

[Well what a surprise](#). Not:

Before Peter Navarro [designed trade wars](#) for [President Trump](#), he orchestrated housing wars in San Diego across five unsuccessful bids for local office.

Navarro, then a UC Irvine economics professor, led San Diego's slow-growth movement in the 1990s, drawing battle lines that still define today's development fights.

His zero-sum view on homebuilding then reflects the zero-sum view on trade that animates the tariffs he helped design.

This is actually no great revelation. Much of the "slow growth" movement and the push for high tariffs derive from the idea of walling oneself away from the rest of the world — particularly "those people. Both movements also rest on believing that basic economics can simply be ignored.

You don't have to be a Milton Friedman market fundamentalist to recognize that refusing to build more housing means that its price will go up, and middle-class families will be priced out of the market. There are lots of complexities to urban economics, but that isn't one of them. Similarly, you don't have to be an ideologue to see that building trade barriers reduces wealth for all concerned: economists rarely agree on things, but virtually none believe in a high-tariff economy.

But that is what Navarro believes. And it isn't just slow growth, either Navarro:

[called for a moratorium on housing](#) until the city could provide adequate services, increased fees on new development, and tied housing permits to new police hires; [and]

also [proposed limiting immigration into the city](#) to control population growth and ease the strain on housing.

There is a [truly dark, bigoted side of much environmentalism](#), and here it is: we need to preserve the environment — and so all "those people" should just stay away or be deported.

Little wonder, then, that Donald Trump — easily the most racist President of my lifetime and the most racist in more than a century — has been somewhat obsessed with “protecting the suburbs,” and two months ago, [his Regime killed President Biden’s “Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing” rule](#) — a very weak and watered-down attempt to allow more people to move to the suburbs. [He has long been infatuated with this idea](#). Navarro shares it.

As much as NIMBYs want to claim a progressive pedigree, that dog won’t hunt. [No matter](#)



[how wild a dog it might be.](#)