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# Greenwash

Nativists, Environmentalism & the Hypocrisy of Hate

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**A REPORT BY THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER**

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**MEDIA AND GENERAL INQUIRIES**

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# Executive Summary

BY MARK POTOK, EDITOR

A quarter of a century ago, John Tanton, a white nationalist who would go on to almost single-handedly construct the contemporary, hard-line anti-immigration movement, wrote about his secret desire to bring the Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental organization, into the nativist fold. He spelled out his motive clearly: Using an organization perceived by the public as part of the liberal left would insulate nativists from charges of racism — charges that, given the explicitly pro-“European-American” advocacy of Tanton and many of his allies over the years, would likely otherwise stick.

In the ensuing decades, nativist forces followed Tanton's script, making several attempts to win over the Sierra Club and its hundreds of thousands of members. That effort culminated in 2004, when nativists mounted a serious effort to take over the Sierra Club's board of directors, an attempt that was beaten back only after a strenuous campaign by Sierra Club members and groups including the Southern Poverty Law Center. The attempt was a classic case of “greenwashing” — a cynical effort by nativist activists to seduce environmentalists to join their cause for purely strategic reasons.

Now, the greenwashers are back. In the last few years, right-wing groups have paid to run expensive advertisements in liberal publications that explicitly call on environmentalists and other “progressives” to join their anti-immigration cause. They've created an organization called Progressives for Immigration Reform that purports to represent liberals who believe immigration must be radically curtailed in order to preserve the American environment. They've constructed websites accusing immigrants of being responsible for urban sprawl, traffic congestion, overconsumption and a host of other environmental evils. Time and again, they have suggested that immigration is the most important issue for conservationists.

The hypocrisy of these come-ons can be astounding. The group headed by Roy Beck, one of the key activists leading the efforts, has given close to half a million dollars to a far-right news service that has described global warming as a hoax. Tanton's wife, who works hand in glove with her husband, runs an anti-immigration political action committee (PAC) that funds candidates with abysmal environmental voting records. The congressional allies of John Tanton, Beck and the other greenwashers

are organized into an anti-immigration caucus whose members have even worse environmental voting records than the beneficiaries of Mary Lou Tanton's PAC. John Tanton's U.S. Inc. (USI), a foundation set up to fund nativist groups, spent about \$150,000 on a highly conservative fundraising agency whose client list includes several major anti-environmental organizations.

This new wave of greenwashing attempts, in particular the formation of Progressives for Immigration Reform as a purported group of “liberals,” is only the latest attempt by nativist forces to appear as something they are not. The white-dominated Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the most important of the groups founded by Tanton, has been behind the creation of three other front groups that supposedly represented African Americans (Choose Black America), Latino Americans (You Don't Speak for Me!) and labor (Coalition for the Future American Worker). In fact, FAIR had its own white spokesman double as a press representative for the first two organizations. Another group unrelated to FAIR, Vietnamese for Fair Immigration, turned out to be led by a white man who used a fake Vietnamese surname and whose only connection to that country was that he liked the food.

The arguments being made by the nativists today — in a nutshell, that immigration drives population increase and that a growing population is the main driver of environmental degradation — have in the last 15 years been rejected by the mainstream of the environmental movement as far too simplistic. The allegation that immigrants are responsible for urban sprawl, for example, ignores the fact that most immigrants live in dense, urban neighborhoods and do not contribute significantly to suburban or exurban sprawl. In a similar way, most conservation-

ists have come to believe that many of the world's most intractable environmental problems, including global warming, can only be solved by dealing with them on a worldwide, not a nation-by-nation, basis.

The greenwashers are wolves in sheep's clothing, right-wing nativists who are doing their best to seduce the mainstream environmental movement in a bid for legitimacy and more followers. John Tanton, the man who originally devised the strategy, is in fact far more concerned with the impact of Latino and other non-white immigration on a "European-American" culture than on conservation. Most of the greenwashers are men and women of the far right, hardly "progressives."

Environmentalists need to be aware of so-called "progressives for immigration reform" and their true motives. These individuals and organizations do not see protecting the environment as their primary goal — on the contrary, the nativists are first and foremost about radically restricting immigration. Environmentalists should not fall for their rhetoric.

# The Hypocrisy of Hate

## Nativists and Environmentalism

BY HEIDI BEIRICH

In January 2010, national leaders in ecology, sustainable business, and the larger environmental movement gathered in Washington to grapple with the problem of building “The New Green Economy.” Hosted by the government-funded National Council for Science and the Environment, the event was a prestigious one.

But one of the invited speakers was hardly an environmentalist.

Roy Beck, who participated in a panel entitled “Perverse Incentives, Subsidies, and Tax Code Impediments to a Sustainable Economy,” is the head of NumbersUSA, an anti-immigration group that was largely responsible for sinking a comprehensive immigration reform bill in 2007. Beck has spent nearly 20 years relentlessly attacking American immigration policies, even editing tracts like *The Immigration Invasion*, a book so raw in its nativism that Canadian authorities banned it as hate literature. More to the point, perhaps, purported environmentalist Beck’s group not long ago paid nearly half a million dollars to a far-right news service— an outfit that has described global warming as a “religion” that is “impervious to evidence” and has pilloried conservationists as “anti-mankind.”

So what was Beck doing talking about “greening the tax code”?

Roy Beck is part of a sweeping, renewed attempt by immigration restrictionists in America to convince environmentalists that they, too, must oppose immigration if they are to save the environment from the ravages of a growing population. Because such efforts typically have been organized by anti-immigration activists whose leading concern is not the environment — men and women who attempt to recruit conservationists and other “progressives” to their cause, sometimes even while simultaneously working with nakedly anti-environmental forces — this strategy has come to be known as “greenwashing.”

In the last few years, key nativist groups have increasingly been taking up this strategy. They have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to run full-page advertisements appealing to liberals in an array of publications and have started a new group, Progressives for

Immigration Reform (PFIR). They’ve built a series of websites aimed at “progressive” environmentalists — and many of those sites are run by people who are also principals of right-wing nativist groups.

Time and again, the hypocrisy of their claims comes to the surface. PFIR was originally registered by a Republican activist who was also involved in efforts to denounce overly liberal professors — hardly a “progressive” position. Its leader is a former attorney for one of the country’s leading nativist organizations and agreed to be interviewed for a cover story in a far-right nativist journal. A nativist political action committee controlled by Mary Lou Tanton, who is married to the primary architect of the strategy of appealing to environmentalists, has given money to an array of politicians whose environmental voting records are miserable.

“The nativist movement is clearly attempting to split the environmental movement in order to advance its own white nationalist agenda,” said the Rev. David Ostendorf, who heads the Center for New Community, a Chicago-based interfaith group dedicated to “building community, justice and equality.” “The greening of hate is not about the environment, conservation or population. It is about preserving the dominance of European Americans.”

### Early Efforts

Nativists have been working since the late 1960s to enlist environmentalists as allies in their struggle to drastically limit or end immigration (see timeline, p. 16). And, in fact, a great many early environmental leaders, including the powerhouse Sierra Club, did endorse the argument that population had to be stabilized and that immigration had to be reduced. Following that logic, some who started on the environmental left went even further, becoming critical not only of the numbers of immigrants but also of their impact on a “European” culture. A handful, includ-

ing former Democratic Colorado Gov. Dick Lamm, ended up attacking multiculturalism.

That began to change in the 1990s, largely because new evidence was making clear that the population explosion of prior decades was ending — that fertility declines dramatically as societies develop, meaning that the fear of an endlessly expanding population “bomb” was not a realistic one. At the same time, more and more environmentalists concluded that immigrants did not contribute in significant ways to such problems as urban sprawl, overconsumption of resources and traffic congestion. Many also worried about the white nationalism that seemed to be at the core of many restrictionist groups. The Sierra Club, in particular, abandoned its anti-immigration stance in 1996. Similarly, Paul Ehrlich, the author whose influential 1968 book *The Population Bomb* predicted a “race to oblivion” if population wasn’t brought under control, eventually renounced the immigration-restrictionist position he had explicitly endorsed, instead describing fighting global poverty as the key to slowing population growth.

But John Tanton, Mary Lou Tanton’s spouse and the main builder of today’s nativist movement, did not move with the environmental mainstream. Instead, he continued to see immigration as a root cause of environmental degradation.

A Michigan ophthalmologist who headed the Sierra Club’s Population Committee in the early 1970s, Tanton kept moving to the right, eventually coming to embrace an array of eugenicists, white nationalists and race scientists as he increasingly viewed “European-American” society as under threat. More and more, he worried about a “Latin onslaught,” writing to colleagues about the necessity of maintaining “a European-American majority” in America and complaining that Latinos were less “educable” than other races. But through it all, Tanton never lost interest in wrestling the Sierra Club around to his point of view.

