

Holding a candle to climate change

Warning! This article contains no statistics to remember or Tweet about. Seems like talking about the weather has gone from the innocent "how're ya doin" segue conversations to near declarations of ideological warfare. *Climate change* has now taken on the mantle of bogeyman for everything from a freak rainstorm in the desert to a longer-than-normal summer heat wave in Alaska. According to true believers, traffic jams in California are caused by climate change as are naturally occurring wildfires. And if you broach the subject with today's climate activists they'll tell you that the millions of people lined up to cross our southern border are there because of heavy rains or earth tremors in their hometowns. That's right. Illegal immigration is the result of our planet's fluctuating weather systems!

There is no question that climate change has become a very profitable banner stretched across the high-rent buildings of lobbyists on K Street in our nation's capital, but it's not confined to DC. Offices filled with 'climate patriots' are popping up all around the United States often with start-up capital provided by deep pocket donations from millionaire and billionaire philanthropists who see themselves as modern age climate (read: social change) warriors.

Today's climate crusaders are made up of every age group unlike the mostly youthful protesters of the sixties and seventies. Many, though, have never even heard of real conservationists like John Muir and couldn't touch the hem of his garment even if they had. A fair number are *crossover veterans* of civil rights protests or anti-capitalists who've shared a bedroll or two with Wall Street occupiers. They come from the periphery of social justice and special interest organizations and can even be your neighbors who pull on their hiking boots every weekend to trek the countryside in search of an endangered species to save like the Silvery Minnow.

This is not to say that all who drive a Prius with a 'Coexist' bumper sticker or members of the Sierra Club and the Ornithological Society are dyed in the wool crazies. They aren't. However, there are millions of decent environment-loving individuals who have found a home among the more vocal elements who believe that we only have a decade of clean air left to breath before the curtain descends on planet Earth.

It would be very wrong to tar the sensible climate guardians and honest conservationists among us with the same brush that we use to paint the ultra-radical climatistas with. I'm speaking of those that rant about the carbon discharged by America's commercial airlines while blithely ignoring tons of the stuff that spews forth from the climate champions' private jets that circle the globe in search of fat speaking fees for their owners. The atmosphere of the rich and famous is a protected one from any/all media criticism if the climate hypocrites have joined the chorus of shrill voices who preach the gospel of collectivist climate guilt. You know the sermon I mean, the one about the inherent evils of the combustion engine or environmentally-destructive oil pipelines that would save millions of dollars by not trucking product from the field to the refinery.

Our climate is changing. No doubt about it just as God made little green apples, but the science of just *how much* and *why* is still being debated by serious researchers. It is by no means settled science. And while there are many known 'culprits' out there, there are also a few that aren't even part of the conversation and certainly not in the headlines. One of those is the packaging industry - a multi-billion dollar business that happily wraps everything we buy from the foods we eat to the single-use shipping materials that bring products from farm to market. We're talking billions of pounds of annual refuse here not just a week's worth of old newspapers or plastic Perrier bottles.

It's high time we did a deep dive into our individual lifestyles and really focused on the entire range of our routine purchases. There are still those among us who remember the old WWII slogan: "Is this trip really necessary?" In that spirit, we need to do a reality check before we drive a hundred miles to a climate change protest or donate to an organization that relies on junk science and intimidation to harangue those of us who are doing our part to keep the planet free of normal

refuse... and empty climate change rhetoric. I'm reminded of Catholic TV host Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's closing remarks on his now long forgotten TV program..."If everyone lit just one little candle what a bright world this would be." While the affable man may have been selling something different from conservation with his sermons, he had a point that climate devotees could pack up in their rucksacks with their granola bars. It is: that by lighting a simple wax candle we could brighten up the room of our discontent, clear our minds AND perhaps even save a few kilowatt hours along the way. Take THAT Mother Earth!

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