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About 60 Percent of Conservatives Favor a Carbon Tax

Ronald Bailey | Jun. 14, 2013 10:47 am

Yesterday, I moderated a debate on the question: **Resolved: Under no circumstances should conservatives support a tax on carbon emissions.** The debate was organized by the R Street Institute and the Heartland Institute as a debate among free market friends. For the proposition were James Taylor from Heartland and David Kreutzer from the Heritage Foundation. Against the resolution were former Congressman Bob Inglis from the Energy and Enterprise Initiative and Andrew Moylan from R Street.



Credit: activistcenter

The audience consisted of perhaps 150-197 people. Looking over the list of the folks who RSVPed to the discussion most of the attendees could be fairly characterized as leaning conservative or libertarian.

Briefly, Inglis and Moylan argued for a revenue neutral carbon tax which would basically level the playing field for all forms of energy by replacing the panoply of energy regulations and subsidies. Taylor and Kreutzer countered that it is a total fantasy ("pixie dust") that the Democrats and environmental activists would allow for revenue neutrality. To my mind, Kreutzer had the best line of the evening when he said that is delusional to believe that \$200 billion could walk across town in DC without being molested.

Inglis and Moylan argue that history has shown time and again that unless conservatives offer the public a plausible plan more in line with free market thinking, that the activists will eventually be able to get their regulatory nightmares enacted. Taylor and Kreutzer responded that by offering a tax, the activists will end up saying, thank you, and push on with their schemes to regulate, subsidize, and control anyway.

The debate was spirited, but friendly. At the end of the discussion, we called for a division of the house and all participants agreed (with some surprise) that the majority was opposed to the resolution. In other words, a revenue neutral carbon tax could be acceptable to conservatives and libertarians.

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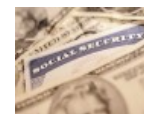
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Ronald Bailey is a science correspondent at Reason magazine and author of Liberation Biology (Prometheus).

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John | 6.14.13 @ 10:49AM | #

No it couldn't Ron. It could be acceptable to the various species of idiots who live in Washington. Actual conservatives who live elsewhere? Not so much. Making cheap energy expensive is a road to poverty.

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 11:01AM | #

*Artificially cheap

There are costs other than what you pay at the pump.

log in or register to reply

SugarFree | 6.14.13 @ 11:05AM | #

Like having to hear sockpuppets rattle on.

log in or register to reply

Tony | 6.14.13 @ 11:09AM | #

Do you mean all the people here with Exxon's hand up their asses?

log in or register to reply

WTF | 6.14.13 @ 11:12AM | #

Fuck off sockpuppet.

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fish_remote | 6.14.13 @ 11:12AM | #

You never told us you worked for Exxon. There's a certain logic to it given your preferences though.

Well done sir...turning a hobby into a career.

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 11:11AM | #

Not taking is giving! So every dollar that the government doesn't take from Exxon is a gift! Whenever a company gets a tax break, when less money is taken away from them, that money was forcibly taken from a starving child and given to the corporation!

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 11:56AM | #

Yes you've mastered the most simplistic possible language in defending the corporate status quo. Congratulations. I'm sure it works on other idiots.

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 12:00PM | #

It's called *reductio ad absurdum*, moron.

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 12:05PM | #

It's called a bunch of bullshit that boils down to "Life isn't fair, let the oil industry keep its massive handouts. Now give me your social security, granny!" Libertarian ethical purity!

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 12:19PM | #

Exxon paid \$27.3 BILLION in income taxes last year.

Massive handouts my ass. Moron.

[log in](#) or [register](#) to reply

Gilbert Martin | 6.14.13 @ 11:14AM | #

"There are costs other than what you pay at the pump."

Not until the nanosecond that you become capable of proving it to be so with unequivocal and absolute definitiveness there aren't.

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 11:57AM | #

Say you walk into a store with no price tags. Is everything free?