In 1986, Tanton wrote a private memo to staff members at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which he had founded in 1979 (and where he remains a board member today) and U.S. English, an English-only group he then headed. In addition to denigrating Latinos, the memo explicitly laid out the idea that, in order to avoid the appearance of racism, nativists needed to win over “liberal” groups like the Sierra Club. “[T]he issues we’re touching on here must be broached by liberals,” Tanton wrote. “The conservatives simply cannot do it without tainting the whole subject” by attracting charges of racism.

And then he got to the punch line: “The Sierra Club

may not want to touch the immigration issue, but the immigration issue is going to touch the Sierra Club!”

But even then, a decade before their 1996 decision to move to a neutral stance on immigration, the views of the club’s leadership were changing. By 1998, when nativists made their first concerted attempt to reverse the club’s position, there were enough members opposed to reject their anti-immigration ballot proposal by a 3-to-2 margin. That was not the end of it, however (see timeline, p. 16, and story, p. 11). The extensive and hard-fought battle for control of the Sierra Club would continue right through 2005, when the last nativist attempt was beaten back decisively.

Now, with immigration reform back as a major national issue, a whole series of new nativist efforts to appeal to environmentalists has been launched by many of the same people who were behind the attempted “hostile takeover” of the Sierra Club. But the mainstream of the environmental movement, meanwhile, has gone in the other direction. Today, most environmentalists see blaming immigrants for environmental degradation as too simplistic (for more, see essay, p. 13).

“The ‘keep them at home’ refrain of the U.S. anti-immigration movement assumes an automatic connection between immigrant-related population growth and environmental degradation,” said Betsy Hartmann, director of the Population and Development Program at Hampshire College and the author of a book on the politics of population control. “But no such automatic connection exists. Take the issue of urban sprawl. ... ‘Smart growth’ advocates identify the main causes of sprawl as poor land-use planning, zoning regulations and tax laws — not population growth and immigration. In other words, it’s not so much the number of people that matters, but how they live.”

### **Back at You**

The Sierra Club defeats were painful ones for the nativist movement and, for a time, restrictionists essentially licked their wounds. But it wasn’t long before the immigration opponents launched new efforts to seduce environmentalists.

In 2007, Beck’s group started a website called *Sprawl City*. Focusing on how “uncontrolled immigration” threatens “America’s environmental stability,” the site blames immigrants for creating sprawl. It is registered to Beck’s NumbersUSA and relies, it says, on research by Beck and Leon Kolankiewicz, a man who had written for key nativist groups for years and would later advise PFIR. In 2008, a very similar site, *Apply the Brakes*, was mounted by a group that included one of the principals

in the nativist attempt to take over the Sierra Club (see also timeline, p. 16).

But the nativists' real attention-getting move of 2008 came with their attempt to directly target environmentalists rather than their organizations. A series of expensive, full-page ads — signed by a previously unheard-of organization with the unwieldy name of America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning (ALT) — appeared that year in relatively liberal publications, including *The Nation*, *Harper's Magazine* and *The New York Times*. "We're the nation's leading experts on population and immigration trends and growth," boasted the ads, which depicted highway gridlock and argued that using alternative energy resources and simultaneously reducing immigration would "reduce the threat" of rising prices of fuel and other resources. Another version of the ad warned "progressive thinkers" that the natural resources and future of the United States were in jeopardy if the country allowed continued immigration.

ALT is actually a coalition of five leading nativist organizations: FAIR, the American Immigration Control Foundation, The Social Contract Press, Californians for Population Stabilization and NumbersUSA. All five have received funding from Tanton's U.S. Inc. foundation, and the first three are listed as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) because of the virulent nature of their advocacy and, in FAIR's case, its ties to white supremacy.

The ads didn't come cheap. They were produced by Davis & Company Advertising Agency in Virginia Beach, Va., which tax records show was paid, between 2006 and 2008, by FAIR (\$1.3 million), NumbersUSA (\$1.6 million) and U.S. Inc. (\$470,000). Officials of the agency did not return calls seeking comment.

Another effort begun in 2008 is just coming to fruition today. Funded to the tune of \$100,000 by Tanton's U.S. Inc., the "Tomorrow's America" project is a new documentary series being created by Starlight Media Corp. That company, run by one George A. Colburn, is located near Tanton's home in Petoskey, Mich., and lists Tanton's office as its point of contact. According to the project's website, the films will portray "significant negative impacts" of both documented and undocumented immigrants on the environment. Preview clips show that a series of Tanton allies are interview subjects, including Beck, former Colorado governor Dick Lamm, and the late Father Patrick Bascio, who wrote *On the Immorality of Illegal Immigration*. The first edition of Bascio's 2009 book was published by American Free Press, a hate group that also publishes an anti-Semitic and conspir-

acy-minded periodical of the same name.

### 'Progressives' for Reform

At around the same time that the ALT ads were appearing, Roy Beck began circulating a letter in search of an executive director to head a new group to be called Progressives for Immigration Reform. PFIR seemed to emerge directly from the ashes of the attempt to take over the Sierra Club in 2004 board elections (for details, see story, p. 11); the three men making up that year's nativist slate — Dick Lamm, former Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Executive Director Frank Morris and Cornell University entomology professor David Pimentel — joined PFIR's boards at the start. By the time it opened its doors in 2009, PFIR had landed funding from the \$400-million-plus Colcom Foundation (see story, p. 12), whose vice president of philanthropy is Tanton's close friend, fawning biographer and former U.S. Inc. staff member John Rohe.

PFIR's site describes the organization as dedicated to exposing the threat of "mass migration" and seeking "population stabilization." A PFIR official last year told SPLC that current immigration policies are "unsustainable with regard to energy consumption, availability of fresh water and preservation of wilderness."

The executive director who was finally selected to head PFIR was, in many ways, hardly a surprise. She was Leah Durant, an African-American lawyer who had earlier worked at FAIR's legal arm, the Immigration Reform Law Institute.

Durant, a former Department of Justice staffer who defended government civil immigration cases, had given FAIR cover on the "diversity" front before. She was a speaker at a 2006 press conference held to announce the creation of Choose Black America (CBA), ostensibly an anti-illegal immigration group composed of concerned African Americans. In fact, as the SPLC pointed out at the time, CBA was a front group whose black "members" were selected, flown to the press conference in Washington, D.C., and lodged there by FAIR. Its spokesman was a white FAIR official, and it fell apart soon afterward.

PFIR's claim to being "progressive" — at least in the way most people understand that word — is dubious at best. It was originally registered as an organization in Colorado in 2007 by Ryan Richard Call, a man who confirmed to the SPLC that he was a former Republican college activist who later held several "Colorado GOP positions." More importantly, Call had been a member of the far-right Students for Academic Freedom, which argued that America's college professors are too liberal



and aimed “to end political abuse of the university.”

A search of federal and state records turned up just one donation by Durant to a political candidate — a 2007 gift to Republican James O’Brien, who was making a bid for a Virginia state senate seat. In his campaign that year, O’Brien attacked his opponent for wanting “to teach children to accept the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Lifestyle.” He also highlighted his perfect record in opposing abortion rights and supporting the National Rifle Association.

In summer 2009, after taking the helm of PFIR, Durant agreed to be interviewed by Tanton’s racist journal *The Social Contract*, which had earlier run special editions on such topics as “Europhobia.” It’s unclear how much she knew about the journal, but it was certainly well known in the circles she and other FAIR lawyers traveled in. Peter Gemma conducted the cover story question-and-answer interview with Durant. Although Durant may not have known it, Gemma was for many years the “media coordinator” for the Capital Region of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), a white supremacist hate group that has described blacks as “a retrograde species of humanity,” once compared the late pop singer Michael Jackson to an ape, and, as part of its basic platform, has long “oppose[d] all efforts to mix the races of mankind.” The CCC also has long railed against the immigration of non-whites to America.

Durant did not respond to repeated phone and E-mail requests for comment this spring. A year earlier, however, she seemed concerned to distance PFIR from Tanton, who founded FAIR, the organization she once worked for. “PFIR has no connection with FAIR, and John Tanton is neither a board member nor founder,” she wrote the SPLC, adding, “Also, as an African American, I take offense at being called racist.” Apparently, the offense was a slight one. A few months after writing those words, Durant attended Tanton’s 33rd annual “Writers Workshop,” where she posed for a photo (above) with Gemma and racist *Social Contract* editor Wayne Lutton.

