

Why We're Skeptical Of Rallying Around The Abundance Agenda

Advocates of an “abundance” agenda want a reorientation of politics towards economic growth and material abundance. While they identify real infrastructure challenges—the housing crisis; the need for expedient clean energy build-out—their proposed solutions are overly broad and permissive, taking aim at regulations that they see as stymying private developers, even when those safeguards aim to protect workers and the environment from corporate overreach.

1) The Abundance Agenda Repackages Right-Wing Ideas For A Liberal Audience

The abundance agenda is a deregulatory agenda

- Abundance advocates take aim at the “red tape” created by the overlapping web of procedural laws at the federal and state level as impediments to expedient building.
- Proponents are skeptical of proceduralism and the diffusion of power, and want to see growth and speed prioritized over targeted reforms to improve democratic processes.

The agenda pushes many of the same ideas that purportedly animate Elon Musk’s DOGE

- Removing red tape and increasing government efficiency are the purported principles animating both abundance agenda advocates and Elon Musk’s efforts to gut the regulatory and enforcement capacity of federal agencies.
- Elon Musk apparently recognizes this commonality, as he [tweeted](#) a video of Ezra Klein misleadingly discussing the convoluted requirements for broadband infrastructure deployment with Jon Stewart on March 28, 2025, racking up over 28.8 million views.
 - Ironically, as former Deputy Director of the NEC Bharat Ramamurti [pointed out](#), corporate interests and GOP Senators were [behind those convoluted requirements](#), not Democrats. Musk is now [muscling in](#) to twist the rural broadband program’s requirements in order to help his company Starlink profit.

The agenda obfuscates key differences between issue areas and levels of government

- Abundance advocates prescribe a common cure—eliminating “veto points” from permitting processes—across wildly different contexts. But what may increase housing supply in one municipality will not affect utility incentives to decarbonize, for example.
- Proponents indiscriminately lump together regulations ranging from federal worker safety protections to local zoning restrictions which epitomize structural racism.
- The ambiguity of the abundance agenda’s policy proposals, strategic or otherwise, allows private interests to leverage “abundance” as a Trojan Horse for their preferences.

The agenda is backed by Big Oil and Big Tech players

- The growing abundance movement has [institutional support from fossil fuel and Big Tech affiliates](#), including the sprawling Koch network and crypto and AI industry players.
- Electricity availability is one of the key barriers to expanding AI data centers, which [require](#) 24/7 firm power to be cost-effective; expanding methane gas infrastructure via “abundance”-oriented deregulation is a shared interest of large fossil fuel and tech firms.

The agenda promotes right-wing skepticism towards public interest groups

- Abundance advocates ignore the power imbalance created by industry influence and corporate concentration while seeking to weaken legal tools that public interest groups have utilized to enforce executive agencies' compliance with consumer and environmental protection laws.
- Corporate interests, including the [pro-abundance Koch network](#), have historically sought to limit plaintiffs' ability to sue corporations directly for harms, ironically expanding the role of lawsuits against the government for failing to enforce consumer protection laws; litigation that abundance advocates now seek to see limited.
- This would erode the few checks remaining on the Trump administration and future executives intent on ignoring or refusing to enforce existing law.

2) Abundance Advocates Are Dismissive of Environmental and Labor Coalitions

Abundance agenda advocates have already alienated key environmental coalitions

- During the Biden administration, abundance advocates [aligned behind legislation](#) pushing through approvals of Sen. Manchin's favored Mountain Valley Pipeline, despite [local opposition](#) and the [broadly unified](#) opposition of the environmental community.

The agenda's proponents are skeptical of organized labor

- Abundance advocates are [generally uneasy](#) towards the demands of organized labor, with some viewing public sector unions as "NIMBY-like" ([Niskanen](#)), slowing construction ([Ezra Klein](#)), and raising costs for construction ([California YIMBY](#)).
- They are nostalgic for an era of expedient building that cost workers their lives. Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson favorably cite the speedy (but deadly) construction of the Empire State Building and Transcontinental Railroad in [Abundance](#) and their [book tour](#).

The agenda's center-left proponents are skeptical of populism

- Klein and Thompson's [Abundance](#) and Marc Dunkelman's [Why Nothing Works](#), both published in early 2025, frame their proposals as oppositional to the rise of populist sentiment among the American working class.