

'What's Bugging Me' Interview on Whatever Happened to the Climate Change 'Crisis'

Steven Koonin, former Under Secretary of Science, on Soaring Costs and Shifting Priorities

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a new interview with host Dennis Kneale on the "What's Bugging Me" podcast on Ricochet, a climate-change expert says even Vice President Kamala Harris is backing off urgent corrective measures amid new economic realities of the huge costs involved.

Steve Koonin, a senior fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution and author of the book "Unsettled: What Climate Science Tells Us, What It Doesn't, and Why It Matters," discussed the recent political shift on the Green New Deal, the costs of climate initiatives, and the global energy landscape.

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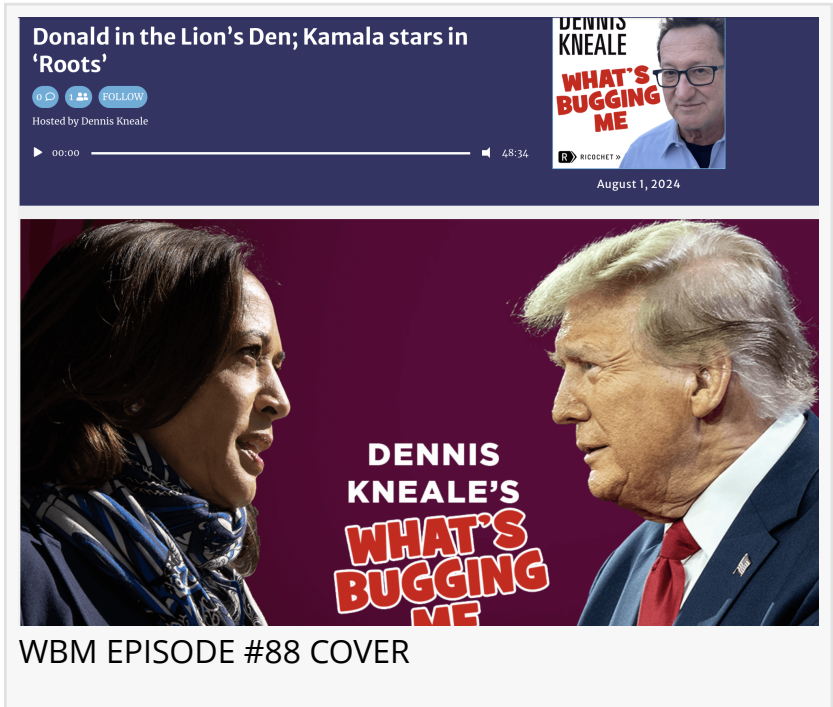
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Steven Koonin

Koonin said the scaling back of the Green New Deal by political figures, including the new Democratic presidential nominee, Harris, echoes similar trends in Europe, where politicians are reconsidering large-scale energy transitions due to the high costs of such initiatives.

“I think more than half of the world, frankly, doesn't give a hoot about it,” Koonin said. “They've got much more immediate and soluble problems.”

Koonin argued that the immediate costs of climate policies, estimated at 5% to 7% of GDP annually, are not justifiable given the uncertain long-term benefits. "We're being asked to spend a lot of money right now," he said, "and the benefits, if any, are 30 to 40 years in the future."



He noted that many developing countries, such as Nigeria, face more pressing issues than climate change. They require reliable energy for basic needs like refrigeration and lighting, which are currently best met by fossil fuels. Koonin criticized international financial institutions for restricting fossil fuel investments in these regions, calling such policies "immoral" and politically unfeasible.

Koonin also addressed the Paris Agreement's goals, which include eliminating all greenhouse gas emissions in the latter half of the 21st century. Yet, fossil fuels still constitute 80% of the world's energy supply. The United Nations says by the year 2030, emissions will be almost double the level that was set by the Paris Agreement.

A more balanced approach is needed, Koonin says, one that includes nuclear energy as a significant component of a zero-emissions future. Wind and solar energy sources cannot meet the growing demand for continuous electricity supply, he argues—especially now that the AI revolution is stoking demand for more electricity.

His insights reflect his extensive background in both academia and industry. Koonin has served as Under Secretary for Science at the U.S. Department of Energy and as Chief Scientist at BP, bringing a wealth of experience to his analysis of climate and energy policies.

The interview with Steven Koonin can be heard on "What's Bugging Me" episode #88, on the Ricochet platform here:

<https://ricochet.com/podcast/whats-bugging-me/donald-in-the-lions-den-kamala-stars-in-roots/>

And on Apple Podcasts here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/whats-bugging-me/id1657007934>

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What's Bugging Me on the Ricochet Network and Apple Podcasts

S. Ladouceur
Dennis Kneale Media
[email us here](#)

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