### The Hypocrisy of Hate

The hypocrisy of nativists seeking to pose as environmentalist liberals can be stunning. Roy Beck — whose NumbersUSA is, together with FAIR, leading the current



Leah Durant (right) poses with Wayne Lutton (left) and Peter Gemma

attempt to recruit liberals — paid some \$444,150 in 2006 and 2007 to NewsMax Media, a far-right online publication that has run articles mocking the idea of global warming and arguing that “there is not a shred of evidence that DDT poses the least kind of threat to the health of the planet’s people.” Unsurprisingly, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, the 1962 book that called DDT into question, is described by

NewsMax as “based on myth.” In fact, dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane was banned in the United States in 1972 due to the harm it caused, and it was later banned worldwide for agricultural use.

Mary Lou Tanton, whose husband first conceived the idea of taking over the Sierra Club, runs the US Immigration Reform PAC. The political action committee has donated to 69 candidates who were ultimately elected. Taken together, these politicians’ average environmental voting score, as compiled and graded by the League of Conservation Voters, is a miserable 14%. One of them, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), has called global warming “the biggest hoax ever.” Another, nativist hardliner and former Colorado congressman Tom Tancredo, received a paltry 3% score. Tanton’s PAC also supported Michael Peroutka, a member of the neo-secessionist League of the South, a hate group that opposes racial intermarriage and says slavery was “God-ordained.” As 2004 presidential candidate for the far-right Constitution Party, Peroutka gave an interview to “The Political Cesspool,” an infamous radio show that has hosted an array of racists and anti-Semites.

For his part, John Tanton, through his U.S. Inc., spent about \$150,000 with a direct-mail fundraising agency called Eberle Associates. Eberle is hardly liberal — it describes itself as the place where “for more than 30 years conservative leaders from around the nation have turned ... [to] realize their dreams.” Among its other clients are The Conservative Caucus, Americans for Tax Reform, American Border Patrol (listed by SPLC as a hate group) and Pro English, a Tanton English-only group.

Tanton’s funders aren’t much different. The Swensrud Foundation has long supported U.S. Inc., FAIR and the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank that began life as part of FAIR. (Two of Swensrud’s trustees, Nancy S. Anthony and Steven B. Swensrud, now sit on FAIR’s

board.) It also backs three conservative groups that have ridiculed the idea of global warming: the Heritage Foundation, the Young America's Foundation, and the Washington Legal Foundation.

The chief political allies of FAIR, NumbersUSA, and most of the country's other major nativist groups are found in the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, headed by U.S. Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-Calif.), a former FAIR lobbyist. The caucus' 95 members score an average 11% on the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) scorecard. Similarly, Reclaim American Jobs, a new worker-friendly congressional caucus started by Beck, has 27 members with an average 8% LCV score.

The activists behind the latest greenwashing attempts are engaging in a series of cynical, self-interested attempts to recruit environmentalists that have little to do with a serious effort to confront environmental problems. The hypocrisy of their claim to be "progressives" is, in many

cases, self-evident. But their well-orchestrated attempts in the past, like the 2004 siege of the Sierra Club, should serve as a warning — the nativists, like wolves in sheep's clothing, are wily and capable opponents.

"John Tanton and the anti-immigration network he built have been greenwashing their racist agenda for far too long," said Tarso Ramos, executive director of Political Research Associates, a Massachusetts organization that has long monitored the American radical right. "These folks haven't done a thing to reduce American consumption rates, constrain extractive industries or hold polluters accountable. Yet they're working overtime to convince actual environmentalists to do their dirty work — blaming immigrants for environmental degradation."

# An Early Battle

## Defending the Sierra Club

The recent efforts of nativists to swing environmentalists into the anti-immigration camp are hardly the first. Their most pitched battle in recent memory — and one that was beaten back only after a protracted struggle — involved a series of attempts between 1998 and 2005 to take control of the 750,000-member Sierra Club.

The club had been in the sights of the nativist movement going back to at least 1986, when movement maestro John Tanton first suggested in a private memo that the club would make a rich prize. When it shifted in 1996 from a long-held position similar to that of Tanton’s to neutrality on the immigration question, Tanton and other activists urgently launched a major effort to reverse its position.

Ultimately, it came to a 1998 vote by club members on whether to stick with immigration neutrality or, as the Tanton forces hoped, move to an anti-immigration position under the theory that immigrants were largely responsible for environmental degradation. What amounted to an internal war quickly developed, with the club’s nativist forces organizing under the rubric of Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization (SUSPS). And the battle was not entirely internal: Barbara Coe, the head of a hate group called the California Coalition for Immigration Reform, claimed she got 6,500 of her members to join and vote for the nativist plank — this despite the fact that she candidly admitted she was no “tree-hugger.”

In the end, club members voted 60%-40% to retain its neutral stance on immigration, following the advice of then-executive director Carl Pope, who had described the nativist position as “wrong” and likely to be seen as racist. The newly adopted resolution called for action against the “root causes of global population problems” — like poverty — rather than scapegoating immigrants.

The next year, SUSPS decided to change its tactics and make an attempt to take over the club’s board of directors. Over the next several elections, the group was able to get three of its nativist candidates onto the board. Then, in 2004, it put up five candidates in a bid to finally win a board majority.

A titanic battle ensued, prompted in part by a letter from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to Sierra

Club officials warning of an imminent “hostile takeover” attempt by nativist forces. The SPLC’s letter cautioned that hate groups were asking their members to join the club in order to vote for the nativist board slate. Before it came to a vote, at least 20 hate groups were urging their members to join in the struggle for control of the Sierra Club.

The SPLC, which believed that most club members would oppose the nativists if they fully understood what they stood for, worked to prevent the takeover. Morris Dees, co-founder of the SPLC, ran for a club board seat in the same election not to win, but so that he could use his candidate’s statement (which is included on club ballots) to warn club members of the intentions of the nativist slate.

When it finally came to a vote, the SUSPS-endorsed candidates lost by remarkable 10-to-1 margins, enraging many on the nativist side.

The last attempt to take over the club came a year later, but by then club members had largely been inoculated against the views of the nativists. Another proposed policy change, similar to that rejected in 1998, was put on the ballot. But it was rejected easily, with votes running 5-to-1 against it.

The defeat was a bitter one for Tanton and his allies. Jerry Kammer, a senior fellow at the Tanton-founded Center for Immigration Studies who has also attacked the SPLC, presented a report in 2009 to denounce the club’s alleged capitulation to “cynicism and political correctness.” “Strategic Negligence,” he titled his 4,000-plus-word jeremiad, “How the Sierra Club’s Distortions on Border and Immigration Policy are Undermining its Environmental Legacy.”

# The Foundations

## Funding the Greenwashers

The recent attempts by nativist groups and activists to convince environmentalists to oppose immigration have not paid for themselves. Behind the “greenwashers” have been several major right-wing foundations.

The most important may be the **Colcom Foundation**, a \$400-million-plus entity founded in 1996 by Cordelia Scaife May of the far-right Scaife family. May is a close friend and long-time funder of John Tanton, the man who started the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and who spearheaded the idea of trying to convert environmentalists to the nativist cause. And Colcom’s vice president is John Rohe, who worked for years at Tanton’s U.S. Inc. foundation and once wrote a fawning biography of Tanton and his wife. In 2008, Colcom gave four groups started by Tanton — FAIR, U.S. Inc., the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and NumbersUSA — a total of nearly \$8.5 million, part of it earmarked for work on the “impact of immigration” on the environment. In 2009, according to Colcom’s website, it also supported the newly established Progressives for Immigration Reform, now the leading greenwashing organization in the country. Colcom also funds genuine environmental groups like The Conservation Fund, the National Tropical Botanical Garden and the Pennsylvania Resources Council.

Colcom also funded three organizations listed as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Between 2007 and 2009, the foundation gave \$100,000 to American Border Patrol, \$470,000 to the American Immigration Control Foundation, and \$255,000 to the VDARE website’s parent foundation.

The **Weeden Foundation** has long supported both nativist and environmental groups. Alan Weeden, president of the foundation, also serves on FAIR’s board of directors. In 2008, the foundation supported CIS, NumbersUSA and Population-Environment Balance (whose president, Virginia Abernethy, is a self-described white separatist and member of the baldly racist Council of Conservative Citizens). It also funds environmental stalwarts like the National Resources Defense Council and the Earth Island Institute. It does not, however, support the powerhouse Sierra Club, which Weeden’s brother and fellow foundation official Don Weeden described in 2009 as having “just dropped domestic population growth as an issue.”

Other organizations that have supported both nativist and environmental groups include the **Blair Foundation** and the **Smith Richardson Foundation**.

