatened. Most severely affected will be coal miners, steel workers, and auto workers. Millions more jobs will be on the line.

- Utility prices will rise by 5-15% in many parts of the country. A single Commonwealth Edison power plant located in Kincaid, Illinois reports that it faces the prospect of spending \$350 million to reduce emissions.

- The Bush administration estimates the cost to the economy to be at least \$21 billion per year. Other studies show the cost to be minimally \$50 billion annually, and likely to be well over \$100 billion.

- Automobile prices will be increased by at least \$600. To meet mandated fuel-efficiency standards, cars will need to be 1,000 pounds lighter. Most Americans will only be able to afford compact or subcompact cars.

- Studies have shown that the less the weight of a car, the higher the rate of fatalities from accidents. In June 1989, the *Journal of Law and Economics* predicted that 1,000 more people will die each year because the lighter and smaller cars needed to meet such fuel-efficiency standards are not as safe as larger cars.

- Fuel prices will be increased by more than 10% to meet new standards. Gasoline prices may rise as much as 25-30¢ per gallon, on top of new state and local taxes.

- The amendments requiring the use of ethanol in gasoline will cost the consumer between \$25-50 billion in major urban areas. The main beneficiaries of this will be the Archer Daniels Midland grain cartel company, which controls 75% of all U.S. ethanol production. ADM's chief execu-

utive officer is Dwayne Andreas, one of Gorbachov's closest collaborators in the West. Since the Carter administration, ethanol producers, mostly ADM, have received over \$4.6 billion in government subsidies.

- The automotive aftermarket, from independent car mechanics to auto part retailers, will be wrecked by the amendment requiring an eight-year, 80,000-mile warranty on all the emission control systems in new cars. That means consumers will be forced to go back to dealers for all repairs, and will end up paying 20-40% higher fees in repairs and parts. Over 500,000 independent small businesses and repair shops will be affected—and the extended warranty will not reduce pollution.

- The amendments create state-run programs requiring permits for the operation of sources of air pollutants, including dry cleaners, the local printer, and photocopying shops. Exorbitant fees are mandated to pay for the huge bureaucracy that will be created at the local, state, and national level to review and approve (or deny) the permits.

- Businesses will have to periodically submit detailed emission analyses, compliance schedules, and compliance certificates to the permitting agency. Businesses must also notify the permitting authority of any violation of a permit condition. Virtually any change affecting a manufacturer's air emissions could require an operating permit amendment. The National Association of Manufacturers estimates that small businesses will spend far more money trying to fill out Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) paperwork, than on controlling emissions.

- Small businesses will be required to spend between \$75,000 and \$100,000 a year to meet requirements to monitor their emissions. Failure to comply with the requirement to report to the EPA carries criminal as well as civil penalties.

- The amendments impose an absolute cap on future emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. A cap is placed on industrial emissions by industry, and by geographical area. This will prohibit the growth of any industry, since a factory could not be built unless one existing factory shuts down, to keep the total amount of emissions the same. This is the industrial equivalent of the Chinese zero population growth model, in which women who have had one child are forced to undergo abortions.

- The cap on emissions will prohibit the construction of new power plants, and wreak havoc in metals-producing industries that use large amounts of electricity, such as alumi-

num, copper, and titanium. Already, aluminum mills in the Northwest have been asked to cut back on production during winter months by the Bonneville Power Authority to "conserve electricity."

- The use of nitrogen, the basis for most agricultural fertilizers, will be severely limited, if not banned. Crop yields will fall by half. Pesticides and fungicides will also be severely curtailed. The National Agricultural Chemicals Association has estimated that consumer food prices will rise 13%, and U.S. supplies of fruits and vegetables will collapse by 24%, if the use of crop-protective fungicides is prohibited.

- Virtually every oil refinery in the United States will be shut down. Already, oil industry executives have begun shifting refining operations to overseas facilities. The steel industry will have to shut down between 36 and 39, and perhaps all, of its 40 coke oven plants. According to EPA studies, about 50% of U.S. pulp and paper mills will not be able to meet the new standards, and will be shut down.

- Under existing law, only eight "air pollutants" are regulated—mercury, asbestos, beryllium, vinyl chloride, benzene, radionuclides, inorganic arsenic, and coke oven emissions. The new amendments name 191 substances to be identified as "hazardous air pollutants," and specify that "major sources" of these substances will be strictly regulated.

- A "major source" of pollution can be quite minor and may emit only 10 tons per year (TPY) of any listed substance, or 25 TPY of any combination of listed substances. Some of these so-called pollutants are critical elements in industrial production, such as butadiene, which is used to make synthetic rubber.

### **An environmental police state**

- Basic constitutional rights, such as a trial by jury, are eliminated by this monstrous legislation. The EPA is empowered to impose severe civil and criminal penalties for the tiniest infractions, by administrative fiat—and is given powers far greater than the Internal Revenue Service. Citizens may have a court trial only if they appeal after being convicted by the EPA. The amendment has ample provisions for environmental bounty hunters to bring "civil" suits and actions, and take a share of whatever fine is imposed by the EPA!

- A person can be jailed for up to two years for each violation. Each day, for example, of operating a plant with too great an emissions level, or failing to file proper forms, can be considered a distinct violation.

- The amendments establish a total ban on chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs,) and impose mandatory jail sentences for individuals and companies that provide Third World countries with the technology to manufacture CFCs. Third World countries that desperately need refrigeration equipment to prevent food spoilage, will not get it, because the technology depends on CFCs. This, despite the fact that there is no conclusive evidence supporting the contention that the ozone layer is being depleted by CFCs.

## **High technology can clean up the environment**

Pollution is a result of the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels or other inefficient industrial processes. Therefore, the way to clean up the environment, and advance the economy at the same time, is to progress to more efficient, productive technologies.

Here are a few of the technologies that would reduce pollution, increase productivity, and lower costs to industry and consumers.

**Standardized nuclear power plants**—modular light-water reactors could be mass produced and put into operation within six years.

**Modular high-temperature gas-cooled reactors**—should be commercially developed and mass produced, providing higher temperatures for industrial processing.

**MHD**—coal can be burned more efficiently and without pollution, by using magnetohydrodynamics.

**Fusion**—an accelerated research and development effort could make fusion available soon after the year 2000.

**High-speed rail**—the irrational growth in long-haul commercial trucking has been fed by the collapse of the nation's railroads. Modern rail systems would return energy-wasteful trucking to short-haul, intracity transport. Faster, high-speed rail should be built for intercity passenger and freight transport.

**Maglev**—magnetically levitated vehicles, which do not have any contact with their metal guideway, achieve speeds up to 300 miles per hour for passengers and light freight. This system would provide clean, fast, safe transport for distances of 100-600 miles.

**Plasma processes**—an array of low-temperature plasma processes (a few thousand degrees) could revolutionize metals processing. Rather than chemically reducing ores or recycled materials, they can be directly separated into their constituent elements. No pollution is produced.

**Directed energy**—lasers, electron beams, and other forms of coherent energy can be directly applied to materials for cutting, drilling, and other operations, to replace metal-on-metal machine tool-making and finishing techniques. This would result in orders of magnitude increases in productivity, and improved energy efficiency.