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RightNut | 6.14.13 @ 12:02PM | #

Obvious false equivalence is obvious.

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 12:07PM | #

No. Everything is a **dollar**, moron.

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Gilbert Martin | 6.14.13 @ 12:13PM | #

If it's your store, yes.

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Suthenboy | 6.14.13 @ 11:54AM | #

Aside from the global warming boogeyman under the bed, what would that be Tony?

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 12:02PM | #

Conflicts over dwindling oil supplies is another. Wars cost lots of money.

Here's a breakdown of how the US government subsidizes the oil, coal, and gas industries. Just one line item, infrastructure, costs \$1.6 trillion per year.

Now go on and pretend none of it is real for no discernible freedom-related purpose.

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acidovorax | 6.14.13 @ 12:13PM | #

Conflicts over dwindling oil supplies is another. Wars cost lots of money.

Nice red herring, Tony. Are you attempting to argue that wars are inherently linked to oil trade? Undoubtedly, under our cronyist mixed system, the incentive to substitute products is hindered, but still exists. Less intervention would pressure alternatives in the event of increasing costs due to decreasing supply. Wars are primarily state driven policies.

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Jordan | 6.14.13 @ 12:29PM | #

But don't you remember the Great Whale Oil Wars of 1900?

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 12:33PM | #

Are you attempting to argue that wars are inherently linked to oil trade?

Duh. If we haven't fought wars for oil already, we will. But we have, of course.

Surely you're not suggesting the global oil cartel has anything to do with free markets.

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 12:35PM | #

Duh. If we haven't fought wars for oil already, we will. But we have, of course.

Derpaliscious!

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acidovorax | 6.14.13 @ 12:40PM | #

Duh. If we haven't fought wars for oil already, we will. But we have, of course.

Surely you're not suggesting the global oil cartel has anything to do with free markets.

Because the oil region is cartelized doesn't argue for greater intervention. Intervention produces costs and externalities that you conveniently ignore.

And again, wars are not inherent to the oil market. They are products of state intervention.

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 2:54PM | #

As opposed to the costs and externalities of the status quo that all you guys ignore? What could possibly be a worse externality than radically altering the global environment?

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 3:07PM | #

What could possibly be a worse externality than radically altering the global environment?

How can you be certain that the altered environment would be worse?

What if the result is more arable land in higher latitudes along with a longer growing season? Is that worse?

What if higher CO2 levels result in greater crop yield? Is that worse?

Intervention raises the cost of energy and everything produced with energy, thus making society poorer and less able to react to changes in the environment should they come to pass. Of that we can be certain, and that for certain is worse than "doing nothing."

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BiMonSciFiCon | 6.14.13 @ 3:39PM | #

"Conflicts over dwindling oil supplies is another. Wars cost lots of money."

One of these sentences is true.

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 4:33PM | #

How can you be certain that the altered environment would be worse?

You don't even have to adhere to the precautionary principle to understand how ludicrous this question is. Who the fuck are you to tell me I have to accept other people fucking up my environment?

It's almost certain to be worse since the projection is that we'll be altering the global environment to a state no human being in the history of the species has ever lived in, and there are likely runaway effects.

No rational assessment of the situation can conclude that the status quo is the best option. I don't know why you find it so difficult to wrap your mind around the very easy concept that advocating doing nothing is not the same thing as advocating freedom or noncoercion.

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SeaCaptain(Yokeltarian) | 6.14.13 @ 11:19PM | #

"Just one line item, infrastructure, costs \$1.6 trillion per year."

So the gas tax, a user based tax, is a subsidy? Its those of us with petro engines subsidizing your bicycle and coal-powered electric car, sockpuppet.

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Mike M. | 6.14.13 @ 11:04AM | #

So much this. These aren't conservatives, these are the same Beltway cosmotarian dipshits who support gun control laws.

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AlmightyJB | 6.14.13 @ 11:04AM | #

I would agree as well.