# The Greening of Hate

## An Environmentalist's Essay

BY BETSY HARTMANN

I first encountered the greening of hate — the scapegoating of immigrants for environmental degradation — when I was invited to debate Virginia Abernethy of the Carrying Capacity Network at an environmental law conference in Oregon in 1994. Although the topic was population, I quickly realized I wasn't debating a fellow environmentalist or family planning advocate, but rather an anti-immigrant activist for whom population and carrying capacity were euphemisms for circling our wagons and closing our borders. It turns out Abernethy is a member of the white supremacist Council of Conservative Citizens. She opposes racial "mixing."

My encounter with Abernethy was just one small tip of the iceberg of an organized right-wing movement against immigrants that cloaks itself in green language to lure environmentalists into the fold. Its main claim is that immigration, by increasing U.S. population growth, drives environmental degradation, causing traffic congestion, urban sprawl, water shortages, forest loss, and greenhouse gas emissions, to name a few. When immigrants come to the U.S., the argument goes, they adopt American lifestyles and consumption patterns, so they should stay home in their poor countries where they have a lighter ecological footprint. Typically, anti-immigrant groups move seamlessly from portraying immigrants as an environmental burden to painting them as an economic burden on taxpayers, schools, hospitals and other public services.

First, some facts to put population growth and immigration into perspective. The U.S. population is currently 308 million and could reach between 399 million and 458 million by 2050. While immigration accounts for approximately one-third of U.S. population growth, natural increase accounts for the other two-thirds. Because the U.S. has a relatively youthful population, births continue to outnumber deaths, though that could change as the population ages. Future levels of immigration are hard to predict and will depend to a large extent on the state of the U.S. economy. For example, immigration levels have decreased since the beginning of the current recession.

On a global scale, it's worth noting that the population "explosion" of the previous century is over. In the last few decades, population growth rates have come down all over the world so that the average number of children

per woman in the developing world is less than three and predicted to drop to two by 2050. The momentum built into our present numbers means that world population will continue to grow to about nine billion in 2050, after which it is expected to stabilize. The challenge before us is to plan for the addition of that three billion people, wherever they are located, in environmentally sustainable ways.

The "keep them at home" refrain of the U.S. anti-immigrant movement assumes an automatic connection between immigration-related population growth and environmental degradation. But no such automatic connection exists. Take the issue of urban sprawl. In New England, where I live, sprawl has increased while population has decreased, a phenomenon that is occurring in many other urbanized areas in the U.S. experiencing population loss. Pittsburgh and Cleveland are two examples. "Smart growth" advocates identify the main causes of sprawl as poor land-use planning, zoning regulations and tax laws — not population growth and immigration. In other words, it's not so much the number of people that matters, but how they live. As for all those traffic jams supposedly caused by immigrants, it's America's crazy love affair with the automobile, cheaply priced gasoline and lack of public transport that are at the real root of the problem.

The argument that it's better to keep poor people in poor countries so they consume less is just plain wrong on a number of counts. First, it diverts attention from the urgent need to address overconsumption: with only 5% of the world's population, the U.S. presently consumes 20% of its resources. Whatever the rate of immigration,

well-off Americans need to change their lifestyles for the future of the planet.

Second, the assumption that immigrating to the U.S. necessarily turns people into super-consumers is a spurious one. Many immigrant communities bring with them traditions of greater respect for the environment. In my hometown of Amherst, Mass., Cambodian immigrants helped spur a revival in community gardens. In nearby Holyoke, Puerto Rican immigrants are revitalizing the depressed city in one of the most successful urban renewal and agriculture projects in the country, *Nuestras Raíces* (Our Roots).

Third, protecting the environment does not mean you have to keep people poor. Contrary to anti-immigrant rhetoric, it's possible to raise incomes *and* improve the environment at the same time. In the U.S., "green jobs" and "green recovery" programs represent a win-win strategy to provide decent employment and incomes, improve energy conservation, support green technological innovation, and fight global warming. All over the world, in rich and poor countries alike, people are using the climate crisis as an opportunity to link ecological goals with new kinds of economic and technological development that raise living standards without razing the environment.

But the anti-immigrant movement has only one solution for global warming: stop immigration. Activists claim that when immigrants move to the U.S., they consume a lot more energy than they would at home and so they and their offspring are responsible for growing American carbon emissions. "The United States will not be able to achieve any meaningful reductions in CO2 emissions without serious economic and social consequences for American citizens unless immigration is sharply curtailed," claims a recent report by the Federation for American Immigration Reform.

In other words, let's build border fences instead of taking steps to conserve energy, switch to renewables and implement a sensible climate policy in step with European nations like Germany and Denmark that are ahead of the curve. Such an approach would bring serious economic and social *benefits* to American citizens; instead of lagging behind, the U.S. could become a leader in green technology, giving a much-needed boost to the economy.

Moreover, carbon emissions are not linked strongly to population growth in North America (or elsewhere). Writing in the journal *Environment and Urbanization*, climate expert David Satterthwaite notes that while North America contributed about 4% of world population growth between 1950-2005, it was responsible for 20% of the growth in global carbon dioxide emissions from

1950-80 and 14% from 1980-2005. Meanwhile, the few countries in the world where population growth rates still remain high, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, have the lowest per capita carbon emissions.

When all is said and done, the anti-immigrant movement's response to climate change is not all that different from climate deniers who claim global warming isn't a problem and we should just go on consuming fossil fuels the good old American way. Anti-immigrant groups may pay lip service to the problem of climate change but, like the deniers, they have no interest in finding real solutions.

Given the many holes in their logic, and repeated exposés by hate-watch groups like the SPLC, why is the anti-immigrant movement still able to get away with this environmental charade? To answer that question, one needs to understand more fully the role of population control ideas and interests in the American environmental movement.

As the U.S. conservation movement gathered steam in the early 1900s, so did the eugenics movement, which promoted the view that Nordic and Anglo-Saxon races were genetically superior to all others. Many of the early conservationists were eugenicists who believed in maintaining the purity of both nature and the gene pool. In her book *Eugenic Nation*, Alexandra Stern describes how influential conservationists in California viewed Mexican immigrants as a serious biological and cultural threat to society and the environment.

Eugenics was eventually discredited in the U.S., but not before thousands of poor men and women had been compulsorily sterilized to remove them from the gene pool. Moreover, eugenics lived on in the environmental movement through the prominence of figures such as the late biologist Garrett Hardin. As late as the 1990s, Hardin was accepting support from the main financier of eugenics research in the U.S., the Pioneer Fund, which the SPLC lists as a hate group. His famous 1974 article on "Lifeboat Ethics" advocated throwing the poor masses overboard for the survival of the elite and targeted immigrants for "speeding up the destruction of the environment of the rich countries."

The 1960s brought another unfortunate convergence, this time between the environmental movement and population control. By the end of that decade, reducing the population growth of poor countries had become an essential element of U.S. foreign policy. The main motive was not environmental; rather, population growth was seen as retarding economic growth and fomenting political instability, making countries more susceptible to Communist influence. But increasingly, the popular media couched these Cold War calculations in environ-

mental terms to build popular support for American population-control efforts overseas. Images such as the “population bomb” became a lens through which the public and policymakers alike came to view the relationship of poor people to the environment. The overconsumption of the rich and corporate plundering of the planet’s resources were let off the hook as poor women’s fertility became synonymous with the felling of forests, polluting of rivers and desertification of farmland.

In many ways, this focus on population control threw the American environmental movement off track. By shifting the blame elsewhere, to the proverbial dark-skinned Other, it prevented many Americans from taking a deeper look at their own role, and the role of the U.S. government and corporations, in causing environmental degradation at home and abroad. It distorted family planning policy as the provision of birth control became a coercive tool in the war on population growth, rather than a means to improve women’s health and choices. It alienated people of color and immigrants from the environmental movement and left the door wide open to the greening of hate.

Fortunately, in recent years things have changed for the better. In 1994, a worldwide movement of women’s rights activists culminated in the reform of international population policy at the U.N. population conference in Cairo. Access to good-quality, voluntary family planning became part of a broader strategy to raise the status of women. The environmental justice movement challenged

mainstream American environmentalists to acknowledge the disproportionate impact of pollution on communities of color, and the growing voice of immigrants in that movement raised the profile of their environmental stewardship and leadership.

But there is still a long ways to go. The idea of a “population bomb” has suddenly come back in vogue with a vengeance, tied to fears of global warming. The rhetoric of some population and environment groups is edging dangerously toward the same arguments used by proponents of the greening of hate. A recent mass mailing by Zero Population Growth, for example, blames population growth for traffic congestion, overcrowded schools, childhood asthma, poverty, famine, rain forest depletion and global warming. For environmentalists, the real challenge ahead is to remain vigilant about who is saying what and why, and to continue building a broad-based, democratic environmental movement where immigrants are welcomed as part of the solution.

