


# The Irresponsible Pursuit of Paradise

*By Jim L. Bowyer*

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**The Irresponsible Pursuit of Paradise** By Jim L. Bowyer

In a new book *The Irresponsible Pursuit of Paradise,* author Jim Bowyer delves into the ethically bankrupt position that underlies much of environmental policy of the U.S. and other wealthy countries. He notes that aggressive resistance to local extraction of raw materials in the face of high per capita consumption, and heavy reliance on imported raw materials adds up to what has been aptly described as environmental imperialism. Bowyer observes that "... contrary to common practice today, high consuming nations need to be asking, 'Why not in my back yard?'"

The book begins with a quest to discover the secrets of Paraíso, an imaginary kingdom that is a paradise in both name and appearance. However, this book mostly dwells in the land of pure non-fiction, being an investigation of the actions of the residents of a present-day, real-life paradise as they strive to keep what they have. It is a story of unawareness, denial, hypocrisy, and a great deal of wishful thinking. And, finally, it is a story of needs for change.

In one part of the book, Bowyer assesses actions of a number of U.S. Presidents often considered the best environmentalists. He observes that they often mandated actions to protect the domestic environment with little or no consideration of high levels of domestic consumption, or the massive importation of raw materials that support that consumption. There is similarly seldom evidence of thinking about how domestic materials demand might be reduced, or how environments of other nations might be impacted as a result of increasing raw material importation. Bowyer notes that this kind of provincial positioning is not limited to the U.S., but characterizes pervasive thinking and actions that take place at all levels of government in economically developed countries all over the world.

The volume delves into such controversial matters as population dynamics and what that might mean for consumption-oriented economic systems, environmental impacts of consumption and of outsourcing of raw materials procurement, shortcomings of environmental education, considerations of global equity, and strategies for addressing consumption. Several chapters are dedicated to what might be done to change course.

Though not written specifically for use as a textbook, the volume delves into

current critical issues related to environment and environmental policy, and includes for each chapter questions for further thought and discussion.

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Review

"This positive-thinking book should be read by all students, general public, and decision-makers seeking enhanced understanding of current environmental and societal issues." -- **John Helms, Professor Emeritus, Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management, University of California, Berkeley**

"I highly recommend the book to everyone who wants to understand the seldom-discussed foundational issues that will define our children's and grandchildren's world." -- **Robert Malmsheimer, Professor, Natural Resources Environmental Policy and Law, State University of New York, Syracuse.**

"A nicely-written book that explores in depth the threat that rising population and economic growth pose to the environment and resource availability." -- **John Tilton, Research Professor and University Professor Emeritus, Division of Economics and Business, Colorado School of Mines, Boulder**

"A useful and thought-provoking book'" -- **David Morris, Co-Founder and Vice-President, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, Washington, D.C.**

"Dr. Bowyer turns the lens around to our own often hypocritical or counter-productive behaviors towards sustainability." -- **Jennifer O'Connor, President, Athena Sustainable Materials Institute, Ottawa, Ontario --Reviews**

About the Author
**Dr. Jim L. Bowyer** is Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota Department of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering and Director of the Responsible Materials Program in Dovetail Partners, Inc. He has published widely on the topics of life cycle assessment, carbon tracking and reporting, bioenergy, green building standards, and environmental policy and is a frequent speaker nationally and internationally on these topics.

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