

Okay, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Here's an Alternative to Green New Deal



By Alex Berezow, PhD — February 26, 2019



Credit: Public Domain/Wikipedia [1]

I'd like to propose a plan to put Americans on Jupiter by 2030. It goes like this:

Rocket fuel is too heavy and polluting, so we will build special spacecraft that harness the energy of the stars, fusion power. Because Jupiter is really far away -- as in [600 days away](#) [2] -- we will travel at light speed. That cuts the trip to something like [33 minutes](#) [3]. (Perfect! That's just enough time to watch an episode of *The Big Bang Theory*.) Once we land on the planet, we will proudly plant a gigantic flag of the United Nations on its soil to celebrate this triumph of humanity.

Naysayers and other people who hate science inevitably will point out some flaws in this plan. Fusion power isn't yet feasible, they'll say. They'll whine about how the laws of physics don't permit travel at light speed. And they'll complain that Jupiter doesn't have a surface to land on.

Whatever. These losers just don't have any vision.

A Realistic Alternative to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal

Does all that sound ridiculously arrogant and scientifically illiterate? Of course it does. Yet, that's basically how new Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) has responded to the critics of her Green New Deal. We're all idiots. She's a visionary.



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  @AOC · Feb 22

Yup. If you don't like the [#GreenNewDeal](#), then come up with your own ambitious, on-scale proposal to address the global climate crisis.

Until then, we're in charge - and you're just shouting from the cheap seats.

Charlotte Clymer   @cmclymer

It's really this simple: if you've got a better than what @AOC is offering to combat climate change, please show it. If you're a Member of Congress who can effectively address climate change better than the [#GreenNewDeal](#), show your receipts. Make an effort.

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AOC's remark to "come up with your own ambitious, on-scale proposal" is precisely the sort of uneducated statement a person who knows literally nothing about a topic says. It's reminiscent of the anti-vaxxers who say, "If vaccines are so safe, show me the evidence!" There are entire research papers and books dedicated to energy policy. AOC just hasn't bothered to read any of them.

As it turns out, the solution to climate change isn't all that complicated. It won't be accomplished in 12 years; we couldn't even rebuild the World Trade Center in 12 years. But it can be done. I wrote a brief, 550-word [article](#) ^[4] that gives a general outline. If even that's too long, here's the TL;DR version:

1. **Start building Generation IV nuclear power plants right now.** Not next year. Not tomorrow. Right now. They are meltdown-proof and the best source of carbon-free energy on the planet. Research suggests that the [entire world could be on nuclear power within 25 years](#) ^[5].
2. **In the meantime, phase out coal while embracing natural gas.** Natural gas burns cleaner than coal. If you object to this, then do #1 faster.
3. **Upgrade our energy infrastructure** with a smart grid, smart meters, better capacitors, and better transmission lines. All of this is necessary if we want to rely at least in part on solar and wind. (But solar and wind aren't really necessary; see #1.)
4. **Invest in solar and fusion power research.** Current solar technology is too inefficient. The breakthrough we've been seeking in solar hasn't happened yet, but it could. Similarly, fusion is theoretically the best source of energy (even better than nuclear), but scientists haven't figured this one out yet. It turns out that recreating the sun on earth is kind of hard.
5. **As our energy infrastructure improves, electric car technology will improve along with it,** making fossil fuels largely obsolete. (Airplanes might always need fossil fuels, though, much to AOC's chagrin.)

That's it. It's not a sexy plan, but it's a realistic one. We could actually accomplish this, but so far, there has been no political will whatsoever to do it. Oddly, the biggest opponents are

environmentalists, people like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

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[1] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unicorn#/media/File:DomenichinouicornPalFarnese.jpg>

[2] <https://www.universetoday.com/128259/long-take-get-jupiter/>

[3] <https://pages.uoregon.edu/jimbrau/astr121/Notes/Jupiter/jupiterradio.html>

[4] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/02/09/solution-us-energy-policy-really-really-simple-10847>

[5]

https://www.realclearscience.com/journal_club/2015/05/15/we_could_get_rid_of_fossil_fuel_electricity_in_just_25_years