



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on May 7, 2012

Washington Crucifies Job Creators

Well, hot diggity dog. At least one mean-spirited, overzealous Washington regulator got what was coming to him. Last week Al Armendariz, a regional director of the Environmental Protection Agency, was forced to quit his job when some of his intemperate remarks got publicized. It would be great if the same thing happened to a few thousand of his fellow bureaucrats.

Armendariz was in charge of enforcing EPA regulations in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico. He was appointed to his post in November 2009 by President Barack Obama and quickly demonstrated a zeal for the job. He was infamous for his office's harsh prosecution — many would say persecution — of any company that fell afoul of EPA regulations.



In a lecture two years ago, Armendariz explained his “philosophy of enforcement” to the audience:

It was kind of like how the Romans used to, you know, conquer villages in the Mediterranean. They'd go in to a little Turkish town somewhere, they'd find the first five guys they saw, and they'd crucify them. And then, you know, that town was really easy to manage for the next few years.

That's a pretty chilling and cold-blooded attitude, wouldn't you say? Notice that guilt or innocence has nothing to do with Armendariz's methodology. All he's concerned about is how quickly and how ruthlessly he can intimidate his subjects.

How would you like to have someone with this philosophy determining the future of the company you work for? Or founded? Or any private enterprise in this country, for that matter? Well, the sad truth is, there are thousands of petty tyrants like Armendariz working for your government — and being paid by your tax dollars — in hundreds of federal bureaucracies. The only unique thing about Armendariz is that he got caught.

Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.) deserves a tip of the hat for shining a spotlight on this particular cockroach. It happened because Inhofe decided to investigate an EPA vendetta against Range Resources, a drilling company the EPA accused of contaminating local water supplies. A lengthy investigation exonerated the firm, but not until Armendariz and his staff had done as much damage as they could to the company. As you probably know, the only energy producers the Administration of President Barack Obama likes are the wind and solar ones that need millions of dollars in federal subsidies to survive. In the case of Solyndra Inc., \$500 million in subsidies couldn't keep it going. But if you're a for-profit producer of coal or oil or natural gas, forget it. You've got a big, bright bull's eye painted on the middle of your back. And it was put there by Obama and his environmentalist buddies.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently published a lengthy opinion piece by Bob McDonnell, in which the



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Virginia Governor lamented how the Obama administration pulled the rug out of from under plans to develop his state's offshore oil and gas resources. He explained, "In 2010, Virginia was poised to become the first state on the East Coast permitted to produce oil and natural gas offshore."

But the plans were nixed by Washington "with little explanation and even less regard for the strong bipartisan and public support for the offshore initiative." Three months later, the administration added insult to injury when it announced plans to subsidize wind-power development in Virginia's waters.

And the same thing is happening from the Gulf Coast to Alaska. Profit-making (and tax-paying) private companies that want to develop our oil and gas resources are told "no way, Jose." One project in Alaska that McDonnell cites could have created 55,000 new jobs annually — not to mention \$145 billion in new payroll and \$193 billion in additional government revenue. In case after case, it was a government bureaucrat — not the marketplace — that put the kibosh on the project.

And don't get me started about the Keystone XL pipeline. Thanks to the administration's intransigence, thousands of jobs — and billions of barrels of oil — that could have been flowing from Canada to Texas and Oklahoma may now be going to China.

By the way, it's not just federal regulators who can promulgate some crazy rules. So can state and local governments, as many homeowners can testify. Just ask Joseph Pomares, who was recently cited for having "standing water" in a birdbath he added to a rental home he owns in Astoria, N.Y. A new regulation to the health code there makes landlords responsible for any infractions found on their property that could lead to the "breeding or harborage" of mosquitoes. It seems regulators there take their responsibilities to prevent West Nile virus very seriously. The citation he received advised Pomares that he was in violation of Article 151 of the city's health code and could face a \$2,000 fine if the situation was not remedied at once.

No doubt I could fill 100 more pages with similar injustices and outrages across this country. I was going to say that it was no doubt impossible to estimate the cost of complying with all the rules and regulations that have been inflicted on us by a Big Nanny government run amuck. But if I said that, I'd be wrong. It turns out that the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a pro-free market think tank in Washington, has undertaken precisely such a [study](#). And CEI says the total cost to our economy of government regulation amounts to a staggering \$1.75 trillion a year.

To help put that price tag in perspective, CEI reports "Regulatory costs exceed all 2008 corporate pretax profits of \$1.463 trillion." How many jobs has it cost us? It's impossible to know for certain, but the number is likely in the millions.

Administration officials have pointed with pride to the latest unemployment figure, which allegedly has fallen to 8.2 percent. This is based on claims that 120,000 new jobs were added to the economy in March. But buried deep in the report is the news that far more Americans who got new jobs dropped out of the labor force that month. The "no longer looking for work" numbers swelled by 164,000.

Just think about it: If every unemployed person stopped looking for work, our unemployment rate would be 0. That's the sort of "recovery" this administration is giving us.

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson said that King George had "erected a Multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance."

Frankly, compared to what this Administration has done to us, our rebellious forefathers had it easy. Don't you agree?



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Until next time, keep some powder dry.

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