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Banjos | 6.14.13 @ 1:09PM | #

Finally, correct usage of the word cosmotarian.

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cavalier973 | 6.14.13 @ 10:51AM | #

The carbon tax will pass, energy will get progressively more expensive as a result, and energy companies will be blamed for it.

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AlmightyJB | 6.14.13 @ 10:58AM | #

The large energy companies will probably help write it and be exempt from it or have caps so high as to be irrelevant. DC is all about pay to play.

[log in](#) or [register](#) to reply

AlmightyJB | 6.14.13 @ 10:56AM | #

Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb

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Almanian! | 6.14.13 @ 11:09AM | #

Hey! No posting comments from the South Park Mormon Episode thread!

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 10:57AM | #

By "level the playing field" you mean "artificially raise the price of fossil fuel energy so alternatives can compete," right?

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fish_remote | 6.14.13 @ 11:10AM | #

By "level the playing field" you mean "artificially raise the price of fossil fuel energy so alternatives can compete," right?

Nope..."leveling the playing field" means shoring up US government finances so they retain a shred of credibility while spending an additional 100T.

Carbon taxes have never been about anything except MOAR revenue.

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Fist of Etiquette | 6.14.13 @ 10:57AM | #

Inglis and Moylan argue that history has shown time and again that unless conservatives offer the public a plausible plan more in line with free market thinking...

A plan for what? Forcing through regulation a bullshit market in which no one would

volunteer to participate?

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Almanian! | 6.14.13 @ 11:09AM | #

I'd REALLY like to give this "free market" a chance to work. Even just once.

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From the Tundra | 6.14.13 @ 11:14AM | #

Radical.

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Gilbert Martin | 6.14.13 @ 12:20PM | #

How can a tax have anything to do with a free market?

Taxes - of any type and regardless of what they are supposedly for - are levied by governments and backed up with force.

That has nothing to do with free markets.

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DJF | 6.14.13 @ 10:58AM | #

""characterized as leaning conservative or libertarian""

Using this reasoning shouldn't the title say "60 percent of Libertarians favor a carbon tax"

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AlmightyJB | 6.14.13 @ 11:03AM | #

I don't see how a libertarian could support this at all. Even self-proclaimed Glenn Beck libertarians (ie not really libertarians) have to be against that.

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AlmightyJB | 6.14.13 @ 10:59AM | #

Maybe we should tell them that carbon taxes are gay.

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Almanian! | 6.14.13 @ 11:11AM | #

That would be gay. We should tell them carbon taxes are illegal aliens.

[log in](#) or [register](#) to reply

John Galt | 6.14.13 @ 11:18AM | #

Immediate 100 percent support of Log Cabin Republicans.

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The Late P Brooks | 6.14.13 @ 11:02AM | #

In other words, a revenue neutral carbon tax could be acceptable to conservatives and libertarians.

Just because I *might* marry Michelle Pfeiffer doesn't mean I want to get married.

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Floridian | 6.14.13 @ 11:11AM | #

Genius. If we give in to the progressives just a little they will leave us alone. The best part is

once the tax is enacted if it has consequences we did not intend it will be easy to repeal. It will never become a permanent part of the tax code. Why haven't we done this with gun control. It is a sure fire winner.

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Almanian! | 6.14.13 @ 11:13AM | #

It totally worked with the income tax and welfare programs, too, so - yeah, ~~we you~~ people should support this.

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robcb | 6.14.13 @ 11:12AM | #

Did anyone chant Coase's name during the debate?

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fish_remote | 6.14.13 @ 11:16AM | #

No but I did hear.....*His name was Robert Paulson...His name was Robert Paulson...His name was Robert Paulson...His name was Robert Paulson...repeated a number of times.*

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sarcastmic | 6.14.13 @ 11:18AM | #

Where Is My Mind

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John Galt | 6.14.13 @ 11:22AM | #

Smoking Pixie dust at half past nine?