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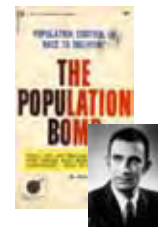
## Nativists and Environmentalists

# A Timeline

*Nativists in America have been working to enlist environmentalists as allies since the late 1960s. This is partly due to the fact that many leaders of the contemporary anti-immigration movement first came to immigration issues from the left, typically as a result of their interest in environmentalism and, more precisely, the effect of swelling population on the environment. It is also a function of the fact that leading nativists, many of whom are bigots, have sought to shield themselves from charges of racism by finding allies on the left who are also immigration restrictionists — “greenwashing,” as the practice is sometimes known. A good example is John Tanton, who largely founded the modern nativist movement. Starting out as a Sierra Club activist in the 1960s, Tanton increasingly grew concerned about the growth of the population of the United States and became head of the Sierra Club’s Population Committee in the early 1970s. Over time, Tanton came to see immigration and burgeoning population as the root cause of most environmental degradation — at the same time that he began to characterize Latino and other non-white immigrants as having a degenerative effect on American culture and society. What follows is a timeline that summarizes the efforts of Tanton, his allies and others to convert “progressive” environmentalists to their cause despite the white nationalism that is at the core of the worldview of many of them. In order to save space, individuals’ and organizations’ full names are used only on first reference; full individual names and brief biographies, along with group acronyms, are listed in an appendix (p. 25).*

**1968**


The environmentalist Sierra Club (SC) publishes *The Population Bomb* by Paul Ehrlich, who was encouraged to undertake the project by David Brower (left), a longtime SC executive director. The book, defining population as an environmental issue and suggesting coercion be used in underdeveloped countries to depress fertility, surpasses Rachel Carson’s landmark 1962 work *Silent Spring* to become the best-selling ecology book of the 1960s. Also published in 1968 is ecologist Garrett Hardin’s famous Malthusian essay, “The Tragedy of the Commons.” Hardin is a believer in eugenics (the “science” of selective breeding aimed at producing better humans) whose research is backed by the racist grant-maker Pioneer Fund (PF). The essay concludes, “Freedom to breed will bring ruin to all.”


**1970**

**April 22** The first Earth Day, organized by Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson, is celebrated. “Population will inevitably and completely outstrip whatever small increases in food supplies we make,” Ehrlich says on the occasion. “The death rate will increase until at least 100-200 million people per year will be starving to death during the next 10 years.”



**June 1970** Michigan environmentalist John Tanton attends the First National Congress on Optimum Population and the Environment in Chicago, where he meets population-control activists including Ehrlich and Hardin.

**1971**


Tanton becomes chairman of the SC’s National Population Committee, where he will serve until 1975. Also in the early 1970s, Tanton is active in his hometown Petoskey, Mich., chapter of the SC and other environmental groups.

**1973**

Tanton joins Zero Population Growth (ZPG). In 1975, he will become ZPG president, a position he holds until 1977. The movement will falter in the late 1970s as population concerns ease because U.S. fertility rates are falling sharply.

**1974**

Population-Environment Balance (PEB), initially named The Environmental Fund, is founded to stabilize U.S. population in order to protect the environment. PEB pushes for a moratorium on immigration.



**1977**

Tanton quits ZPG after the group moves away from treating immigration as a major cause of population growth.

**1978**

**May 5-6** The SC urges the federal government to examine the impact of immigration policies on population trends and environmental resources. It argues that each region of the world must achieve a balance between population and resources.

**1979**

Tanton founds the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) with the help of other former ZPG members angered by ZPG's lack of interest in immigration restriction.

**1980**

SC officials testify to the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Reform that it is "obvious that the numbers of immigrants the United States accepts affects our population size" and adds that it is an "important question how many immigrants the United States wants to accept."

**1984**

Tanton holds the first of a series of private, biannual policy retreats, calling them WITANS meetings after the Witena-gemot councils convened by 15th-century English kings to discuss affairs of state. Participants include leaders from FAIR and other groups created by or tied to Tanton. Tanton chooses the sessions' topics, supplies background reading material, and writes a memo for the discussions.

**1986**

Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) is founded by former members of the California chapter of ZPG. Unlike ZPG, CAPS blames high immigration levels for ravaging California's environment. On its board are Otis Graham, a close Tanton friend, and UCLA astronomy professor Ben Zuckerman. An emeritus board member is David Brower, the SC's first executive director. In later years, CAPS will accept funding from the PF, which supports studies linking race and intelligence.

**Oct. 10** Tanton distributes a set of private documents, later known as the "WITAN memos," to colleagues at FAIR and elsewhere (the memos will be leaked two years later). In them, among other things, he suggests a campaign to convince the SC and other environmental groups to see immigration as a threat. "The Sierra Club may not want to touch the immigration issue," he writes, "but the immigration issue is going to touch the Sierra Club! (To mention just one group.)"

**1988**

**March 30** Tanton writes Gregory Curtis of the far-right Cordelia Scaife May Foundation regarding immigrants' purported lack of environmental values. "What will happen when [the white population] goes into minority status, and the groups that comprise the new coalition majorities don't share the same [environmental] values?" Tanton wonders. "Will all the gains be lost in the twenty-first century, when there is no longer a majority to defend them in the legislature?"



**September** Tanton's 1986 WITAN memos are leaked to *The Arizona Republic* in the midst of a battle in Arizona over a law that would mandate that all government documents be written in English. At the time, Tanton is head of U.S. English (USE), which is backing the proposal. The memos warn of a coming "Latin onslaught" and fret that high Latino birth rates will lead "the present majority to hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile." Tanton also asks if Latinos will "bring with them the tradition of the *mordida* [bribe], the lack of involvement in public affairs." Arnold Schwarzenegger (left) and Walter Cronkite (right) both quit the USE board over the memos' racially inflammatory language, as does executive director Linda Chavez, a conservative commentator. Tanton resigns from USE.

**1989**

**Spring** The SC issues its strongest immigration-restriction policy statement to date, saying, "Immigration to the United States should be no greater than that which will permit achievement of population stabilization in the United States." It adds: "Sierra Club statements on immigration will always make the connection between immigration, population increase in the U.S., and the environmental consequences thereof." But the SC says it is interested only in the numbers of immigrants, not who they are.

**1992**

**January** CAPS, FAIR and PEB join together to form a new coalition, the California Coalition to Stabilize Population (CCSP).

**1993**

**March** The SC's Population Committee proposes a policy to the club's board that states, in part, that "net immigration to the United States and Canada (immigration minus emigration) should be reduced so that their levels are consistent with the U.S. and Canadian population policies." But the SC's Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Task Force denounces the proposal, saying: "Many Club members and leaders believe that the policy is ill-conceived, insensitive and racist and will greatly damage the Club's ability to become a more diverse and inclusive organization."

## 1994

The Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA), a conservation organization founded by sportsmen, issues a statement saying “international migration must be addressed as part of a comprehensive strategy to manage U.S. population size.”

**Feb. 17** During the debate over California’s harshly anti-immigrant Proposition 187, Tanton writes to FAIR Executive Director Dan Stein and the FAIR board to complain that the SC is moving away from the anti-immigration cause. “No population group (save Population/Environment Balance and NPG [Negative Population Growth]) will say that immigration is a U.S. population problem; nor will any of the environmental groups,” he frets. “We’re on our own.”

**March** The National Audubon Society (NAS) board debates a draft policy calling for no net increase in immigration, one of many considered in a year-long debate. Ultimately, the NAS will describe immigration as driving population growth that the group says is responsible for sprawl, traffic and overconsumption of scarce goods.



**October** The SC comes out officially against California’s Prop 187, which would deny children of undocumented workers the ability to attend school, among other things. SC Executive Director Carl Pope calls the ballot measure “wrong,” “stupid” and “counterproductive,” and adds, “The last thing we need is more sick Californians, more children without inoculations, more patients in crisis in our emergency rooms.” For its part, FAIR supports the measure. A senior FAIR official, western regional representative Rick Oltman (above), chairs the Yes on 187 Campaign.

**December** *How Many Americans: Population, Immigration and the Environment* is co-published by Sierra Club Books and the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), a nativist think tank conceived of by Tanton and initially a part of FAIR. The book, which advocates aggressive deportation and other measures meant to prevent undocumented immigration, is apparently the final immigration publication issued by the SC. It is by Leon Bouvier, who works with CIS and NumbersUSA (NUSA), another Tanton-connected group, and Lindsey Grant, who later becomes a supporter of Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization (SUSPS). (Some 15 years later, Grant will be on the masthead of Tanton’s *The Social Contract*, a journal that has published racially charged articles on such topics as “Europhobia.”)

