

# Go Green, Obama

Strategist advises New Deal for energy efficiency

Dear Senator Obama:

Yes, it's great that you are winning the *money* race with record numbers of small donors, but you won't have a truly great presidential campaign until you deliver a *message* that does more than make the call for hope. In my experience, Americans are desperately seeking to embrace a signature idea that involves them directly in fixing their communities. Voters and non-voters alike want to know more about how they literally can roll up their sleeves and join in a new, Habitat-for-Humanity-style project of national renewal.



You seemed to hint at all that in your Springfield announcement speech, but so far you haven't told us what we can do other than wait for your election or write you a check. We're yearning for more.

Now I get that your campaign team is wisely trying to avoid the mistakes of Democratic campaigns past. No disagreement from me ([www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/2004/dear\\_john.html](http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/2004/dear_john.html)) that we need to avoid debates over dry policy plans which fail to engage voters at the deep, emotional, gut level we need to tap.

My gut says that the answer lies in marrying a call to national service to energy efficiency and independence — getting young and old, union worker and apprentice, city and rural, black and brown and white, retrofitting a new America and busy creating the jobs and industries of tomorrow. This is hardly a new idea, but no one yet owns the idea in this campaign. To own it you need to bet big and go all in, Texas hold-'em style.

**'My gut says that the answer lies in marrying a call to national service to energy efficiency and independence.'**

People want the whole enchilada — new federal R&D and clean energy earmarks in every Congressional district, national service to weatherize the 13 million homes that remain eligible for federal assistance (many in inner cities) — and I'll even bet Americans would reach into their pockets and buy freedom bonds to invest even more if they knew the jobs created would stay at home.

I don't really care what you call it. Call it Project Hope. A Green New Deal as Tom Friedman does. A green corps to rival FDR's civilian conservation corps in a new century. A new Apollo project. Renew America. Operation Iraqi Freedom. The What-Else-We-Need-To-Do-After-We-Buy-A-Prius-12-Step-Nutri-System. Or honestly I'll (even) Take Manhattan. As in Project. That's your marketing team's call.

But I won't take no for an answer because mark my words, your failure to deliver a compelling and big idea will cost you the election.

So what's the hold-up to giving Americans what they've been craving for?

Could it be that the hurdle to moving forward lies in your own campaign's structure? With all due respect, I worry you may be repeating the fatal flaw that the Kerry campaign made in 2004 by creating silo-ed "policy groups" and treating the energy issue as a separate issue rather than as a centerpiece of a smart war on terror and winning economics.

Understand in your gut, as voters already do, that all of these issues are connected.

Otherwise you will be stuck, as you are right now, in wonky debates within your campaign apparatus and in the public sphere over whose CAFÉ standard is better in 2018 or whether an 80 percent or 90 percent carbon cut by 2050 is enough, or whether we can afford more federal spending, or if we should subsidize Detroit or any of the dinosaur industries that will *never* be the leaders until their competitors from the renewable side are given the level playing fields and the markets they need to compete.

Like I said, voters' eyes glaze over when they hear about this stuff.

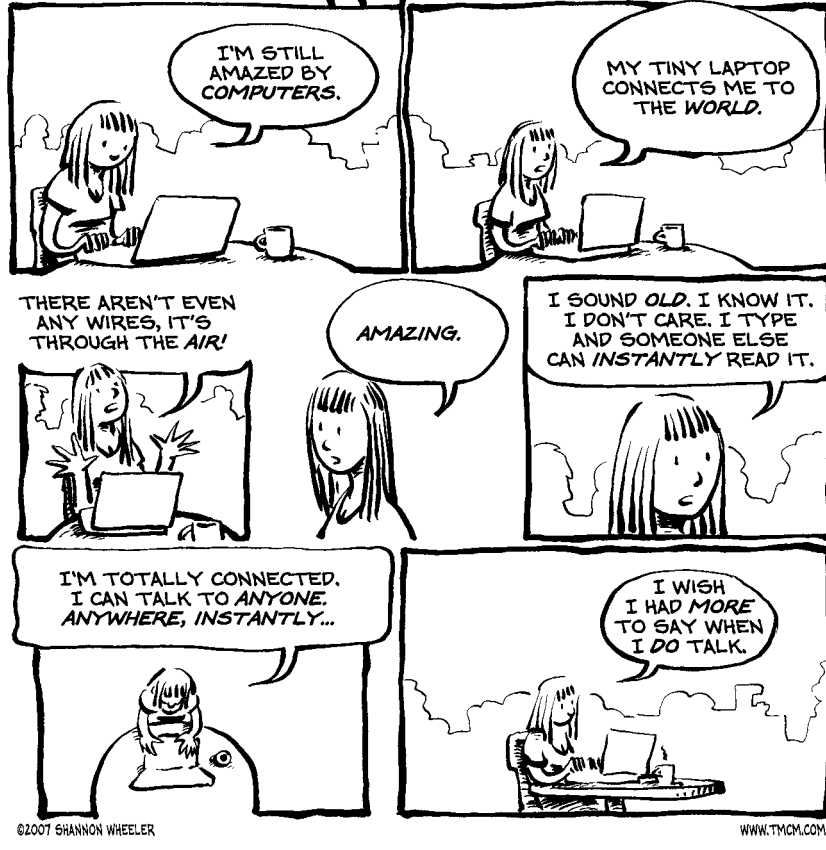
Voters draw closer when you explain how we can create a new America — with our own hands, from downtown Detroit to the sprawl of Las Vegas.