[log in](#) or [register](#) to reply

fish_remote | 6.14.13 @ 11:51AM | #

It's Friday.

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The Late P Brooks | 6.14.13 @ 11:14AM | #

Why would we allow the totally awful to be the enemy of the perfect?

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Killazontherun | 6.14.13 @ 1:10PM | #

^EXACTLY THIS

Revenue neutrality is not a worthy goal. It does nothing to shrink government, it does nothing to free us from its shackles. It is a complete and utter counterproductive waste of time for a libertarian to pursue it.

Carbon tax accepting libertarians and conservatives, and even the uncommon liberal who hates the prosperity destroying environmentalist movement, get your heads out of your asses, the fight is over there!

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BakedPenguin | 6.14.13 @ 11:17AM | #

Oh, there's all kind of economic stupidity out there: the [coming EU recovery autumn](#).

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From the Tundra | 6.14.13 @ 11:22AM | #

"Although this could be another head-fake this one might be for real."

So, someone pays this idiot? Let me see if I understand his analysis - not getting worse is actually getting better. Unless it isn't. But it might. But I can't say for sure.

It sounds like he is reading off a Magic 8 Ball

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BakedPenguin | 6.14.13 @ 11:33AM | #

"Reply Hazy: Ask Again Later"

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CampingInYourPark | 6.14.13 @ 11:17AM | #

The science correspondent scans the audience at a debate and concludes: "About 60 Percent of Conservatives Favor a Carbon Tax". How scientific.

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Virginian | 6.14.13 @ 11:18AM | #

A bunch of DC parasites support a new scheme to divert the wealth of the productive into their hands? No fucking way.

[log in](#) or [register](#) to reply

entropy | 6.14.13 @ 11:18AM | #

What the fuck????

I don't even believe this. Impossible.

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The Late P Brooks | 6.14.13 @ 11:23AM | #

What we should do is use a carbon tax to pay down the national debt.

The money would never be diverted to other uses.

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The Late P Brooks | 6.14.13 @ 11:25AM | #

Teleportation would be totally awesome, assuming you get reassembled correctly at your destination.

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Anonymous Coward | 6.14.13 @ 11:26AM | #

To my mind, Kreutzer had the best line of the evening when he said that is delusional to believe that \$200 billion could walk across town in DC without being molested.

If the slut didn't want to be molested, she wouldn't have worn all of those zeroes.

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fish_remote | 6.14.13 @ 11:39AM | #

So the money was asking for it?

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Anonymous Coward | 6.14.13 @ 12:22PM | #

Yes. \$200 billion should wear a burqa in order to protect its virtue. It should also travel

outside only with a male relative and not be allowed to drive.

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Cliché Bandit | 6.14.13 @ 11:26AM | #

Sample size = way too small

Sample randomness = uhh DC...really?

Methodology = spurious at best (not that I dont like you Ron, I am one of your bigger defenders here)

Data evaluation protocols = non-existent, A call for division does not a double blind study make.

All jokes aside I think this is important enough to have the lovely Miss Enkins put it in her next poll. It would be damn depressing if this were truly a trend in the conservative movement. (Not that I am a conservative, far from it, but I want my opposition parties to, you know, be kinda like opposition)

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Cliché Bandit | 6.14.13 @ 12:54PM | #

that extra 'n' is free of charge for Emily.

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Emmerson Biggins | 6.14.13 @ 11:31AM | #

I can think of one situation where I could at least go along with it, if not out outright support it: Abolition of the 16th amendment and income tax. It is a consumption tax after all. I do prefer that. But the actual choice we have in front of us is if we want one or both, not or the other.

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Episiarch | 6.14.13 @ 11:34AM | #

Why am I supposed to give a fuck what 60% of anyone cares about anything? Fuck your carbon tax, Ron; fuck conservatives; and fuck everyone who wants to "level the playing field" or impose more taxes or control on the rest of us in any way. FUCK YOU.

What an asinine article.