## 1996

**Feb. 22** The Wilderness Society (WS) approves a policy statement calling for slower population growth in the U.S. “One-half to two-thirds of U.S. population growth results from domestic births and longer life spans,” WS says. “One-third to one-half is due to immigration. To bring population levels to ecologically sustainable levels, both birth rates and immigration rates need to be reduced.”

**Feb. 24** The SC board abandons its restrictionist 1989 policy, opting to “take no position on immigration levels or on policies governing immigration into the United States,” and forbidding anyone speaking in the club’s name to call for immigration reduction as a way to reach U.S. population stabilization. The board refuses a straight up-or-down vote on the resolution, instead adding to that year’s internal SC ballot a proposal affirming the statement and calling for action against the “root causes of global population problems.” That decision spawns a countermovement by SC members who propose a resolution that calls for a “reduction in net immigration.”



**Late February** Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization (later renamed by its SUSPS acronym alone) is formed by Zuckerman (left), the CAPS board member and UCLA astronomy professor, and Alan Kuper (right), a FAIR board of advisors member and physics professor at Case Western Reserve, in order to lobby the SC to oppose immigration.

## 1997

**Early 1997** Carrying Capacity Network (CCN) and the especially hard-line anti-immigration group Americans for Immigration Control (AIC) sponsor two conferences that bring together environmentalists and anti-immigration activists. After one, Eric Draper, a senior vice president at NAS, says he “was uncomfortable” with the tone of a FAIR speaker and tells a reporter that “I think the attempt to marry the environment with immigration is a very hard sell and I don’t think most people will buy it.”

**Feb. 2** Tanton offers to financially support SUSPS’s efforts to change the SC’s stance to an anti-immigration position, writing to SUSPS’ Kuper: “I should be able to provide you with several thousand dollars of help for the campaign. Think expansively. How much could you put to good use?”

**April 22** ZPG board member and Tanton ally Joyce Tarnow writes to fellow board members to say ZPG's position on legal immigration levels is "terribly inadequate" and to urge a dialogue with anti-immigration organizations. Later in the year, after 27 years in leadership positions with the group, Tarnow resigns, citing ZPG's "unwillingness to take a rational position on legal immigration reform."



**August** Representatives of 40 smaller environmental organizations — groups like LA Earth First! and Friends of the Sea Otter — reportedly gather in Estes Park, Colo., along with openly bigoted groups like the California Coalition for Immigration Reform (CCIR) and Voice of Citizens Together (both of which are later listed as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center, or SPLC). Together, the groups form the Alliance for Stabilizing America's Population, or ASAP! The event, organized by PEB, features speeches by former Sen. Gaylord Nelson (above), University of Colorado emeritus physics professor Albert Bartlett, and syndicated columnist Georgie Anne Geyer, all close Tanton friends. ASAP! calls for a five-year ceiling on immigration at 100,000 a year and alleges, contrary to well-settled law, that the 14th Amendment does not guarantee citizenship to children born to undocumented workers.

**October** The *Detroit Free Press* reports that Tanton and SC board member Dave Foreman, co-founder of EarthFirst!, are introducing a proposed SC anti-immigration policy for a direct vote by the entire membership. Anne Ehrlich, whose husband Paul wrote *The Population Bomb*, officially sponsors the measure. In the next year, advocates will gather enough signatures to get it on the SC's internal ballot.

**Dec. 3** The SC's Pope tells the *Lewiston [Idaho] Morning Tribune* that the Ehrlich proposal "is not America at its best. It's America at its worst. And for the Sierra Club to be dragged into this kind of cess-pool is very unfortunate."

## 1998

NUSA releases a video, "Immigration by the Numbers: An Environmental Choice," that is narrated by Monique Miller of Wild Earth (a group that later disappears). In the film, Miller blames sprawl on immigrants.

**February** The SC's 550,000 members receive ballots asking them if they support "Alternative A," requiring the SC to advocate ending population growth, in part by restricting immigration, or "Alternative B," which reaffirms the SC's 1996 policy of neutrality on immigration. Alternative A, which also calls for no more than 200,000 immigrants to be admitted annually, is supported by Kuper, Foreman, Nelson, Paul Ehrlich, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society leader Paul Watson, Rainforest Action leader Randy Hayes and Worldwatch Institute leader Lester Brown.



**April 25** After a heated campaign featuring charges of "the greening of hate," the SC announces its members have voted 60%-40% against changing the club's neutral stance on immigration (although just 13% of SC members voted), a position also supported by the Natural Resources Defense Council, the NAS and Friends of the Earth. Still, nearly 30,000 people vote for the anti-immigration position. SC Executive Director Pope (above) says "overpopulation is, without question, a fundamental cause of the world's ills," but that a vote in favor of Alternative A would mean that the SC "would be perceived as assisting people whose motivations are racist."

## 1999

**Oct. 28** Tanton writes in a file memo that he discussed the SC vote with Alan Weeden, president of the Weeden Foundation and a long-time funder of FAIR, where Weeden is a board member. Tanton says Weeden's foundation put \$90,000 into mailings about the SC vote but that Weeden, while disappointed in the outcome, still "feels it helped move the issue forward." Tanton also reports "low-key talks that are now going on in the Club, perhaps leading to another vote."

**Late April** SUSPS changes tactics and fields its first candidates for the SC board of directors, Kuper and Watson, in elections to be held in April 2000.

**May** Brower, the former SC executive director, fails in an attempt to replace Chuck McGrady as SC president. Brower wanted the SC to oppose immigration.

## 2000

**Dec. 23** In a letter to Tanton employee Roy Beck, who heads NUSA, Tanton says the SC board must be convinced that "the grassroots out there agree with the proposed stance on immigration [backed by Tanton and Beck]. What we need to do is apply pressure to convince them, not try to talk them into taking some action that they feel — rightly or wrongly — would bring down the wrath of the membership on them."

Kuper founds Comprehensive U.S. Sustainable Population, which distributes a scorecard of legislative voting records. Kuper combines anti-immigration grades and environmental grades assigned by other organizations to create a composite "environmental grade."

**Jan. 1** *The Journal of Policy History* publishes “The Environmental Movement’s Retreat from Advocating U.S. Population Stabilization,” by Beck and Leon Kolankiewicz of CCN.

**February** PEB sends an alert to its members announcing that Kuper, “long time Sierra Club member and population stabilization advocate,” will run for the SC board in April. Highlighting Kuper’s role in founding SUSPS, PEB’s alert urges its readers, “If you’re a Sierra Club member, be sure to vote!”



**Late April** SUSPS-backed SC board candidates Kuper and Watson are defeated. In protest, Brower (left) resigns from the board, saying, “Overpopulation is perhaps the biggest problem facing us, and immigration is part of that problem.”

**2001**

**March** CIS publishes “Forsaking Fundamentals: The Environmental Establishment Abandons U.S. Population Stabilization,” an article by Beck and Kolankiewicz, who writes regularly for CIS.

**April** Changing tactics again, SUSPS gets a statement on the annual SC ballot that blames sprawl on population growth, which for SUSPS is mostly driven by immigration. At the same time, Zuckerman, backed by SUSPS, runs for the board. Both Zuckerman and the ballot proposal are defeated.

**August** SUSPS Chairman Bill Elder testifies to the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims, blaming an “immigration boom” for damaging the environment. Also testifying in the same vein are Frank Morris, a FAIR board member and former executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and David Pimentel, a Cornell professor of entomology who is also on the board of CCN.

**2002**

**April** After dropping his earlier ballot statement opposing immigration, Zuckerman finally wins election to the SC board on a platform of making the SC more visible on college campuses and finding more money for conservation.

**2003**

**April** SUSPS-endorsed candidates Watson (left) and Doug LaFollette (right), Wisconsin’s secretary of state, are elected to the SC board, where they form the beginning of an anti-immigration voting bloc with Zuckerman.



**Fall** SUSPS announces a major push to win an SC board majority opposed to immigration. The group endorses Robert van de Hoek, three-time Colorado governor Richard Lamm (who joined the SC earlier in the year), Kim McCoy, Morris and Pimentel. Lamm and Morris both serve on the board of FAIR, while Pimentel is on the CCN board. Pimentel is interviewed by Tanton’s *The Social Contract*.

**September** Nativist groups start alerting backers about the upcoming SC elections. *The Social Contract* urges supporters to join the SC in time vote for those concerned with “endless U.S. population growth.” The National Immigration Alert List urges followers to vote for directors “who are concerned about the environmental consequences of our immigration-driven U.S. population growth.”

**Oct. 21** Citing notices in the nativist press, the SPLC’s Mark Potok writes to SC President Larry Fahn to warn of a “hostile takeover attempt” by anti-immigration forces.

