

# Global Environmental Pollutants: Is Anthropogenic Activity Despoiling the Planet?

Or is it Mainly the Anti-Human Activity of Multinational Corporations?

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Definition of Anthropogenic: *“an adjective used to describe the environmental pollution and pollutants that originate from human or corporate activity.”*

Conscientious whistleblowers in the honor-the-earth, protect-the-water and assorted other environmental movements regularly point out the glaring reality that it is actually the amoral, conscienceless multinational corporations that are the main cause of local, regional and planetary environmental pollution.

But if an investigative journalist accidentally allows those assertions to be published or voiced, the media’s propaganda machine predictably goes into defensive mode or attack mode, first casting doubt on the whistle-blower’s assertions or else it issues an ad hominem attack upon the whistle-blower.

The corporation’s stable of lawyers and public relations department – with the assistance of assorted media mouthpieces – start mis-directing the public’s perceptions by repeatedly using the “time-honored” phrase of “*human activity*” or “*man-made activity*” for causing the problem (even though all the credible truly scientific evidence implicates “*corporate activity*” for the damage).

Thereafter, especially if the media outlet depends on advertising revenue from the corporate polluter, the whistle-blower will likely be black-balled from further interviews.

Every polluting, fossil fuel-burning multinational corporation could be indicted in any unbiased court of law for crimes against humanity and for crimes against the planet – if any courageous lawyer could be found to prosecute the case. Plenty of solid scientific data exists to convict polluting corporations for their crimes against the planet – if a fair-minded judge could be found that is not beholden to corporate interests.

And any legislative body containing a majority of honorable politicians (that have not taken corporate campaign bribes) would easily pass legislation protecting the planet rather than listening for even another minute to the corrupted “pseudoscience” that is spouted so regularly by the highly-paid mercenary lobbyists that do the bidding their industry paymasters.

It is the rare corporation that does not pollute the earth in the process of mining the earth’s natural resources and in the manufacturing of their products. And then the end-products invariably cause serious pollution in many ways, including the act of disposing of the often toxic used-up product.

## Pentagon SuperFund Sites, the Worst of the Worst

The Pentagon and its military-industrial complex of weapons suppliers are acknowledged to be the worst and most plentiful polluters on the face of the earth, with hundreds of military bases and weapons production sites that qualify for the designation of SuperFund sites. Those sites contain the most toxic by-products of war-making and the environmental pollution is so bad that the government and the taxpayers are on the hook for doing the impossible clean-up!

The same can be said of the mining industry, so that when a mine shuts down, the metallic ore plays out or the mining company goes belly-up, the government and the taxpayers are on the hook to do the clean-up. (The so-called clean-up is particularly difficult in the deadly residue and toxic tailing ponds at the sites of sulfide (sulfuric acid-producing) mines where gold, silver, copper and zinc had been mined.

(For much more information about sulfide mining, see my column on the Butte, Montana SuperFund open pit copper mine that is located just outside of the dying community of Butte, Montana. The Butte mine clearly illustrates the long-term pollution that just one abandoned copper mine invariably causes as it gradually fills up with heavy metals that are dissolved in sulfuric acid that has a highly acidic pH of 2.5 [approximating stomach acid].) The Butte SuperFund site is just one of 16 Montana SuperFund sites that the has been assigned to remediate.

Here is the link: <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/12/poisoned-snow-geese-in-butte-the-new-canaries-warning-us-humans-about-the-toxic-nature-of-copper-mining/>

## Minnesota's 25 EPA SuperFund Sites

Incidentally, Minnesota at one time had over 40 SuperFund sites, with 25 remaining on the EPA's list, including Duluth's St. Louis River site at the old US Steel Plant, where there are carcinogenic PAHs (Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), carcinogenic VOCs [volatile organic chemicals], cyanide, naphthalene, and heavy metals – including mercury – in the sludge at the bottom of the river, where US Steel dumped its chemical and metallic refuse. Most of the Minnesota sites are either corporate refuse site, municipal landfill sites or weapons manufacturing sites. All have serious heavy metal and/or carcinogenic contaminants that are poisoning the ground water, soil and even the air.

The recently discussed irreremediable pollution in the slip near Duluth's Canal Park, where the decommissioned ore boat, the William A. Irvin, is moored, is not large enough to warrant SuperFund status, nor has the upstream St. Louis River Cloquet Paper Mill operation, which, for many decades, discharged toxic paper-processing by-products (especially carcinogenic chlorinated hydrocarbons from the bleaching process) directly into the St. Louis River before it was forced to change its manufacturing operations.

## Corporate Disinformation Tactics

When confronted by damaging information about their corporate processes, one of the early disinformation tactics that CEOs order is to have their public relations propagandists play the "doubt card", which tries to deflect blame for the malfeasance on some other entity, often by producing some pseudoscientific research that the industry concocted in secrecy.