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fish_remote | 6.14.13 @ 11:41AM | #

Glad to see your sticking with the training regimen....still a long way to go before you reach the lofty heights of Peter King.

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Redmanfms | 6.14.13 @ 11:43AM | #

What an asinine article.

This.

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robc | 6.14.13 @ 11:46AM | #

The majority is always wrong.

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Ron Bailey | 6.14.13 @ 11:57AM | #

E: Asinine? Hey I was just the moderator who is just reporting what happened.

Regarding inside-the-beltwayness, I find that ideological divisions are often sharper in DC than in most of the rest of the country.

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robcc | 6.14.13 @ 12:17PM | #

That seems unlikely.

Just to pick my home state as an example, neither Massie nor Yarmuth represent the extremes of ideological division in the state of KY.

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robcc | 6.14.13 @ 12:17PM | #

Did you bring up Coase at any point, just to toss it out there to see what either side would say?

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Virginian | 6.14.13 @ 12:19PM | #

Except the mean trends toward abject statism. There are libertarians in DC, yes. Hell, there might even be more libertarians per capita than the national average.

But the overwhelming majority of the city is statist of one flavor or another.

I'd argue any conservative who supports a new tax is not a conservative at all.

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Cliché Bandit | 6.14.13 @ 12:52PM | #

hence i will reiterate my call to see if Emily can put this in the next Reason poll. It would strike me as WAY off base for anywhere near a majority of cons to support a carbon tax in any form.

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LynchPin1477 | 6.14.13 @ 12:02PM | #

I'd support a carbon tax in principle though a lot would depend on the particulars. But then again, I believe in AGW and that it is likely to be pretty costly.

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Virginian | 6.14.13 @ 12:19PM | #

Believe whatever you want man, just don't point a gun at me to sacrifice to your fucking cult.

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LynchPin1477 | 6.14.13 @ 12:33PM | #

So if you burn something toxic next door to me, do I not have a right to stop you just because you don't think those fumes are actually toxic, or at least as toxic as I do?

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Virginian | 6.14.13 @ 12:39PM | #

He said, posting on his fossil fueled powered computer.

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LynchPin1477 | 6.14.13 @ 1:00PM | #

Yes, I do use electricity, and cars, and planes. I also take steps to minimize

how much I use, but that really isn't the point. We don't need to go back to a stone age existence to minimize the risks associated with climate change. If we did, I wouldn't advocate for it. The point of a carbon tax would be to provide an incentive to bring carbon emissions down to safer levels, not eliminate them. I have no interest in seeing the government decide *how* to do that, but I do believe it is a legitimate use of government power to provide that incentive, and I'm comfortable defending that on libertarian grounds.

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Virginian | 6.14.13 @ 1:06PM | #

Well really, if you wanted to reduce CO2, the logical thing would be to cut your own throat.

Every breath you take you are killing the planet!

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LynchPin1477 | 6.14.13 @ 1:15PM | #

In that morality, it would probably be more logical to cut the throats of millions or billions of people, since one person won't make a difference. But I fundamentally reject that morality.

Also, I am genuinely interested in your answer to my earlier question. No two brands of libertarianism are exactly the same and I'm always interested in hearing other people's thoughts.

[log in](#) or [register](#) to reply

Virginian | 6.14.13 @ 1:41PM | #

Prove the harm, then you can take it to civil court.

Computer projections are not proof of harm.

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acidovorax | 6.14.13 @ 1:27PM | #

The point of a carbon tax would be to provide an incentive to bring carbon emissions down to safer levels, not eliminate them.

And how is this safe level calculated? How do they determine the proper reduction that maximizes the positive over the negative? The higher costs due to the tax are an immediate negative.

I have no interest in seeing the government decide how to do that, but I do believe it is a legitimate use of government power to provide that incentive, and I'm comfortable defending that on libertarian grounds.

The use of the State to provide "incentive" is a template for absolute control. What "incentive" couldn't be justified?