**November** Watson openly boasts about an attempt to take over the club at the SC’s annual meeting in San Francisco. Earlier, he publicly said that the “heartening thing” was that only 8% of SC members had voted in the prior election, meaning that a small number of new members could sway the entire group’s agenda.



**Late 2003** Severing their longstanding ties with Tanton, Paul and Anne Ehrlich quit the FAIR board. Their ZPG, having already become a relative moderate on the nativist scene, renames itself the Population Connection and embraces the idea that ending poverty — not deporting immigrants — is the key to reducing population.

## 2004

**January** Zuckerman sends fellow SC board members an article from the virulently anti-immigrant VDARE.com website that claims Latinos are spreading disease and crime in the U.S., and that “Hispandering politicians” are allowing this to happen. During the same month, Barbara Coe (right) encourages members of her CCIR, listed by the SPLC as a hate group, to join the SC. (In 1998, Coe made a similar effort, later claiming that 6,500 of her members joined the SC and voted for “Alternative A,” the proposed nativist policy, even though she then told a reporter she was no “tree-hugger.”)



**Jan. 8** SC member and virulent nativist Brenda Walker, a contributor to Tanton’s *The Social Contract*, asks VDARE.com readers to “join the Sierra Club NOW and have your vote influence this debate.” She adds, “The prize is enormous.”

**Jan. 14** Groundswell Sierra, a group formed within the SC to oppose the nativist slate, debuts its website and announces plans to resist the attempted SC board takeover. That same day, SPLC co-founder Morris Dees announces he will run for the SC board — not to win, but to use the ballot statement afforded to every candidate to urge SC members to vote against the nativist slate.

**Jan. 15** Ten former SC presidents write an open letter warning of an “organized effort” by nativists. Three other past presidents sign the letter later, meaning that all living former SC presidents are on record against the takeover attempt.

**Feb. 9** SC board candidates Lamm, Morris and Pimentel sue the Sierra Club, demanding that “fake candidates” who aren’t really seeking election be forced out. One of their targets is Dees.

**Feb. 11** After a review of new SC membership applications, an SC spokeswoman says about 20 racist groups and websites have urged followers to join the SC in order to vote for the nativists. They include VDARE.com, the neo-Nazi website Overthrow.com, and the National Coalition of White Writers.

**Feb. 18** Lamm, Morris and Pimentel unexpectedly drop their lawsuit over “fake candidates.”



**March 28** In an interview showing his immigration concerns are not limited to the environment, Lamm tells *The Denver Post*: “What we’re saying is, culture matters. I think one of the most important questions facing Americans is, how do they preserve their culture with this onslaught of new people and new cultures diluting what we are and who we are?”

**April 21** Concluding a long campaign, SC officials announce that the SUSPS-supported SC board candidates have all been defeated by about 10-to-1 margins.

## 2005

**April 26** SC members reject another proposed policy change to their group’s stance on immigration, with votes running 5-to-1 in opposition.

## 2006

**April 25** Wayne Lutton — a member of several white nationalist hate groups, a long-time Tanton employee and confidante, and editor of *The Social Contract* — is cited in a newspaper article claiming to be a “right-wing green.”

**Spring** A handful of environmentalists gather in Western Oregon to discuss “the decade-long retreat of U.S. environmental organizations from addressing domestic population growth as a key issue in both domestic and global sustainability.” The meeting eventually results in the formation of Apply The Brakes (ATB), a group that calls for immigration restrictions. Among the founders of the group is Bill Elder of SUSPS.

## 2007

The Sprawl City website goes up, focusing on “how uncontrolled immigration levels threaten America’s environmental stability.” In particular, immigrants are blamed for creating sprawl. Registered to NUSA, the site says it relies on research by NUSA leader Beck and Kolankiewicz.

## 2008

The ATB website is inaugurated. Don Weeden, brother of Alan Weeden and another principal of the family foundation that bankrolls both major nativist groups and environmental organizations, tells a CIS panel that the ATB will take on the population consequences of immigration to the U.S. environment. The ATB website is run by Elder. Another ATB member is Colorado State University philosophy professor Philip Cafaro.



**June** Full-page ads appear in *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *Harper's Magazine* and other publications seen as liberal, signed by a new group calling itself America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning (ALT). The group is a coalition of five existing organizations — CAPS, NUSA, FAIR, TSC and AICF (the last three are listed as hate groups by the SPLC, and all five have received funding from Tanton). "We're the nation's leading experts on population and immigration trends and growth," boasts one of the ads. Pitched to environmentalists, the ads claim that an immigration-fueled population boom will dramatically worsen traffic congestion and destroy pristine land. One shows a highway clogged with vehicles above the caption, "One of America's Most Popular Pastimes." The other depicts a bulldozer clearing forest above the words, "One of America's Best Selling Vehicles." They are designed by Davis & Co., which FAIR pays \$983,802 in 2008 and \$348,442 in 2007, according to its tax returns.

## 2009

**June** According to the pro-immigrant Center for New Community, NUSA's Beck circulates a letter seeking an executive director for a new organization to be named Progressives for Immigration Reform (PFIR).



**January** Marking a major new nativist effort to reach environmentalists, PFIR is founded with a board of directors and board of advisors largely staffed by people with long histories in Tanton's organizations. Among the board members are three men — Morris, Lamm and Pimentel — who led the attempted 2004 takeover of the SC. PFIR Executive Director Leah Durant (left) is a lawyer who earlier worked for FAIR's legal arm, the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI).

**April 14** To considerable press attention, PFIR releases a poll supposedly showing that "liberals are concerned about the current levels of immigration into the United States and the harmful effect that current immigration policies are having on U.S. population growth, the environment, and the availability of jobs."

**April 28** In a visit to the Washington, D.C., offices of PFIR, Rep. Heath Shuler (R-N.C.) details his plans to introduce legislation increasing border security and requiring verification of employees' legal status. PFIR's Durant tells a reporter: "There is a lot of concern about the impact mass immigration will have on the environment. In fact, there is a natural marriage here between immigration reform and environmental preservation."

**Summer** Tanton's *The Social Contract* features Durant on its cover and runs a six-page article on PFIR inside. Incredibly, given that Durant is black and portrays herself as a "progressive," the article and a question-and-answer interview with Durant are written by Peter Gemma, a longtime official of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), a hate group that opposes racial intermarriage and has described black people as "a retrograde species of humanity."

**June** CIS publishes "The Environmental Argument for Reducing Immigration to the United States," blaming immigrants for sprawl, water shortages and other environmental ills. It is written by Winthrop Staples and ATB's Cafaro, who has also joined PFIR's board of advisors.

**June 3** NUSA's Beck testifies to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on immigration and the environment, claiming that drastically reducing the number of immigrants is "a matter of profound environmental importance for posterity."

**June 23** PFIR's Durant appears on CNN's "Lou Dobbs Tonight" to discuss the group's April poll claiming that liberals are concerned about immigration levels.

**July 1** FAIR releases a report, "Immigration, Energy and the Environment," that blames immigrants for the rise in greenhouses gases.

**Aug. 25** CIS sponsors a panel at the National Press Club on "Immigration, Population, and the Environment: Experts to Debate Impact of Current Policies." The panel includes PFIR's Cafaro, Don Weeden of the Weeden Foundation, and Steven Camarota, director of research for CIS.

**October** CIS publishes "Strategic Negligence: How the Sierra Club's Distortions on Border and Immigration Policy Are Undermining its Environmental Legacy," a report that attacks the SC and claims it has "undermined its environmental legacy."

**October** Negative Population Growth, which receives funding from FAIR, runs an ad in *E-The Environmental Magazine* warning of a “population crisis” that may “destroy our future.”



She is photographed there alongside Lutton (left), who has been active in several white supremacist groups and published in a Holocaust denial journal, and Gemma (center), the CCC official.

**Oct. 4** PFIR’s Durant (right) attends Tanton’s 33rd Annual Writers Workshop.

**Late October** CAPS runs radio ads in California warning that “the real ‘inconvenient truth’” is “the fact that population growth and environmental degradation are related” and “people drive cars, create sprawl, destroy forests and pollute.” The ads suggest that “mass immigration” is driving population growth and thus destroying “natural treasures” through overpopulation.

## 2010

**January** Starlight Media, which is funded by Tanton’s foundation U.S. Inc., announces it is nearly finished with a film, “Tomorrow’s America.” Featuring many leaders of Tanton-linked nativist groups, it focuses on “population growth and immigration” and is meant to “help citizens better understand the history of immigration in the U.S., the mythology that surrounds that history and the roots of current immigration policy in the immigration law of 1965 that led to the new ‘great wave’ of legal immigration in the 1990s.” That narrative echoes Tanton (left) ally Otis Graham (right), the CIS board member who has long argued that a “mythistory” was created during the civil rights movement that falsely depicted America as a “nation of immigrants.”



