

Perhaps not an exact quote but pretty close.

<http://www.enviroblog.org/2008/04/last-action-hero-3.htm>

Last Action Hero 3

A year after he mocked environmentalists as "[Prohibitionists at a frat party](#)," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has delivered another big Earth Day speech – this time at Yale – with the same theme: The environmental movement is a failure because it tries to make people feel guilty about what we've done to the planet, rather than promising an exciting and fun-filled green future. He says the movement needs to move from "handwringing and whining to [an image] that is hip, . . . cutting edge, forceful and selfconfident and even sexy."

Much like an action movie franchise on its third installment, [most of the Yale speech](#) is recycled from last year's address at Georgetown. But Schwarzenegger – not content simply to ignore those who point out that his jet-set, industry-friendly walk doesn't always match his save-the-planet talk – picked an old and very tired wedge issue to try to make his critics seem like nerds in the punchbowl: He says environmentalists' zeal for protecting endangered species is blocking progress in the war on global warming:

[T]he whole world the Germans, the French, the Canadians, the Japanese they all want to come out to California and put solar power plants in the Mojave desert and in other places. The only thing is that the problem is getting that new energy to the power grid because of environmental hurdles.

San Diego Gas & Electric wants to develop solar geothermal fields in Imperial Valley and build 150 miles of transmission lines to go and take this power right into San Diego, but it faces opposition even though it would replace an old carbonbased power plant.

So the point I'm making is it's not just businesses that have slowed things down, it's not just Republicans that have slowed things down, it's also Democrats and also environmental activists sometimes that slow things down.

And even my own agency that I'm supposed to be the head of and the boss of I found out is slowing things down. Now, this gets very complicated, I tell you. For example, our Department of Fish and Game is slowing approval of a solar facility in Victorville. It's because of an endangered squirrel, an endangered squirrel which has never been seen on that land where they're supposed to build the solar plants. But if such a squirrel were around, this is the kind of area that it would like, they say.

Now, the department wants the power company to buy three acres of land to protect these little creatures for every acre of solar land that is being used so that the squirrel could be saved if it exists. So a squirrel that may not exist is holding up environmental progress on a larger and more pressing fight against global warming. What they have here is a case of environmental regulations holding up environmental progress. I don't know whether this is ironic or absurd. But, I mean, if we cannot put solar power plants in the Mojave desert, I don't know where the hell we can put it. (Applause)

Shades of the Fresno kangaroo rat, a tiny critter former Gov. Pete Wilson picked on for standing in the way of suburban sprawl in the Central Valley. The tactic of blaming an endangered species for blocking progress has been used again and again, in battles over the snail darter, the spotted owl, and many other species. What's fiendishly brilliant about Schwarzenegger's twist is that it pits one environmental good (saving endangered species) against another (promoting solar power). Divide and conquer: Good military strategy, not a way to show environmental leadership by bringing people together.

As for the facts of the case, Schwarzenegger's complaint seems to be that foreign companies hoping to develop solar plants are simply having to comply with the federal and state Endangered Species Acts. Lisa Belenky of the [Center for Biological Diversity](#), which is working to protect endangered Mojave species, told me they support solar plants and transmission lines in the right places.

"There are many areas of the desert where habitat has already been destroyed, and the plants can go there, and the transmission lines can be routed along freeways," Belenky said. "The fact that industry has suddenly discovered that there's money to be made in solar energy, which environmentalists have been talking about for 30 years, is no reason to declare open season on the California desert."

What about those San Diego transmission lines? [Utility Consumers' Action Network](#) of San Diego says it's "a 20th Century solution to a 21st Century problem." Instead of buying power from a huge facility in the desert and piping it 150 miles through sensitive habitat, UCAN says San Diego Gas & Electric could generate the same amount of power through solar panels on warehouses and other rooftops-- and save customers tens of millions of dollars a year.

As for the rest of the speech, it doesn't take a progress-blocking environmentalist to see the holes in Schwarzenegger's dismissal of "the kind of guilt I'm talking about smoke stacks belching pollution to power our hot tubs and largescreen TVs, or in my case flying around with a private plane or driving my big Hummers. Now, it's too bad that we all can't live simple lives like Buddhist monks on straw mats. But you know something, it's not going to happen."

Nice sound bites from the Schwarzenegger speech factory. Unfortunately, the governor was preceded to the podium by Rajendra K. Pachauri, the head of the Nobel prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *The Wall Street Journal's* [Environmental Capital](#) blog notes:

The IPCC boss, following other recent warnings that the developed world will have to shoulder most of the burden for tackling climate change, opened his keynote speech somberly warning that "excessive consumption of fossil fuels" was a key factor driving climate change. The vegetarian also warned that "lifestyle changes are going to be important," such as reducing meat consumption and other energy- and resource-intensive activities—not including keynoting climate conferences on different continents.

Just don't unplug my jacuzzi, responded the governor of one of the world's largest economies. Gov. Schwarzenegger said, "Let's face it, people are not going to give up their energy-burning plasma TVs."

Not when there's another rerun of [Last Action Hero](#). You can catch it on cable, or most any day in Sacramento.