Wealthy corporations have the monetary resources to use that tactic for decades if necessary, thus delaying real remedies while the profits keep rolling in. The “doubt card” tactic is currently being used by climate change deniers, especially the accused, amoral corporations in the Big Tobacco, Big Oil, Big Coal, gas, energy, pipeline, mining, pharmaceutical and weapons industries, despite the evidence for global warming that is everywhere that an unbiased, well-informed person might look.

Big Tobacco particularly has become infamous for casting doubt on whether or not cigarette smoking was a public health problem. Big Tobacco’s executives have even expressed pride in inventing that tactic, stating that doubt was their greatest weapon in delaying government interference in their obscenely profitable industry. Casting doubt delayed the public’s perception that cigarettes were carcinogenic or could cause respiratory illnesses, and thus they got away with murder for decades longer than they should have.

Science-minded physicians like US Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, who served under Ronald Reagan (who was Big Pharma’s, Big Food’s, Big Agribusiness’s and the nuclear weapons industry’s hero), knew the facts about tobacco’s lethality. But Koop and many other unbiased scientists were essentially accused of being conspiracy theorists when they tried to warn the public about the tobacco industry’s dangerous products. Selling highly addictive but highly lucrative products creates life-long customers and patients who will pay almost anything to get their next caffeine, nicotine, opioid or prescription drug fix in order to avoid the painful symptoms of withdrawal.

Is there a more devious way for an entity to make money than to sell customers a highly addictive product that also sickens and even kills its customers, while simultaneously lying about the addictive quality and lethality of its products?

#### Illicit vs. Legal Addictive Drugs

Welcome to the world of sociopathic Big Businesses that profit by pushing illicit – but highly addictive – street drugs like heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine and speed, each of which are intended to get customers addicted, thus becoming regular customers.

And welcome to the world of sociopathic Big Pharma industries that maximize profits by marketing legal – and oftentimes highly addictive – psychopharmaceutical prescription drugs such as “anti-depressants”, tranquilizers, opioids, the so-called ADHD drugs, the various anorexic/weight loss drugs and psycho-stimulating drugs like Ritalin, Strattera, Wellbutrin, Effexor and Provigil. Any adverse effects from these prescription drugs are iatrogenic.

#### Big Pharma and Iatrogenocide

Big Pharma’s psychotropic drug marketing programs are virtually indistinguishable from Big Tobacco’s. Until they were caught in the lie, both industries (falsely) asserted that their products were safe, effective and not addictive, and to this day, they both continue to co-opt their partners in deception (the tobacco sellers and the prescribing physicians, allied health professionals, psych drug salespersons and pharmacists) by convincing those groups to continue prescribing or dispensing these dangerous synthetic chemicals long enough to make their clients physiologically dependent.

And then, when the patient who has been taking brain-altering substances long enough and

then realizes that he might be addicted, or feels sick or out of control and then to get off the drug, he is at high risk of developing withdrawal symptoms (that are usually totally different from the symptoms that caused him to start the drug in the first place).

When withdrawal from addictive drugs occurs, the prescribing physician often erroneously makes a knee-jerk diagnosis that the patient's initial "mental illness" is "relapsing". And then, because of the unfounded assertion that the withdrawal syndrome is just the old disorder coming back, the patient is often told that he will have to take a cocktail of drugs for the rest of his life.

Of course the longer a potentially addictive brain-altering drug is taken, the more likely it will be that the patient will have difficulty overcoming the brain's dependence on the substance, and it doesn't matter whether the drug was legal or illicit. There is also a great likelihood of long-term brain damage as these drugs accumulate with each dose and therefore can continue their neurotoxic adverse effects.

Whether using Big Tobacco's or Big Pharma's addictive products, smokers and drugged-up patients are likely to become lifelong consumers of the products and will be helping both industries keep the drug prices high, the next quarter's financial report positive and the corporation's stock price up; all of which keeps the gravy train going strong for the CEOs who regularly take home tens of millions of dollars annually.

Immediately below is one formula for the successful marketing of prescription psychotropic drugs. These principles are just a variation of how people get hooked on nicotine, heroin and other assorted street drugs.

- 1) Brain-wash prospective targets so they will want to try the potentially addictive drug;
- 2) Convince the target to demand a prescription from their physician;
- 3) Cheer-lead the patient to tolerate the inevitable adverse effects so that the patient will continue taking the drug until they are hooked;
- 4) Get the patient to take the drug even though it can be obscenely expensive;
- 5) Be ready for the patient to fail at trying to stop taking the drug;
- 6) Recommend additional drugs to cover-up the drug's adverse effects (rather than quitting the drug altogether);
- 7) Encourage the patient to increase the dose of the addictive drug when he gets drug-withdrawal symptoms or even encourage the patient to take additional drugs to cover-up the symptoms (rather than taking the time to help the patient get off the drug completely).

Industries that sell addictive entertainment (such as videogames, online gambling and pornography), alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, sports, etc) are examples of addictive products that are regarded as good investments for the investor class, no matter what are the consequences for the patient.

