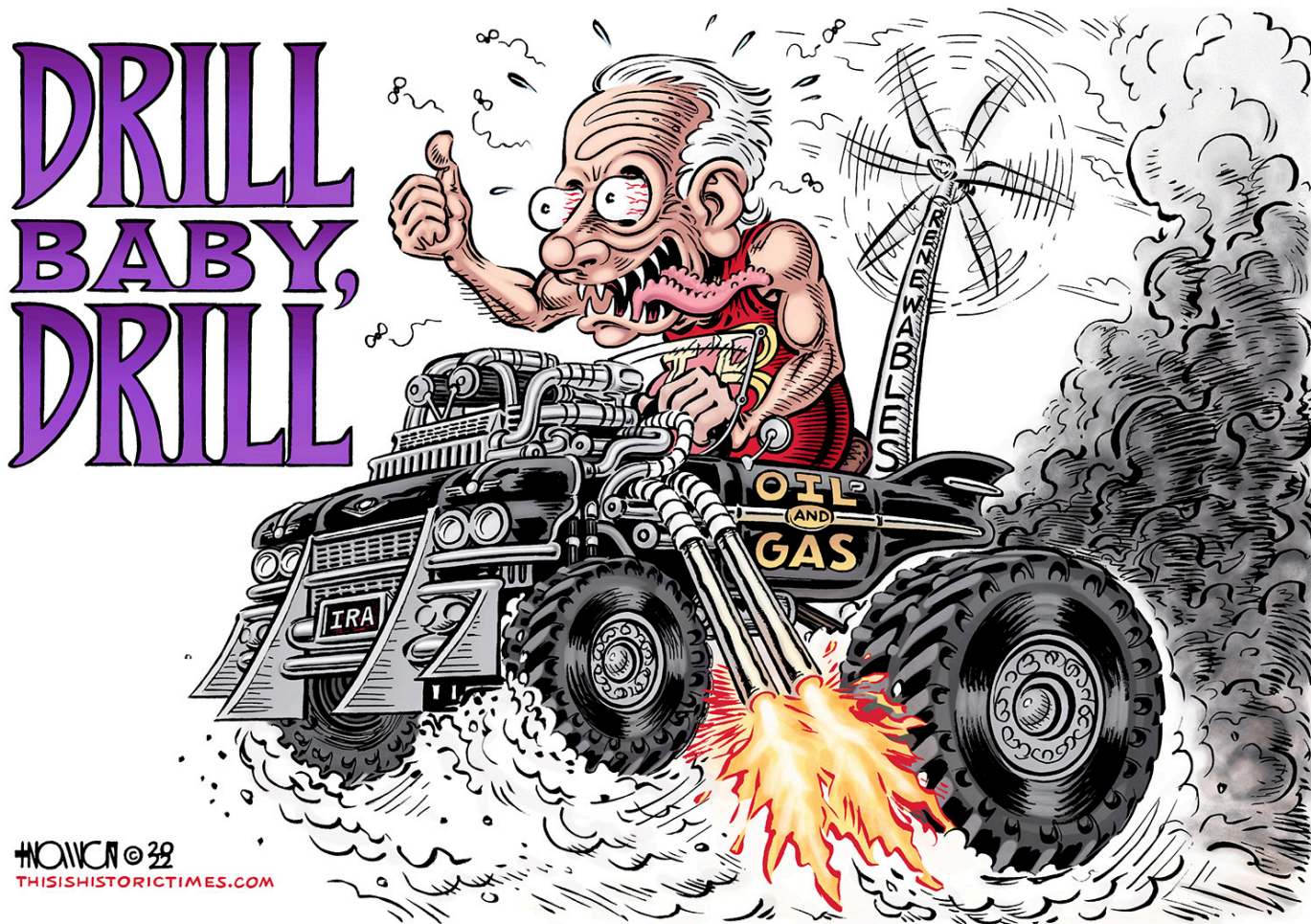


This is Historic Times

Editorial Cartoons by Terrence Nowicki, Jr.

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Windmills Do Not Work That Way!!!



Democrats sure were proud of the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) when it passed back in August, huh? With some independent analyses projecting that the law could reduce 2030 U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40% below 2005 levels, they especially seemed to enjoy crowing that it was the single largest piece of federal legislation ever passed to address Climate Change.

To be fair, I can't argue with the latter conclusion, though [as I said](#) about the American Rescue Plan Act last year, this probably does more to damn the legislature with faint praise than it says about the bill itself. That 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions—which, by the way, still isn't enough to avoid existential catastrophe—depends on all of the bill's energy and environmental provisions going off without a hitch, but before any of those can happen, they're tied to permitting [massive INCREASES in fossil fuel production](#), first!

In other words, the bill forces us to make things significantly worse *before* we're allowed to start making them even slightly better. It's three steps forward after taking two-and-a-half steps backwards, while we're fleeing from a

rampaging monster.

