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Tom Hayden

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The Lady Who Doesn't Like Polar Bears

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Every child in America should know that Sarah Palin is against saving polar bears from extinction. Then the kids should ask their parents, teachers and ministers what the adults are going to do about it.

The first step should to click the 30-second video of a polar bear family searching for ice in Alaska, and read the scientific report. Click on polar bear video clip.

Here's the story. The Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the government in February 2005 to do something about the polar bears. So this last May the US Fish and Wildlife Agency released a "final rule" which said the polar bears are "threatened," which means they are "likely to become extinct in the foreseeable future." The reason they gave was that the "primary threat to the polar bear is the decrease of ice coverage.'

Sarah Palin's own state of Alaska is shrinking. Polar bears are drowning as they swim in search of distant ice flows. The polar icecap itself now is 700,000 square miles smaller than 20 years ago, when Sarah Palin was in college. The melting this year "may well surpass last year's -- the furthest retreat of Arctic ice in a single year since it was first measured," according to the New York Times this week.

Sarah Palin refuses to believe that the ice is melting because of global warming caused by our emissions from oil and gas. So while her state's coastal areas melt away before her eyes, and the polar bear habitat disappears, she opposes the "threatened" listing, and even is suing the Bush Administration.

Sarah Palin doesn't believe in evolution either. She believes instead that everything around us was created according to God's plan. So polar bears -- and beluga whales, salmon and wolves -- once were part of God's great plan for millions of years, but now they have to disappear if they get in the way of the new stuff God's been busy creating, like cars and oil companies.

But wait a minute. Maybe Sarah Palin's plan is not God's plan. According to the Chicago Tribune, "Palin's administration relied in part on research from scientists funded by the oil industry to fight against the polar bear's listing."

Maybe the Devil's got Sarah Palin, maybe not, that's above my pay grade. But I read in Matthew's gospel that Jesus said to the adults "unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Adults are really confused about this. Some of them think we can't have progress unless we let the polar bears go extinct. Children see it another way, because children want to grow up in a future where polar bears are living too. They should talk to other kids and all their parents before things get worse. And maybe they should pray that Sarah Palin thanks God for polar bears too.

Tom Hayden is the author of The Lost Gospel of the Earth, and former chair of the California Senate's natural resources committee, with authority over endangered species legislation.

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