Those examples of corporate amorality, malfeasance and greed could be called crimes against humanity and crimes against the planet. And just below is another crime against

Mother Earth that has been essentially ignored by the national media. Pretending that the disastrous algae blooms in the Great Lakes aren't there is irresponsible behavior whether corporations or individual humans are to blame. And to acknowledge the disaster might lead to criminal prosecution. Of course, if the root causes of the algae blooms are identified, the next step is to identify the guilty entities (usually corporations) that should be legally responsible for the clean-up.

#### Toxic Algae Blooms in Herbicide and Pesticide-poisoned Lake Erie

The environmental catastrophe that has been well-documented in a multitude of satellite photographs (see one of them below) has been slowly killing off Lake Erie, the 11th largest "fresh" water lake in the world. The pro-corporate, anti-regulatory, neoliberal and neoconservative entities (from all political persuasions except for Greens and Social Democrats) from the rust-belt states of Michigan and Ohio have been negligent in their duty to ensure the sustainability of the environment. But all those politicians took large campaign contributions – and then acquiesced to pressure – from regional and multinational corporations to do what was best for the polluting industries and not for the environment. The corporations most responsible were the ALEC-associated Big Agribusiness, Big Chemistry, Big Mining, Big Energy, Big Food and Wall Street industries in whose interest it has always been to see abolished the common-sense efforts of the Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency for the regulation of toxic pollutants. Immediately below are named some of the corporate pollutants.

- 1) Pesticides and insecticides used in corporate agribusiness,
- 2) Phosphorus- and nitrogen-containing nutrients in corporate agribusiness-promoted fertilizer and phosphate detergents (PO<sub>4</sub>),
- 3) Corporate sewage treatment plants,
- 4) Corporate garbage-burning facilities,
- 5) Corporate mining waste runoffs,
- 6) Corporate pharmaceuticals that are excreted by humans and livestock animals,
- 7) Organochlorine toxins (often carcinogenic, from upstream corporate paper mills, chlorinated drinking water, etc),
- 8) Fluoridated drinking water,
- 9) Corporate farm animal manure (virtually always contaminated with antibiotics),
- 10) PCBs and mercury from coal-fired corporate electric power plants,
- 11) Other synthetic, non-organic, toxic food waste and water in aquifers, lakes, rivers and streams (even water that is intended for drinking!), and
- 12) Global climate change because of the fossil fuel industry's refusal to change to sustainable energy sources.

The following satellite image is of a massive toxic algae bloom from the summer of 2015,



which was the worst bloom in years. The summer of 2016 was expected to be worse than 2015. The photo shows Michigan's Lake St. Clair and the western part of Lake Erie, Both fresh water lakes received enormous amounts of Agribusiness-facilitated, fertilizer-laden, herbicide-laden, pesticide-laden, highly polluted water from streams and rivers that drain the area's chemically-treated, corporate-managed farm land. Normal lakes should be uniformly blue with zero green color! The green, of course, represents the algal bloom.

These algae are often toxic. They are able to thrive partly because of the warming water (more proof of global climate change), but the bloom is made much worse because of the combination of high nitrogen and phosphorus nutrient load from farm fertilizer and livestock manure and because algae are resistant to the above list of cellular toxins that kill off algae's competitors, such as fish and other aquatic life.



Highly toxic herbicides and insecticides are commonly found in the watersheds leading into Lake St Clair and Lake Erie. The poisons that are secreted by the algae can be lethal to fish and animals, including humans, given a large enough exposure. Some of the toxic chemical herbicides and pesticides listed below are commonly sprayed on farm fields of large American corporate farming operations, thanks to Big Agribusinesses like Monsanto. They include:

- 1) Metolachlor, atrazine, deethylatrazine, cyanazine, simazine and Round-up are among the most frequently detected herbicides.
- 2) Diazinon, chlorpyrifos, and carbaryl were among the most frequently detected insecticides.

Algae are simple plant species that do not thrive in unpolluted cold water. Under certain conditions, the overgrowth of some algae species can produce deadly toxins that can kill or sicken fish, shellfish, mammals, birds and humans, and, of course, will make the water

smelly and undrinkable.

When masses of algae die and decompose and de-oxygenate the water, massive fish die-offs – if there are any fish left – will occur.

Non-human corporations are the major culprits, not individual human persons. Corporations are not persons, no matter what the Supreme Court said in 2010, but they should be held responsible.

In a strict law and order society like Donald Trump claimed his presidency was all about, such crimes against humanity and the earth should be punished with the death penalty.

I say take the culprits to court and lock 'em up before they kill again.

*Dr Kohls is a retired physician from Duluth, MN, USA. He writes a weekly column for the Duluth Reader, the area's alternative newsweekly magazine. His columns deal with the dangers of American fascism, corporatism, militarism, racism, malnutrition, Big Pharma's psychiatric drugging and over-vaccination regimens, and other movements that threaten the environment, health, democracy, civility and longevity of the populace. Many of his columns are archived*

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