And that's the BEST case scenario. As history has taught us, what's more likely to happen is either Democrats will start quietly ignoring the "three steps forward" part once they think people have stopped paying attention, or Republicans will retake control of one or more branches of the federal government and start *actively running* in the opposite direction, [directly into the wood chipper](#).

The only parts of the bill you can be *assured* will happen are the ones that make Climate Change worse.

This counterintuitive strategy was negotiated in order to appease Joe Manchin, the [ferret-faced](#) Captain Planet villain from West Virginia who can't drive his Maserati into a concrete support pillar at 115 MPH soon enough, and who almost single-handedly torpedoed the obnoxiously-titled, still far from good enough, but at least marginally superior "Build Back Better" Act almost exactly [one year ago](#).

Manchin sought the noted concessions in exchange for his vote on the IRA, because he knew that's what his fossil fuel overlords would expect if he wanted to keep drawing bribes to pay for his shitty houseboat that for some reason no one's tried to sink with him and his evil daughter tied up and gagged on board.

But, in an hilarious twist, he ended up hoisted on his own petard when *Republican* resistance [put a stop](#) to the very next anti-environment, pro-pollution, industry ball-fondling measure he proposed a month later, which would've [fast-tracked development of a stalled natural gas pipeline through West Virginia](#). Granted, their opposition was mainly in retaliation for Manchin's yes vote on the IRA, but you love to see it, nonetheless! How does that saying about living by the sword go, again? Let's see Joe Manchin suffer more embarrassing, ironic humiliations in the coming months, please!

I had two very strong ideas for cartoons on this topic, but identifying which one was better before doing anything more than sketches was so difficult that I decided to start out by drawing both at the same time, hoping one would begin to pull ahead of the other in the process. I actually got pretty far with the other one, and for awhile it seemed like the clear winner, because it was conceptually simpler and more direct, though it lacked some of the above cartoon's nuance.

Unfortunately, that kind of simplicity can be a drawback if you don't nail the details, because the less there is going on in a picture, visually, the more obvious and distracting any errors become. That's why a lot of less-competent artists try to hide deficiencies in composition, perspective, anatomy or other fundamentals with [sloppy rat's nests of cross-hatching](#) or [illogical belts and pouches](#).

My other idea featured a large number of oil derricks arranged across a variety of planes—uniform objects that needed to look more or less identical to one another, because any differences would be immediately noticeable by comparison. I wasn't able to come up with a reliable drafting formula to ensure that they all had the same relative pitches, heights and widths without some of them looking like they were tipping over, and I also struggled with how much detail to include or omit in each one so none of them either looked like they were missing components or had their scaffolding turn into illegible, grey blobs.

Finally, I gave up and switched my full attention to the other idea, instead, which is a lot more fun, anyway. Most people who grew up in America at any time in the latter half of the 20th century will almost certainly recognize the work of [Ed "Big Daddy" Roth](#), even though most also probably aren't familiar with either his name or much about him. I myself learned a lot while researching material for the cartoon, even though I could clearly picture his signature [bug-eyed monsters driving souped-up hot rods](#) in my head from the moment I thought of the idea.

Roth's illustrations were *everywhere* you might find even a whiff of American car culture between the 1950s and the 1990s: on posters, T-shirts, stickers, and lunchboxes. They and his custom-built roadsters were so popular that one was featured among Hot-Wheels' 16 original die cast toy cars, and at the tail-end of their ubiquity, they were the basis for the look of the [White Zombie music video segment](#) in *Beavis And Butt-Head Do America*.

Speaking of popular art that influenced car culture during the late 20th century and beyond, my cartoon also references the Mad Max franchise. The vehicle driven by my Joe Biden/Rat Fink hybrid is modeled on the one belonging to [Immortan Joe](#) in *Fury Road*, the "[Gigahorse](#)." Other people have done [much better drawings](#) of it in Roth's style before, though I'm not aware of any which feature such an explicit connection to current events.

This reference is of course a no-brainer, given the subject matter. After all, Mad Max has become probably *the*

preeminent, modern pop-cultural artifact which discusses the potential consequences of unrestricted Climate Change, undoubtedly reaching an even bigger audience than Al Gore and Davis Guggenheim's [Oscar-winning documentary](#) on the subject, which itself was popular enough to merit [mockery](#) on (and later, a rare [public retraction/apology](#) from) *South Park*.

Which is to say, the reality of Climate Change is so obvious and undeniable at this point that I now struggle to imagine anyone still being sufficiently unaware of their surroundings to not at least *seriously consider* the possibility that it *might* be real. Like, just go the hell outside, where in the Pacific Northwest it was recently 78 degrees two hours after sunset in the middle of *fucking October*. ANYONE who can look at that and go “nah, [this is fine](#)” is either lying about their actual feelings or needs to have their head examined.

Tags: [Biden](#), [climate change](#), [drill baby drill](#), [Ed "Big Daddy" Roth](#), [fossil fuel](#), [Gigahorse](#), [global warming](#), [green energy](#), [Immortan Joe](#), [Inflation Reduction Act](#), [Joe Biden](#), [Oil](#), [rat fink](#), [renewable energy](#), [windmill](#)

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