

Environmentalism Is Tyranny

The world is in danger. A terrible threat to our wellbeing is generating a vast surplus of hot, fetid air which, if unchecked, will poison every aspect of our lives. Yes, that's right, the environmentalists are sounding off again. They are **suing** the US government for causing global warming.

They are **always suing** somebody about something.

In fact global warming is the scientific equivalent of **the boy who cried wolf**. However, for the sake of argument let's suppose that global warming was real and that the US government was not doing anything about it. How would environmentalists suing the government contribute to solving the problem? Such a lawsuit would take up a lot of time and money that could surely be put to better use. Instead the environmentalists would be better advised to do research into economically viable technologies to replace the ones that they say are causing global warming. This would automatically persuade people to abandon the technologies that ostensibly cause global warming without coercive government interference – and they could use the profits to fund advertisements to persuade people voluntarily to adopt further aspects of the lifestyle the environmentalists favour. Why are they not doing this? Why are enthusiasts for global warming, and practically every other 'environmentalist' issue, more interested in having the government's ear to push a statist political agenda than they are in solving the real problems that they claim exist?

Because of the 'public good problem'? A few free riders can spoil the value of a public resource for everyone? Nonsense. First of all, public good problems are in reality fairly rare phenomena, if they **exist at all**. Second, global warming, and many other 'environmental' issues, simply do not take the form of worrying about a few free riders spoiling things for everyone. They take the form of everyone, except a few campaigners with their heads full of hot air, simply not wanting to comply with some vast, ruinously expensive and intrusive madcap project. Yet somehow, because these campaigners have seized onto a weakness in contemporary politically-correct public morality, they get a free ride and aren't laughed out of public life. (Ironic, isn't it?)

By pursuing this agenda they have already generated mountains of

wasted paper and reams of pointless regulations that impede economic growth. Environmentalists pose a special type of global threat to human wellbeing that has no counterpart in nature.

Thu, 04/28/2005 - 07:45 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

effete nonsense

There is no sense, other than perhaps a completely trivial one, in which environmentalism is tyranny. This 'permalink' could be the most fatuous to date.

Kieren

by a reader on Thu, 04/28/2005 - 12:39 | [reply](#)

No problem?

I agree there is no good evidence for man made global warming. Plus if it were true there would still be the issue whether warming is good or bad. But to say that legal action would not be the way to solve the problem if it were real is nonsense. We do not live in never-neverland where any problem can and will be solved easily and quickly with no pain. We live in the real world where solving problems is costly and we have limited resources. If my neighbor has a loud stereo which he refuses to turn off then I'll want to sue him. There's no good in saying I should just invest my own money to come up with a better technical solution. So too with environmental property infringements. Where they do exist, the rule of law is needed to solve conflicts, as it is for any other conflict between people. The fact that at some future date, after someone invests enough money another option will be economically viable is besides the point. In that connection it is obvious that right now oil is the most economically efficient option and that at this time it is not very profitable to invest in other options, for if it were otherwise fossil fuel would not be used and more research would be done on alternatives.

Hence for the time being either we allow oil and then oil will be used or we take legal or political action and oil use will decline. I agree there is no justification to curb oil use, but until we move to the garden of eden or until man has been modified into the perfect collective being with only common goals there is no such thing as a common preference where we can eat our cake and have it too and any belief in that is based on faith rather than reason.

Henry Sturman

by [Henry Sturman](#) on Fri, 04/29/2005 - 08:44 | [reply](#)

Here's another issue: if glob

Here's another issue: if global warming were dangerous, but not man-made, would that be OK? Many environmentalists act like the

answer to this is yes. Hopefully their attitude to an impending

meteor strike would be different.

>We live in the real world where solving problems is costly and we have limited resources.

Yeah, and the problem of using nuclear power (a solved technological problem) has now become a political problem (how to debunk environmentalism). I'm not sure what resources will have to be consumed to solve the latter. Patience is one, for sure.

by a reader on Fri, 04/29/2005 - 18:00 | [reply](#)

Environmentalists

The problem is that "Environmentalists" as a defined subspecies do not exist. Environmentalist is a catch all phrase, and often includes even an finer epithet like "Crazy Environmentalist". To say "Environmentalists" is like saying "Libertarians", although no one knows the number of each. For all I know there may be only one true Libertarian.

Your point is apparently about pesky persons who espouse environmental causes as if they are absolute truth. As most of us know, true believers in anything will use all means at their disposal including the pesky lawsuit. Research would make more sense, but who will fund it? Also who will fund counter-research, the "Anti-Environmentalists"? Get my drift?

If this is a complaint about the environment and those pesky people who inhabit it and think they are the arbiters of truth, more power to you. However its likely more a rant about another "ism" personalized to an "ist".

Do something. Fund a research project. Environmentalists, whomever they are how vast their numbers might be, seem to pose a special type of global threat to human wellbeing that has no counterpart in nature. That is a theory in need of further reseach.

Sounds like a worthy project to me.

by a reader on Sat, 04/30/2005 - 14:18 | [reply](#)

Re: Here's another issue: if glob

Yeah, and the problem of using nuclear power (a solved technological problem) has now become a political problem (how to debunk environmentalism). I'm not sure what resources will have to be consumed to solve the latter. Patience is one, for sure.

