

Climate-Change Head Scratchers

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With energy and the environment playing an important role in the fall election, Canadians face starkly different policy positions from political parties, together with a bewildering array of information and disinformation. Here is my rather eclectic list of little-known facts, head-scratching paradoxes and utter hypocrisy.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

On June 17, the House of Commons passed a motion declaring a National Climate Emergency.

Firstly, there is no such thing as a “national” climate emergency. Climate change is global, not national, and Canada’s contribution to global CO₂ emissions is a minuscule 1.6 per cent. Here are the answers to some questions that will help you assess whether there’s really a “climate emergency.”

Apocalyptic projections of rapid sea level rises are driving municipal and provincial governments on both our east and west coasts to implement “sea level rise plans” that include sterilizing waterfront from development, building sea barriers and even buying out and destroying homes that are deemed vulnerable. So just how fast are sea levels rising? Here again the NOAA provides the answer. Despite all the calamitous rhetoric, the NOAA states that sea levels “continue to rise at the rate of about one-eighth of an inch (3.2 mm) per year.” At that rate, a house built 10 feet above sea level today would still be 9 feet 7 inches above sea level 40 years from now.

CLIMATE CHANGE HYPOCRISY

South Africa, India, the Philippines, South Korea, Japan and China, all signatories to the Paris climate accord, are building a combined 1,800 new coal-fired power plants. Coal plants emit twice as much CO₂ as natural gas plants. Meanwhile, international environmental groups campaign against sending Canadian LNG to those countries. And here at home, the Trudeau Liberals have just introduced a tax specifically designed to discourage the building of new cleaner-burning gas-fired power plants as they continue to pursue the fantasy that wind and solar will keep the lights on. Good luck with that. After hundreds of billions of dollars invested, wind and solar contribute just two per cent of global energy supply. And that's only when the wind is blowing, and the sun is shining.

CLIMATE CHANGE MONOVISION

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) would have us believe that fossil fuel emissions are the sole reason for climate change. But what about urbanization and deforestation? A study by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs states that the urban population rose from 750 million in 1950 to 4.2 billion in 2018. We don't need the IPCC's hugely complex computer models to know that cities are hotter. All we have to do is walk from a paved sun-heated street lined with concrete buildings to a grassy park. Rather than reflecting the sun's rays back to outer space, all that concrete and pavement absorbs the sun rays, creating a giant heat sink. Likewise, deforestation is turning vast tracts of cool African and South American jungles into heat-absorbing barrens. The U.S. EPA summarizes the combined effect, "Processes such as deforestation and urbanization ... contribute to changes in climate." Trying to deal with any problem without considering all possible causes is both a foolish and dangerous strategy.

FIRST, DO NO HARM

The Liberal government's proposed "national clean fuel standard" requires increased biofuel content in motor fuels. Government mandated biofuel content requirements in North America and the EU have driven the burning of critically important jungle habitat to make way for palm oil plantations. On the islands of Borneo and Sumatra, over 50,000 Orangutans have died because of palm oil deforestation.

WHO BURNS THE STUFF ANYWAY

Several municipal Councils, including Toronto and Victoria, are looking to sue fossil-fuel producers for causing climate change, but 70 per cent of emissions come from their own constituents. And imagine their outcry if fuel producers failed to deliver!

B.C. GREEN INCOHERENCE

B.C. Premier Horgan, a champion of carbon taxes, called an enquiry to investigate high gasoline prices, but prohibited the enquiry panel from considering the price impact of provincial taxes. He also wants Alberta to build a new refinery to supply his province, but he's against the pipeline that's needed to carry it.

SORRY, ONLY FOREIGN TANKERS ALLOWED

The Trudeau government implemented a tanker ban prohibiting movement of Canadian oil on the northern B.C. coast. Meanwhile, hundreds of tankers churn through the delicate and much more enclosed St. Lawrence estuaries carrying oil from Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Russia, Iraq, Nigeria, Angola and Algeria. And while ship/whale collisions are virtually unheard-of on BC's northern coast, those foreign oil tankers move through waters where a critically endangered Northern Right Whale was killed in a ship collision just last month.

THE GREAT ANTI-OIL INDUSTRY WARRIOR IS BACK

Gerald Butts, former personal secretary to the prime minister, is back to help the Liberals win re-election. Before joining the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Butts was CEO of World Wildlife Canada (WWF), an organization dedicated to "landlocking" the oilsands by stopping new pipelines. In his role as head honcho of the PMO, he was the mastermind behind policies that could cripple our country's oil industry. Gerald Butts has admitted via his Twitter account to receiving \$361,642 from WWF during his first two years at the PMO. He claims it was severance, but how many Canadians have ever received severance for quitting their job?

So there you have it, my list of points to ponder through those long and balmy mid-summer evenings that "we the north" enjoy.

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