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Snowmageddon only affected 15% of the federal government

Sat, 02/13/2010 - 11:00am | posted by Jason Pye

Over at the *American Spectator*, Doug Bandow notes that despite the complaining of many members of Congress and bureaucrats, **only a fraction of the government was affected by the recent snowstorms**:

In theory the government closure is costing all of us. Some 230,000 D.C. area employees stayed home, costing an estimated \$300 million "in lost productivity per day," according to federal officials. But is the shutdown really hurting the public?

Using the term "productivity" in the same sentence as "federal government" is a dubious exercise. No doubt, in the sense of performing a task efficiently, the Feds can be productive. Just watch how quickly and completely the IRS attempts to clean out the average taxpayer. That explains the joke about Washington's preferred tax form of just two lines: "How much do you earn? Send it in."

But government efficiency doesn't mean productivity in a larger sense. That is, does government activity yield a better life for Americans? On net, the answer is no. The only problem with Snowmageddon is that it has not affected the 85 percent of federal employees who work outside of the D.C. area.

[...]

If you believe the official estimates, the three day federal shut-down cost Americans nearly a billion dollars. But don't worry. Although Snowmageddon has been awful for those of us who live in the region, it likely has saved the American people billions of dollars by slowing down the waste of tax dollars and limiting the harm of regulations.

Now if we could only shut down Washington permanently.

This is how large we've allowed the federal government to get, and Bandow breaks down each department's employment. While we joke around that "snowpocalypse" has brought Washington, DC to a stand still, it has barely slowed down the monster.

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