**Jan. 21** NUSA’s Beck, who describes himself as an environmentalist, speaks on a panel, “Perverse Incentives, Subsidies, and Tax Code Impediments to a Sustainable Economy,” at The New Green Economy conference sponsored by the National Council for Science and the Environment.

**Feb. 26** Mixing environmental with “cultural” concerns, FAIR issues a revealing statement: “Immigration policy must be limited to conserve our environment, open space, and natural resources. It should enhance our national culture, not radically alter or Balkanize it.”

**March** PFIR releases “From Big to Bigger: How Mass Immigration and Population Growth Have Exacerbated America’s Ecological Footprint,” by Kolankiewicz, who now serves on PFIR’s board of advisors. Kolankiewicz argues that “immigration is increasing America’s Ecological Footprint, pushing our country deeper into ecological deficit,” and laments environmentalists’ scant interest in the issue. He writes that “the Environmental Establishment dropped its advocacy and retreated into uncomfortable silence and abject denial on U.S. population.”

**April 1** Jerry Kammer, a former journalist now with CIS, presents an updated version of the CIS paper, “Strategic Negligence: How the Sierra Club’s Distortion on Border and Immigration Policy Are Undermining Its Environmental Legacy,” at the “Breaking Down the Walls” conference at Arizona State University.

**June** FAIR issues an update of a 1999 report, “The Environmentalist’s Guide to a Sensible Immigration Policy.” The report, which is dated April 2010 despite its actual release date, claims that the “principal cause” of urban sprawl is “immigration-related population growth.”

**June 23** Leah Durant of PFIR puts up her first blog post on the popular progressive website, Huffingtonpost.com. PFIR says it intends to post twice weekly on the site.

# Appendix

## Key Groups and Individuals

### ORGANIZATIONS

<b>AIC*</b>	Americans for Immigration Control 8, 12, 18, 22
<b>ALT</b>	America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning 8, 22
<b>ASAP!</b>	Alliance for Stabilizing America's Population 19
<b>ATB</b>	Apply The Brakes 7, 21
<b>CAPS</b>	Californians for Population Stabilization 8, 17, 22, 23
<b>CCC*</b>	Council of Conservative Citizens 9, 12, 13, 22, 23
<b>CCIR*</b>	California Coalition for Immigration Reform 11, 19, 21
<b>CCN</b>	Carrying Capacity Network 13, 18, 20
<b>CCSP</b>	California Coalition to Stabilize Population 17
<b>CIS</b>	Center for Immigration Studies 9, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23
<b>CSMF</b>	Cordelia Scaife May Foundation 17
<b>FAIR*</b>	Federation for American Immigration Reform 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23
<b>GS</b>	Groundswell Sierra 21
<b>IRLI</b>	Immigration Reform Law Institute (legal arm of FAIR) 8, 22
<b>IWLA</b>	Izaak Walton League of America 18
<b>NAS</b>	National Audubon Society 18, 19
<b>NPG</b>	Negative Population Growth 18, 23
<b>NUSA</b>	NumbersUSA 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23
<b>PEB</b>	Population-Environment Balance (initially, The Environmental Fund) 12, 16, 18, 19, 20
<b>PF*</b>	Pioneer Fund 14, 16, 17
<b>PFIR</b>	Progressives for Immigration Reform 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 22, 23
<b>SC</b>	Sierra Club 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
<b>SM</b>	Starlight Media 8, 23
<b>SPLC</b>	Southern Poverty Law Center 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
<b>SUSPS</b>	Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization 11, 18, 21
<b>TSC*</b>	<i>The Social Contract</i> /The Social Contract Press 8, 9, 18, 20, 21, 22
<b>USE</b>	U.S. English 7, 17
<b>USI</b>	U.S. Inc. 4, 8, 9, 12, 23
<b>VDARE*</b>	Website named after Virginia Dare 12, 21
<b>WS</b>	Wilderness Society 18
<b>ZPG</b>	Zero Population Growth (later, Population Connection) 15, 16, 17, 19, 20

\* Listed as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center

### INDIVIDUALS

<b>Roy Beck</b>	Founder and executive director of NUSA 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
<b>David Brower</b>	Former executive director of the SC (d. 2000) 16, 17, 19, 20
<b>Philip Cafaro</b>	Colorado State University philosophy professor, ATB member, member of PFIR board of advisors 21, 22
<b>Steven Camarota</b>	Director of research at CIS 22
<b>Barbara Coe</b>	Founder and chairwoman of CCIR, self-described member of CCC 11, 21
<b>Morris Dees</b>	Co-founder of the SPLC 11, 21



- Leah Durant** Executive director of PFIR, former FAIR attorney 8, 9, 22, 23
- Anne Ehrlich** Sponsor of defeated 1997 SC anti-immigration policy proposal 19, 20
- Paul Ehrlich** Stanford University professor of population studies, author of *The Population Bomb*, spouse of Anne 7, 16, 19, 20
- Bill Elder** Co-founder of ATB, former SUSPS chairman 20, 21
- Larry Fahn** Former president of SC (2003-2005) 20
- Dave Foreman** Co-founder of Earth First!, member of a Sea Shepherd Conservation Society advisory board 19
- Peter Gemma** TSC writer, former “media coordinator” for the Capital Region of CCC, former member of CCC editorial advisory board 9, 22, 23
- Otis Graham** CIS board member, FAIR board of advisors member, former CIS executive director 17, 23
- Garrett Hardin** Former human ecology professor at University of California, Santa Barbara, former member of FAIR board (d. 2003) 14, 16
- Jerry Kammer** CIS senior research fellow, former journalist 11, 23
- Leon Kolankiewicz** PFIR board of advisors, co-creator of Sprawl City website, senior writing fellow and advisory board member of CAPS, writer for CIS, former member of CCN 7, 20, 21, 23
- Alan Kuper** SUSPS co-founder, founder of Comprehensive U.S. Sustainable Population, losing SC board of directors candidate in 2000, former associate professor of applied physics at Case Western Reserve, former FAIR board of advisors member (d. 2008) 18, 19, 20
- Doug LaFollette** Former Wisconsin secretary of state, winning SC board of directors candidate in 2003 20
- Richard Lamm** Member of PFIR board of advisors, former three-time governor of Colorado, losing SC board candidate in 2004, former FAIR board member 7, 8, 20, 21, 22
- Wayne Lutton** Editor of TSC, member of editorial advisory board of the CCC, editorial advisor to the racist *Occidental Quarterly*, contributor to volume published by New Century Foundation and a member of that hate group’s board, former member of board of advisors of the Holocaust-denying Institute for Historical Review and writer for its journal 9, 21, 23
- Frank Morris** Vice president of PFIR board of directors, FAIR board member, CIS board member, chairman of Diversity Alliance for a Sustainable America, former executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, losing 2004 SC board candidate 8, 20, 21, 22
- Gaylord Nelson** Founder of Earth Day, former Wisconsin senator (d. 2005) 16, 19
- Rick Oltman** National media director for CAPS, former FAIR western regional representative, former chairman of Yes on 187 campaign 18
- David Pimentel** Cornell University professor of entomology, member of PFIR board of advisors, member of CCN board, losing 2004 SC board candidate 8, 20, 21, 22
- Carl Pope** Former executive director of SC (1992-2010) 11, 18, 19
- John Tanton** Founder of FAIR, FAIR board member, head of TSC, head of U.S. Inc. foundation, former ZPG president, former chair of the SC’s Population Committee, former head of USE 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
- Joyce Tarnow** Member of FAIR board of advisors, former ZPG board member 19
- Brenda Walker** VDARE contributor 21
- Paul Watson** Founder and president of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, losing 2000 SC board candidate, winning 2003 SC board candidate 19, 20

- Alan Weeden** Board member of FAIR, president of Weeden Foundation *12, 19, 21*
- Ben Zuckerman** University of California, Los Angeles, astronomy and physics professor, member of PFIR board of advisors, co-founder of SUSPS, vice president and former board member of CAPS *17, 18, 20, 21*



THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER is a nonprofit organization that combats hate, intolerance and discrimination through education and litigation. Its Intelligence Project, which prepared this report and also produces the quarterly investigative magazine *Intelligence Report*, tracks the activities of hate groups and the nativist movement and monitors militia and other extremist anti-government activity. Its Teaching Tolerance project helps foster respect and understanding in the classroom. Its litigation arm files lawsuits against hate groups for the violent acts of their members.