

media outlets with loss of advertising dollars and prey on people's desire to live in denial. Who wants to feel bad about smoking? Who wants to feel bad about driving a Hummer?

When all that fails, when the science becomes overwhelming, fall back on false patriotism and shout: "They want to take your freedom away!" It was Samuel Johnson who warned, "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel." Using those tactics, industry front groups delayed for 20 years the news that cigarettes cause cancer.

Scientists and environmentalists have warned about global warming since before Earth Day 1990. Oil, gas and petrochemical groups have even more wealth than tobacco. They have spent a fortune to create doubt on what is very simple science – carbon dioxide is a heat-trapping gas. Keep adding it to the atmosphere and it will trap heat. As the lies melt away in the face of overwhelming scientific consensus, the fallback, yet again, is: They want to take your freedom away.

Twenty years of lies from the tobacco industry caused many cancers to smokers and those near them. Twenty years of lies from the petrochemical industry poses an even graver harm.

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