What will it take to be unassailable to the serious policy crowd and the editorial writers? My recommended benchmark will be specific investment commitments — basically an Iraq War's worth (say \$400-500 billion) — as well as caps and targets. We can nerd out on the details another time, but this isn't anywhere near the zone of political suicide — in fact, you can let others lead the call for carbon taxes and instead offer up a smart mix of federal investment, tax and subsidy shifts, loan guarantees and capital account budgeting to pay for the program, drive economic growth and satisfy both Bob Rubin budget hawks and Al Gore. Voters meanwhile will love it: They'll hear you say you want to invest billions in our communities and create millions of American jobs. Set and match.

Political strategist Dan Carol is a former DNC staffer and co-founder of the Apollo Alliance. A longer version of this commentary can be found at the [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com) website.

## How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TAKE THAT, MATT GROENING!

I have been a fan of the television show *The Simpsons* since the first season (when I was in elementary school). Though the quality of the show has dropped off (and this is pretty much undisputed by everyone except the show's writers), I actually was excited by the prospect of a *Simpsons* movie. Such a film has been rumored for over a decade.

It seemed obvious that Springfield, Ore., would be chosen as the location of the film's premiere. One only has to visit Portland and see Flanders, Lovejoy, Quimby and Terwilliger to immediately understand Matt Groening's love of Oregon. If you research further, more and more evidence piles up for Eugene and Springfield, including, of course, Principal Skinner, named after Eugene Skinner, founder of our fair city.

And yet, Springfield, Vt., will hold the film's premiere. Could there be a place less like the *Simpsons'* hometown than Springfield, Vt.? This is such a colossal missed opportunity that I don't intend on buying a ticket to see the movie in its true hometown, Springfield, Ore.

This will easily be the worst premiere ever.

Peter Fehrs  
Eugene

### PROSTITUTES RULE

When Republicans held control of Congress in the 1990s, they had occasional sex scandals with prostitutes and fathering children out of wedlock. But by 2006, Republican morality had sunk to a new low with conservatives like Reverend Ted Haggard having gay sex on methamphetamines and Republican Congressman Mark Foley trying to have gay sex with underage boys.

But now Republican Senator David Vitter has publicly apologized after his phone number was linked to being a client of an alleged Washington prostitution ring. What this means is that Republicans are

making a moral comeback, moving from gay sex with boys on drugs to adult heterosexual sex with female prostitutes. This shows that Republicans have reversed course and are now heading back in the right direction. If this trend continues, they might start talking about getting out of Iraq and balancing the federal budget.

I'm Marc Perkel, and I approved this message!

Marc Perkel  
San Bruno, Calif.

### WE'RE NO MOTOR CITY

The traffic congestion in Eugene and in Lane County will only get worse because our planning department and local government are catering to it. The more freeways, huge highways and commuter roads that they put in, the worse it will get. They are *inviting* more traffic and commuters to come in because they are "improving" the highways for this.

We are going to become *Detroit*, which did exactly the same thing, and all the business left the area, because it could not function there. Detroit is now a slum. The only "cure" is to STOP and discourage all freeway, highway, etc. improvement and development. If no one believes that, go ahead, investigate the history of Detroit, how it got that way and what happened. You'll be looking at the future of Eugene and Lane County.

dh bucher  
Eugene

### FAMILY DEATH DECISIONS

During the time I have spent at Greenhill, I have had the pleasure of being part of a team that truly, honestly cares about what they do. We are a family.

There is no divide between "management" and "kennel staff." We are not "hamstrung" by policies we don't agree with. We are not out of the loop, ignored or uninformed. We spend our lives at the shelter; we see the dogs every day. We feed them, clean their kennels and take care of them