



Leftists Plan to Reduce Global Warming by Lowering American Living Standards

Daniel J. Mitchell February 2013

Regular readers may remember last year when I shared some remarkably silly data from the “Happy Planet Index,” which supposedly showed the United States ranked below very poor nations such as Cuba, Albania, and Venezuela.

It turns out that nations got lower grades based on their energy consumption. And since energy usage is one of the key indicators of prosperity, that explains why the United States also trailed such global garden spots as Pakistan, Palestine, Iraq, Moldova, and Tajikistan.

Well, the authors of the Happy Planet Index are not the only ones who explicitly embrace stagnation and decline as a strategy to deal with so-called climate change. A leftist think tank in DC is now arguing that we should work less, which means we will produce less and consume less energy.

But that means we will earn less, and therefore consume less. In other words, they are openly asserting that we should all endure lower living standards.

Here are some excerpts from U.S. News and World Report.

Working fewer hours might help slow global warming, according to a new study released Monday by the Center for Economic Policy and Research. A worldwide switch to a “more European” work schedule...could prevent as much as half of the expected global temperature rise by 2100, according to the analysis, which used a 2012 study that found shorter work hours could be associated with lower carbon emissions. The Center for Economic Policy and Research is a liberal think tank based in Washington. “...lowering levels of consumption, holding everything else constant, would reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” writes economist David Rosnick, author of the study.

Gee, maybe we should be like Haiti and Afghanistan, the nations that “won” the top two spots for smallest “ecological footprint” in the Happy Planet Index.

Small carbon footprints!

I suppose this is the point where I should freely acknowledge that I’m not an expert on environmental issues.

But I am a big fan of wilderness and nature and I recognize that – unless we figure out a way to extend property rights to water and air – there is a role for government intervention.

But I’m nonetheless quite skeptical of professional environmentalists. Why? Well, here are a few reasons.

The environmentalist-driven war on high-quality light bulbs.

The environmentalist-driven rule against working toilets.

The environmentalist-driven prohibition against washing machines that actually clean.

This environmentalist-driven example of EPA thuggery.

The environmentalist-driven pointless recycling mandates.

This is what we get from the sane environmentalists. The nutty ones are even more bizarre.

The environmentalist accusation that you’re racist if you oppose their agenda.

The environmentalists who don’t believe in bathing,

The environmentalists who sterilize themselves to avoid carbon-producing children,

The environmentalists who produce/use hand-cranked vibrators to reduce their carbon footprint.

The environmentalist claim that climate change causes AIDS.

Then there's the super-nutty category.

The environmentalists who choose death to lower their carbon footprints.

So perhaps global warming is a real concern, but I think you can understand why I don't trust environmentalists to be in charge of the issue. Though Al Gore has lots of followers, so I guess that's all that matters.