

The Green New Deal has to take business with it and not...

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I have noted that [Bernie Sanders has launched his version of the Green New Deal](#). I do, of course, welcome that. We need a Green New Deal in the USA as much as we need one in the UK. And no one will be able to accuse Sanders of not being comprehensive. Just take a look to see what I mean.

Despite which I am going to flag a concern. That is about the relationship that Sanders clearly imagines he is going to have with business on this issue. If I am honest it does not really appear to me that he imagines such a relationship. There are three reasons for saying so.

First, his Green New Deal is all about what the government will do. There is little vision of partnership in it.

Second, it suggests a lot of things business will be required to do. There is imposition, but not much indication of accepting the idea of willing involvement.

Third, when it does mention business the tone is antagonistic.

Some may be surprised that I pick this last out, but I think it important now. I have talked and written about the Green New Deal for longer than almost anyone. It is very obviously an initiative that has to be led by government as there is no market mechanism that comes close to being able to deliver the co-ordinated activity required to achieve it.

But, and this is an enormous but, so big is the issue to be faced that there is no way that it can be achieved whilst also alienating large numbers of people in the population. The moment for lobbing grenades in support of the radical agenda that the Green New Deal represents has long passed: this is now the mainstream and it has to behave as such. And that means the majority of the economy, which is the private sector in the US as well as the UK, has to be brought into the Green New Deal.

I stress that this will not be easy. My own proposed [radical accounting reform](#) will not be popular with all in this sector, but it is designed to address the issue they claim to be

most concerned with, which is the efficient allocation of capital to those businesses best able to use it given we now know we have a climate constraint. I try to reach across a divide to create a solution.

In that case Sanders' has to move on from this type of rhetoric about the fossil fuel industry:

For decades, fossil fuel corporations knowingly destroyed our planet for short-term profits. The fossil fuel industry has [known](#) since as early as the 1970s that their products were contributing to climate change and that climate change is real, dangerous, and preventable. Yet, they kept going. Instead of working to find solutions to the coming crisis, the fossil fuel industry poured billions into funding [climate denialism](#), hiring [lobbyists](#) to fight even the slightest government regulation and oversight, and [contributing](#) to [politicians](#) who would put the interests of fossil fuel executives over the safety and security of the planet. Fossil fuel corporations have fought to escape liability for the pollution and destruction caused by their greed. They have evaded taxes, desecrated tribal lands, exploited workers and [poisoned communities](#). Bernie believes this is criminal activity, and, when he is President, he will hold the fossil fuel industry accountable.

All of that may be true. But we know it. And we've won the argument. They have lost. They know it. The initiative is now ours to take. The task is not to kick any more. Those days are done. They were necessary, but are over. The job now is to build the replacement systems that will permit the private sector to operate in the world we now live in which can only be stable and secure if we minimise conflict within the transition to sustainability.

And we need to face the reality that the private sector will be a major player in this new system of economics. Some may not like it. I suggest they get over it: this is a reality. In which case let's stop the kicking and pile on the pressure for real change instead. We have to take as much of business as possible with us, and not have it slowing us down by dragging, kicking and screaming, behind us.