08.26.2026

End of 'Green' Enslavement in Latin America

VijayJayaray*
8/26/2026

Colombia spent four years under leftist leadership apologizing for its energy resources. The penance ended when newly elected President Abelardo de la Espriella told his countrymen that energy security sits at the center of national sovereignty. He pledged to revive oil and gas exploration, rebuild state-owned petroleum company Ecopetrol, and authorize hydraulic fracturing under strict technical and environmental standards.

De la Espriella's inauguration address in Cali laid out a clear strategy: Colombia will pursue an energy transition, but not from a position of dependence. Any transition, he said, must be "built from strength, not from weakness". That rules out policies embracing solar and wind energy by compromising affordability, reliability, and flexibility.

But the new president will be challenged by a poor economy inherited from past-President Gustavo Petro, a former guerrilla leader. Elected on a promise to lead the world out of hydrocarbons, Petro banned new exploration contracts. At the COP30 climate summit in Belém, he informed the planet that survival is "only possible if we separate ourselves from oil, coal, and natural gas."

The fruit of that sermon was the decimation of Colombia’s energy industry. Petro killed a Permian Basin joint venture with Occidental Petroleum and blocked a $3.6 billion purchase of a 30% stake in CrownRock. Senior directors of Ecopetrol resigned in protest. Industry figures show foreign direct investment in Colombian mining and oil dropped 34% to $6.9 billion between 2023 and 2025. Average crude output slid 4% and crude reserves shrank by 54 million barrels. Natural gas imports climbed from 3% of domestic consumption in 2023 to 31% by 2025.
A nation that supplied its own gas for 45 years now imports nearly a third of it. Bogotá then transitioned away from Colombian fossil fuels and toward somebody else’s tankers. De la Espriella also inherits an electric grid dependent on hydropower during a drought. When reservoirs fall, no amount of climate rhetoric turns a turbine.

Dependence on imported energy was branded as virtue and sold to voters as moral progress in controlling the climate – a physical impossibility. Colombians were told that carbon dioxide from fossil fuels is overheating the planet. Yet, claims of a climate crisis do not withstand scientific scrutiny. Satellite records show a measurably greener planet, and global harvests keep breaking records rather than collapsing. Even United Nations scientists at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are more careful than its hyperbolic publicists.

Chapter 11 of the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report declines to detect or attribute human-caused trends across many categories of severe weather. Meanwhile the outcome that ought to matter most has moved decisively in humanity’s favor. Deaths from natural disasters have fallen by more than 90% over the past century as global population quadrupled.
It is not just Colombia that is waking up to this reality. In Argentina, President Javier Milei has publicly derided the Paris Agreement as a fraud and weighed pulling his country out entirely.
His government backs a $30 billion expansion in oil and natural gas development in Vaca Muerta. Floating liquefaction units are projected to produce annually 12 million metric tons of liquefied natural gas for export. A 437-kilometer pipeline to Punta Colorada will deliver its first

crude exports this December, reaching 390,000 barrels a day by mid-2027.
It is much the same in Brazil, where Petrobras has committed $2.5 billion and 15 wells to the Equatorial Margin by 2030, a frontier believed to hold more than 30 billion barrels of crude.
In Guyana, ExxonMobil produces more than 900,000 barrels a day and expects a final investment decision on the $12.5 billion Longtail project by next year.
Meanwhile, still importing 75% of its gas through American pipelines, Mexico has authorized further study of low-impact hydrofracturing in the Sabinas-Burro-Picachos and Burgos basins.

These Latin American governments have stopped confusing an "environmental" fad with physics. The region possesses abundant energy resources capable of supporting economic growth for decades while continuing to improve environmental performance through better technology and stronger operational standards.

For two decades, a global coalition of nonprofits, international bodies, and financial institutions stigmatized fossil fuel projects regardless of their environmental safeguards or economic necessity. That green shackle is finally breaking as nations choose prosperity and sovereign security over hollow promises of climate collectivists.

Vamos, Latin America.

Originally published at *Town Hall*, August 21, 2026.
**Vijay Jayaraj is a Science and Research Associate at the CO2 Coalition, Fairfax, Virginia. He holds an M.S. in environmental sciences from the University of East Anglia and a postgraduate degree in energy management from Robert Gordon University, both in the U.K., and a bachelor's in engineering from Anna University, India. He served as a research associate with the Changing Oceans Research Unit at University of British Columbia, Canada.*