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LynchPin1477 | 6.14.13 @ 1:47PM | #

And how is this safe level calculated?

That's a question I have, too. From what I can tell, there is still a good bit of scientific disagreement over how x concentration of greenhouse gases translates to y negative impact. Like I said, my support for a carbon tax would depend on the particulars.

What "incentive" couldn't be justified?

Free markets provide all the necessary incentive for lots of things, but that doesn't seem to be the case on certain environmental issues. I think you could solve some of those issues on the basis of property rights, but not all. If someone pollutes the air that I breathe to the point that it causes me harm, without my consent, then I think it is a perfectly legitimate use of government power to limit that pollution to safer levels. That is the same logic that leads me to support finding some way to limit CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions.

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Virginian | 6.14.13 @ 1:53PM | #

Prior restraint is not anywhere in libertarian principles. We reject it in its entirety.

If someone harms you, you have the right to seek compensation. You do not have the right to prohibit someone from engaging in behavior which may or may not harm another. Particularly based on conjecture and fraudulent science.

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 4:29PM | #

So why embarrass yourself by incorrectly calling it fraudulent science, if it doesn't matter anyway?

I love libertarians' idea of a "small" government. Countless new civil courts clogged with lawyers trying to parse who's responsible for polluting which cubic foot of atmosphere.

Prevention is prevention. It's a good idea to go ahead and make murder illegal, and the same goes for pollution.

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Contrarian P | 6.14.13 @ 11:01PM | #

I see you got tired of being made to look like a despicable partisan tool, so you're back to beating the AGW drum again.

Murder and pollution are both illegal, but they are very different. If you dump your trash on my lawn, I can go to the government to compel you to remove it and compensate me for loss of use. If you fail to comply, the government is well within its legitimate functions to take and sell your property to pay for the damages. If you do not have property to sell, it would be appropriate to jail you as a punitive measure. There's really no equivalence to murder. No amount of money returns the person to life, so imprisonment is the only remedy to those harmed.

As for lawsuits related to pollution, why shouldn't I have the capability to file suit against someone who pollutes my person or property? Well, unless that entity is your precious government, who can tell me to go pound sand if I try to sue them.

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robc | 6.14.13 @ 2:03PM | #

COASE COASE COASE ... I dont feel like copy pasting it again and again, you get the point.

See my previous posts (not in this thread).

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acidovorax | 6.14.13 @ 3:40PM | #

There are problems with Coase's Theorem. Several libertarian economists (Walter Block, Gary North come to mind) have criticized it's application as undermining property rights.

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Mickey Rat | 6.14.13 @ 5:12PM | #

"The point of a carbon tax would be to provide an incentive to bring carbon emissions down to safer levels, not eliminate them.

I have no interest in seeing the government decide how to do that, but I do believe it is a legitimate use of government power to provide that incentive,..."

I think I got whiplash from the cognitive dissonance.

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Gilbert Martin | 6.14.13 @ 1:25PM | #

Fumes that are actually toxic will kill you outright in very short order.

So, no you don't have any right to stop someone else just because you like to make up new defitions for words.

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acidovorax | 6.14.13 @ 1:37PM | #

Fumes that are actually toxic will kill you outright in very short order.

So, no you don't have any right to stop someone else just because you like to make up new defitions for words.

No, many toxins are cumulative, so this argument isn't compelling. The reality is that externalities, such as waste and pollution, aren't equivalent. Some byproducts have very little affect on individual life, whereas others are more immediate. Those that can be reasonably demonstrated to have caused damage, should be rectified by the agent responsible. Courts can impose fines, which will incentivize the market to address such issues.

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LynchPin1477 | 6.14.13 @ 2:17PM | #

No, many toxins are cumulative, so this argument isn't compelling.

Thanks for responding to that.

Those that can be reasonably demonstrated to have caused damage, should be rectified by the agent responsible.

