

GOP POISONING SWING STATE VOTERS TO WIN ELECTIONS



I'm not surprised the Administration is withholding the report showing polluted sites around the Great Lakes may be contributing to elevated cancer rates.

The lead author and peer reviewers of a government report raising the possibility of public health threats from industrial contamination throughout the Great Lakes region are charging that the report is being suppressed because of the questions it raises. The author also alleges that he was demoted because of the report.

I'm just wondering whether they're doing so for explicitly political reasons.

You'll recall the description of why Dick Cheney intervened into the Klamath River dispute.

In Oregon, a battleground state that the Bush-Cheney ticket had lost by less than half of 1 percent, drought-stricken farmers and ranchers were about to be cut off from the irrigation water that kept their cropland and pastures green. Federal biologists said the Endangered Species Act left the government no choice: The survival of two imperiled species of fish was at stake.

Law and science seemed to be on the side of the fish. Then the vice president stepped in.

First Cheney looked for a way around the law, aides said. Next he set in motion a process to challenge the science protecting the fish, according to a

former Oregon congressman who lobbied for the farmers.

Because of Cheney's intervention, the government reversed itself and let the water flow in time to save the 2002 growing season, declaring that there was no threat to the fish. What followed was the largest fish kill the West had ever seen, with tens of thousands of salmon rotting on the banks of the Klamath River.

Characteristically, Cheney left no tracks. [my emphasis]

After deciding for farmers over fish, the Administration did a bunch of photo ops to claim credit with voters in the area.

It was Norton who announced the review, and it was Bush and his political adviser Karl Rove who traveled to Oregon in February 2002 to assure farmers that they had the administration's support.

[snip]

Norton flew to Klamath Falls in March to open the head gate as farmers chanted "Let the water flow!"

Now, as the map included in the report makes clear, this report is talking about toxic hazards in the potential swing states of MN, WI, MI, and OH. Add in the potential swing Congressional Districts around Buffalo, and I can certainly see why the Administration wouldn't want voters to know they had increased cancer risks because of the industrial pollution in their neighborhood, particularly not with a corporate friendly Administration that didn't make such toxic hazards a priority. The WaPo article notes that the CDC won't commit to an official release date for this report.

Nowak said that there was no set date for publication, and that the release

was delayed to address concerns raised by the Environmental Protection Agency and other reviewers last summer.

But I'm guessing they were hoping to withhold it until sometime after mid-November.

And note, too, the MO is the same as it was with the Klamath fish issue: the Administration is pushing it's very own scientific interpretation so as to skew the report that will allow it to achieve it's political objectives.

Which in this case appears to be to avoid telling a bunch of swing voters they're at significant risk for cancer.