

Much Show, Null Impact

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Much show, little impact. What is the point of freezing Alberta's economy so that China and India can start coal plants by the dozen?

A couple of worthy green missionaries out in Vancouver, weary of their weight on the global ecosystem, have installed in their new, modest \$3-million home “a [super-insulated, radio-frequency-controlled designer cat door.](#)”

Their cherished furball can prance from the house to the lawn and back whenever it takes it into its whiskered little head to do so, with an absolute minimum of atmospheric displacement.

The cost? A pittance, a trivial \$2,000. The story, unfortunately, tells us otherwise very little about the cat — personality, reading habits, wardrobe, his take-out menu. Which is a shame. It would be nice to know, for example, what jewelry he selected for his litter box. No self-respecting tabby with a two-grand bolt hole is going to back-squirt in some 10-buck plastic pan from Walmart. That we can be sure of. It's a Birks box and a gold flush or Robert's your uncle.

But the story is clear — it's the very headline — about the motivation behind the gilded gateway. Here it is: “This Vancouver couple says their \$2,000 cat door is helping to fight climate change.” And how could it not? Why, it's right up there with not washing the pillowcases for a month or swearing off the golf cart for trips to the 7-Eleven.

We are often told by global-warming excessives that the fight to save the planet is very much on a par with World War II. On that analogy, carbon taxes are the Vancouverite equivalent of the Blitz.

There is no folly too abject, no absurdity too lavish, no pretence too hollow, not to serve as a flag for superior environmental “concern.” Show concern and who cares for the consequences? Take Justin Trudeau’s utterly ineffectual and misguided “carbon tax.” There is so much that is deceptive about this plan, and so much more that is wrong, it may be viewed quite easily as the government equivalent of a cat door. Much show, null impact.

First to its unveiling for 2019. Every government press statement (and ever too many news organizations) describe the increased energy tax (for that is what it is) as a “price on pollution.” The ever-crusading Catherine McKenna, Minister of Earth, Wind and Sky, announces boldly that in 2019 “it will no longer be free to pollute,” and, “making polluters pay is part of any carbon plan.” What is she talking about?

If you want to put a tax on oil and gas, put a tax on oil and gas and call it that. If a government is ashamed or afraid to call a carbon tax a carbon tax, then it probably shouldn’t impose one. But if the case for so doing is really, really weak, then you probably think you can get away with putting carbon dioxide in the same toxic, smelly list with human sewage, chemical spills, bacteriological waste and every malodorous assault on the human senses.

But no, it is simply dishonest to sell a carbon tax as a “price” (n. Liberal for tax) on pollution.

Canada is not in any position to save anything. Whatever minuscule impact some so-called carbon tax will have on the entire planet's atmospheric emissions will be utterly outpaced and negated by the vastly more massive economies that are going the opposite way. What is the point of freezing the Alberta economy so that China and India and half the world besides can start coal plants by the dozen every month and "pollute" to their heart's price-free content?

On its less equivocal days the government admits ... it's really about Canada setting an example. We know we're can't really change the big picture. We know that what Canada does or does not do, in any effectual context, does not matter, but our power of example is spectacular.

Who nursed that absurd fantasy? Even inside Canada half the provinces are or soon will be absolutely opposed. Outside? Well, considering matters with China now, it is not just dubious, it is hallucinatory, to think a policy Canada favours will find favour in Beijing. And after Mr. Trudeau's eerie minstrel tour of India, is it likely that venerable country is searching Canadian headlines for leading examples?

Of the United States, it is needless to speak, except to say the U.S. is no longer in the Paris agreement, will not impose anything like a carbon tax, and, just incidentally, is one of the very few countries that — astonishingly, unlike Canada — has actually lowered its carbon emissions. (How so? Maybe they sell cat doors more cheaply in the U.S. Who knows?)

We are not a world beacon. Our practical impact on global climate, however it is assessed, is trivial. Our measurable contribution is negligible, our exemplary force a delusion.

If the world and mankind is under imminent existential threat — and that is global warming's core thesis — then nothing but a massive, 30- to 50-per-cent reduction

in all the economies of the world offers the hope of reducing carbon dioxide levels to the point the Greens and environmentalists say is necessary. That's the central truth of the global warming crisis — if you accept the reasoning of its exponents.

And within Canada, any serious response to our own Paris commitments would require "... **drastic economic overhaul** ... hiking the price of gas by up to 100 per cent, ceasing development of the oilsands, radically reducing the number of Canadians who drive every day, along with many other actions — and all within a period of 10 years." It would require crippling industrial output in every sector, with the further inevitable burden of a great reduction in what we regard as essential government services. That's not a "price on pollution." It's a determination to greatly lower living standards for a higher cause.

If the government really believes its own rhetoric on global warming, there's the real cost, and anything less is a sham. Which may be defined as the glossy embrace of a virtue you are exceptionally unwilling to practice.

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/rex-murphy-how-the-liberal-carbon-tax-is-not-unlike-a-2000-cat-door>