WE ARE THE SERFS OF OUR SERVANTS

The Justice Department spent $16 each for muffins for refreshments at one conference. At another, hors d'oeuvres that cost $7.32 per serving were served, DOJ's Inspector General reported Sept. 20.

Our "public servants" do indeed live well at our expense. But what, you wonder, do $16 muffins have to do with government subsidies for "green" technologies?

DOJ's extravagance cost taxpayers perhaps $100,000. Subsidies for green companies are $16 muffins on steroids. They cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars.

There are differences. Though Justice grotesquely overpaid, they did get muffins. All taxpayers likely will receive from green subsidies is more debt.

And while the $16 muffins can be attributed to the careless and self indulgence that, alas, often occurs when bureaucrats spend our money, there emanates from the green subsidies a stench of corruption from the Obama White House.

Exhibit A is Solyndra, the showpiece of President Barack Hussein Obama's pledge to create five million "green" jobs over ten years. Vice President Joe Biden spoke (via satellite) at the dedication ceremony Sept. 4, 2009 for Solyndra's new plant in Fremont, California. The president spoke at the plant May 26, 2010.

"The true engine of economic growth will always be companies like Solyndra," Mr. Obama said then.

Solyndra's plant was financed by a $535 million guaranteed loan from a $38.6 billion pot of money in the stimulus bill. That was more than 35 states received for "shovel ready" projects.

The White House rushed approval of the loan despite objections from the Office of Management and Budget. Solyndra is owned by Tulsa billionaire George Kaiser, a major Obama fund-raiser. He and Solyndra executives made at least 20 visits to the White House.

Solyndra filed for bankruptcy Sept. 6. The FBI raided Solyndra's headquarters Sept. 8. Solyndra executives declined to answer questions at a congressional hearing last Friday on the grounds they might incriminate themselves.

Solyndra isn't the only "green" energy firm to receive government loans and then go bust. Evergreen Solar in Massachusetts and SpectraWatt, a solar cell company in New York, filed for bankruptcy in August..

The $38.6 billion set aside for loans for "green" energy firms will "create or save" 65,000 jobs, the administration said when the stimulus bill was passed. But with half the money doled out, only 3,545 new, permanent jobs have been created, the Washington Post noted Sept. 14. That's about $5 million per job.

Wind and solar receive subsidies of about $24 per megawatt hour, compared to an average subsidy for all energy sources of just $1.65, according to the Energy Information Administration.

The most economical fuel for electric power plants is natural gas, EIA says. Hydropower costs 30 percent more; coal 43 percent more; (onshore) wind 47 percent more; nuclear 72 percent more, solar up to 371 percent more.

Wind seems (almost) competitive. But windmills tend not to work when it is very hot or very cold, and it would take a line of wind turbines 110 miles long to supply all the electric power needs of a city of 300,000, science writer Kurt Cobb estimated.

This is why renewables other than hydro probably never will account for much more than four percent of electric power generation; "clean" technology industries for more than two percent of employment nationwide.

So *the only Americans likely to benefit from green subsidies are those who receive them, and the politicians who get campaign contributions from the recipients*.

"It's time to cash in on the mother of all government handouts," Solyndra's Mr. Kaiser told the Tulsa Rotary Club in July, 2009. He was speaking then of fund-raising opportunities for his family foundation. But Solyndra and other greenies also cashed in.

So has Mr. Obama. He'll attend a $25,000 a plate fund raiser in St. Louis Oct. 4 hosted by the owner of a wind power company which got a $107 million tax credit.

Given the cloud hanging over Solyndra, and the dismal job creation record of "green" companies, prudent officials would take care not to throw good money after bad. But Energy Secretary Steven Chu is shoveling out as fast as he can the $19 billion remaining in the loan guarantee fund before the stimulus program expires Sept. 30. Senate Democrats stalled a disaster relief bill to keep green subsidies alive.

They call themselves public servants. But the interests they serve are not those of the American people. We serve them, not vice versa. We have indeed become the serfs of our servants.

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