

# BP Misleads Public With “Green Giant” Claims

by *Eric Peters*

(NAPSA)—In a curious piece of marketing strategy, UK energy giant BP has placed a multi-million dollar bet that there are more avid environmentalists in the United States than SUV owners.

Many American motorists aren't aware that BP stands for British Petroleum, and judging from its latest ad campaign it's safe to assume the world's second largest energy company likes it that way.



Despite the fact that it is the largest oil and gas producer in the United States and has huge holdings in eco-fragile Alaska, BP prefers that Americans believe its initials actually stand for Beyond Petroleum.

That's the tagline in a blitz of billboard and TV ads BP has unleashed across America in recent weeks, emphasizing its commitment to a flock of environmentalist pipe dreams including solar power, wind power and ratification of the Kyoto Treaty on global warming.

One billboard ad almost drips of New Age mawkishness. “We

believe in alternative energy,” it announces. “Like solar and cappuccino.” Another coyly reads: “Solar, Natural Gas, Wind, Hydrogen. And Oh Yes, Oil.” Both end with BP's trademark green and yellow sunflower logo and the words, “It's a start...BP...Beyond Petroleum.”

The real question, however, is whether BP really is any more environmentally pure than or different from such leading rivals as ChevronTexaco, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Occidental and TotalFinaElf.

While the record shows that BP has, indeed, invested more than \$200 million in solar power in the last six years, that's chump change compared to the \$8.5 billion that BP invested in exploration and production of petroleum products last year alone. Further, it plans on spending \$15 billion alone tapping into the Gulf of Mexico over the next decade.

If BP executives at Britannic House, its posh headquarters on London's Finsbury Circus, were completely honest about it, they'd have to admit that the company spends far more in a single year burnishing its environmental

image than it invests in solar power or any other alternative energy source.

There's a reason for that, of course. Solar power, wind power, hydrogen cells, electric cars—all of the energy alternatives that bring joy to impressionable environmentalists—simply aren't very economical.

On the global warming front, BP is backing the Kyoto Treaty—not for any altruistic reasons—but simply because the agreement would have little impact on either it or the United Kingdom, while decimating its American rivals and the U.S. economy.

In truth, British Petroleum cares more about greenbacks than green causes. Nothing wrong with that—its main responsibility is to make money for its investors, not curry favor with zealots who'd like to send all SUV's to the nearest scrapyard.

All things considered, however, BP probably should revise its charming psychological suggestion that its initials really stand for Beyond Petroleum. Even by Madison Avenue's rather lax standards, that claim seems Beyond the Pale.

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