Here is where we may end up disagreeing quite a bit. I think you need to take the risk of damages into account, too. Take speeding in a car -- there is no way to prove that I'm going to kill or seriously injure someone simply by going 120 mph, but if I do hit someone, the risk of catastrophic injury or death for which there is no real compensation is pretty high. So I can be fined for that risky behavior.

Now you may say "slippery slope", and you'd be right, which is why I'd say you need to have clear and high standards for when it is OK to punish risky behavior. For me, that would look something like:

- You need to show evidence that the risk is high
- You need to show evidence that the damages caused if that risk is realized are extreme and irreparable
- You need to show evidence that the punishment would be an effective deterrent
- Lastly, and most importantly, the punishment needs to be minimal given the risk involved. Throwing someone in jail for speeding isn't acceptable.

I'll admit that last point may be the Achilles heel of this whole line of reasoning. These are evolving ideas in my head -- maybe they end up being bad ones.

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Gilbert Martin | 6.14.13 @ 2:44PM | #

"No, many toxins are cumulative, so this argument isn't compelling"

It is to me.

You don't have the right to stop your next door neighbor from doing something just because you CLAIM it's going to hurt you 30 years from now.

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acidovorax | 6.14.13 @ 3:35PM | #

You don't have the right to stop your next door neighbor from doing something just because you CLAIM it's going to hurt you 30 years from now.

Not based on ANY claim, only those with compelling justification. There are well known compounds that have cumulative effects and therefore it is morally responsible for the owner to control it's use and disposal. It is not an infringement of one's right to demand responsible action. I doubt you would argue that it is perfectly allowable for a person to wave a loaded gun in a crowded place.

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Gilbert Martin | 6.14.13 @ 4:05PM | #

"Not based on ANY claim, only those with compelling justification"

"Compelling justification" as determined by who?

"There are well known compounds that have cumulative effects "

CO2 isn't one of them.

" I doubt you would argue that it is perfectly allowable for a person to wave a loaded gun in a crowded place."

That depends on the circumstance.

It was perfectly allowable for the Marines to wave loaded Thompson submachine guns into the firing slits of crowded Japanese pillboxes on Iwo Jima in 1945.

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[acidovorax](#) | 6.14.13 @ 4:19PM | #

"Compelling justification" as determined by who?

By reason and evidence. All logical propositions are not equivalent. Claiming that hydrogen sulfide won't hurt anybody is not as reasonably compelling as claiming that it is a poison.

"There are well known compounds that have cumulative effects "

CO2 isn't one of them.

Never claimed that.

" I doubt you would argue that it is perfectly allowable for a person to wave a loaded gun in a crowded place."

That depends on the circumstance.

It was perfectly allowable for the Marines to wave loaded Thompson submachine guns into the firing slits of crowded Japanese pillboxes on Iwo Jima in 1945.

Context is necessary in all such debates.

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[Gilbert Martin](#) | 6.14.13 @ 4:28PM | #

"By reason and evidence"

If you are to have any claim for stopping me from doing anything, you will have to have specific proof that the specific individual act that I'm doing is going to specifically harm you individually.

Generalities won't cut it.

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[acidovorax](#) | 6.14.13 @ 4:41PM | #

Then you've tossed reason to the wayside. The random firing of rifles in neighborhoods is too general to warrant restraint in your world.

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[Gilbert Martin](#) | 6.14.13 @ 5:14PM | #

I live in an unincorporated area of a county where it is perfectly legal to fire a gun on you own property.

In fact it's not uncommon to hear gunfire - especially during hunting season as the land behind the houses on my street is Army Corps of Engineers buffer zone around a lake. Hunters are back there shooting all the time. No one has been hurt yet as far as I know - and I've been there over 25 years.

If someone is firing "randomly" and hits you, then you have a case against them. You don't have the right to engage in a blanket prior restraint of everyone by claiming that any shooting is to automatically be considered "random".