Everything is about economics, not about technology. Sure, the technological problem of using nuclear power has been solved. But at this time nuclear power is not useful because it is **twice as expensive as power generation via fossil fuel.**

Henry Sturman

by **Henry Sturman** on Sat, 04/30/2005 - 16:28 | [reply](#)

Envirotyranny

single parent spends extra pennies on organic food because she wants what's best for her child and all her nicest friends do the same. (they also say things like "now, jon, be calm at the table or you know what happens, you'll have to eat in the other room.")

nobody quite knows why we must eat organic except that it's something to do with extra fresh natural wholesomeness. it's also to do with preventing local farmers being ripped off by giant supermarkets and, errr, stopping heartless global food corporations from profiting by adding nasty cancer chemicals to our regular food.

but more spent on baby food means less budget for toys and trips to the seaside.

the irony is that children don't usually want expensive food, and happiness is good for the environment.

by a reader on Sat, 04/30/2005 - 22:42 | [reply](#)

Re: Here's another issue: if glob

The issue of economics can't be separated from that of politics, especially tyrannical politics.

We don't know what the 'real' cost of nuclear power is because the political situation caused by environmentalist movement means that nuclear power has to be generated thousands of times more safely than any other form of power. Also, only very politically involved businesspeople can even dream of entering the nuclear industry, because their entire job is dealing with the government on the one hand and the environmentalism-obsessed public on the other.

And we don't know what the real cost of oil is because most of the oil production industry is run for the sole purpose of keeping certain tyrants in power, which is undoubtedly very far from the way it would be run if there were no tyranny involved.

by a reader on Sun, 05/01/2005 - 16:06 | [reply](#)

Yes, "tyranny" was rhetorical

Yes, "tyranny" was rhetorical hyperbole. Rather, Environmentalism is an Ideology (I am tempted to just call it a Christian heresy), which when and where influential could lead to something-like-tyranny in certain spheres of life (though I very much doubt the likelihood of it leading to tyranny proper).

As of now the most "tyrannical" thing that Environmentalism seems to have imposed on the average person is that we are typically all now conscripted, without pay, to sort our garbage by raw-material type before the people we pay to take it away, will agree to do so. Personally I dislike and resent this task very much (and the widespread acceptance of it as being our duty), almost to a

pathological extent, but if that's the worst "tyranny"
Environmentalism will generate I will be very happy :)

Henry is right that it's not clear whether GW is occurring, or if it is whether it is bad. He forgot to add that even if it is occurring, and bad, it's not clear that any feasible human action could stop it. (This is true whether or not human action "caused" it, which is - or should be - irrelevant.) Or at least, if it's happening+bad it's not clear whether the costs of attempting to "stop" GW by limiting greenhouses gases outweigh the costs of some other method of coping with the problem (settling Antarctica, making Mars habitable, building Battlestar Galactica, etc.)

The point that legal action could be appropriate is well taken. Emphasis on "could be". That doesn't mean it is. **The World** asked "How would environmentalists suing the government contribute to solving the problem?" That's a specific question which requires an answer, and the fact that *in principle* it is theoretically appropriate to use the law to solve such problems doesn't mean that the law is the *best* way to solve *this particular* problem.

The linked article gives a fascinating window into what the suers think they are accomplishing: "Any court that rules that global warming is a problem that needs to be addressed, just that headline, would be huge for the people trying to do something about global warming," said Pat Parenteau, a professor at Vermont Law School's Environmental Law Centre.

In other words they are trying to get a court ("any" court, but presumably the San Francisco court they are using was not chosen randomly) to declare "that global warming is a problem that needs to be addressed". They would be happy if this made it into a "headline".

In short, it's a PR stunt, designed to further and buttress their ideology. What they hope to achieve is what all ideologues hope to achieve, inducing people to believe in their ideology. (In particular they presumably want to bring about and maintain the conditions under which an ever-growing number of mainstream journalists write sentences like "Given that most mainstream scientists believe that greenhouse gases from industry and autos cause global warming", such as appears in the article, in passing.) To this end they would like, understandably, to get a court (an Authority) to Rule their ideology correct.

This aim doesn't exactly meet the conditions that Henry envisioned and outlined for how legal action is useful/necessary in solving a collective problem. Henry talks about "solving problems". This lawsuit is not about that. It's about winning converts and establishing orthodoxy. Not the same thing.

by blix on Mon, 05/02/2005 - 19:37 | [reply](#)

A noble ideology

Environmentalism (concern for the environment, and the

anthropogenic impact upon it) and environment science are honest intellectual activities and I cannot understand why 'the World' finds them so contentious. Whether I'm concerned about my local nature reserve (under threat from the planned extension of a golf course), or the much wider issue of climate change, it makes me an environmentalist.

Having climbed down from the original (and churlish) mis-equation of environmentalism with tyranny, (this correlation, after all, is evident nonsense) "blixia" lays the much more measured charge of it being an ideology. He/She is right (the ambiguous name makes it hard for me to use gender-specific pronouns). It is an ideology (defined as a set of beliefs) that makes me, without shame, want to preserve biodiversity on this planet. Unfortunately its become a word a bit like 'sin' or 'reductionism' (you only use it if you're against it). Blixia's ideology might consider biodiversity to be unimportant (preferring, perhaps, net-dollar gain as the singular measure of human success) and this he/she is free to embrace.

There are environmental issues that need to be addressed. Few intelligent people are ignorant enough to deny this. The way to address such problems is through empirical science and debate among informed people. "Anti-environmentalism" plays no part in informing this debate, being, like anti-globalism, an extreme and reactionary ideology.

Kieren

by Kieren on Sun, 05/29/2005 - 01:55 | [reply](#)