Furthermore, the effect of bullets on the human body are immediate and readily quantifiable. It has nothing to do with toxic fumes or other allegedly "cumulative" toxins that were being discussed.

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Leigh | 6.14.13 @ 12:23PM | #

Revenue neutral carbon tax? Hahahaha, that's a good one! Stop it, you're killing me!

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Suthenboy | 6.14.13 @ 12:44PM | #

If 60% of conservatives (or anyone for that matter) agree that we should have a carbon tax, then let us make paying it optional. When you pump gas you will get the option of paying two different prices. When you get your electric bill you will have the option of paying two different totals. I am sure 60% of conservatives and 100% of liberals will opt for the higher payment.

C'mon Ron, this is bullshit. Admit it.

A few people can afford to pay this, but most cant. Artificially raising the price of energy will make a difficult life even more difficult for the vast majority of people. It is Tony level heartless and cruel. If 60% of conservatives need to stroke themselves to make them feel like they are better people than they actually are, let them find a less delusional way of doing it.

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Paul Vincelli | 6.14.13 @ 12:59PM | #

Several months ago, the University of Kentucky hosted of forum on climate change with three excellent speakers who were all self-described conservatives. Liberals reported how they better understand that there are thoughtful conservative perspectives on, and solutions to, climate change, thus allowing for a broadened public discussion. In turn, conservatives in attendance learned the same thing. You can watch the recording of this event at <http://bit.ly/135gvNa>. The starting time for each speaker is noted at this page, so you can listen to the speakers of greatest interest to you.

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rob | 6.14.13 @ 2:05PM | #

Did any of them bring up Coase?

I am going to keep asking, because any discussion of solutions without bringing up his work is idiotic.

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Marshall Gill | 6.14.13 @ 1:00PM | #

The most glaring thing about a stupid carbon tax is the simple fact that the money collected will absolutely not be spent solving the "problem" for which it is ostensibly collected.

Even those who believe that AGW is a real and present danger should appreciate that throwing money at government bureaucrats won't do anything productive.

"We have to tax a few hundred billion to save the planet from AGW!"

"On what will you spend the money?"

"It will go into the government general fund!"

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sarcasmic | 6.14.13 @ 2:27PM | #

Alternative energy cannot compete in a free market because it costs too much compared to fossil fuels. The purpose of a carbon tax is not to raise revenue. It's to raise the price of carbon based fuels to a point where alternative energy can compete. Sure it means

energy will cost more for everyone, thus making society poorer than otherwise. But that's the price you pay preventing THE END OF THE WORLD.

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Tony | 6.14.13 @ 4:26PM | #

They're getting cheaper, but they're not competing on an even playing field. As I noted, the US government spends more than a trillion dollars on fossil fuel-related infrastructure alone.

This represents an overarching problem with free market dogmatism. There never has been a free market, so there never will be. Some things already have a leg up. So it's best to stop obsessing over it and start caring about things that actually matter, such as whether we're destroying the environment.

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Contrarian P | 6.14.13 @ 11:45PM | #

"There never has been a free market, so there never will be."

And nobody has ever circumnavigated the globe! And nobody has ever walked on the moon! And we've never been able to communicate with people in real time out of our direct line of sight! Etc, etc. Seriously, do you even think before you start typing? By your logic, all achievements in human history are impossible because at some time they had never happened.

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SeaCaptain(Yokeltarian) | 6.14.13 @ 11:26PM | #

So if we legalize millions of welfare recipients, the financialcost doesn't matter because its the "libertarian" thing to do.

BUT implementing a carbon tax...ADDING A FUCKING TAX..is "libertarian"?!?!?

Fucking tReason.

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Norton | 7.2.13 @ 4:24PM | #

So "Kreutzer had the best line of the evening when he said that is delusional to believe that \$200 billion could walk across town in DC without being molested." Cute, but it says Congress can't make a revenue neutral change, even if the life of the planet depends on it. 'Tis a sad state we are in.

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