

Thursday 3rd February 2011

Attention: Senate Select Committee On Scrutiny Of New Taxes

Re: Enquiry Into:- Carbon Tax Pricing Mechanisms

Dear Mesdames et Messieurs,

I write in support of simple well designed carbon taxes.

I object to unfettered laissez faire in the area of environmental regulation.

Minimal but effective regulation of the environment is essential if humans are to be still living on this planet in two hundred years, let alone live here for one billion years as I think Brian Aldiss science fiction author predicted.

Some form of simple carbon tax with a few flat or fixed percentage rates on the most wasteful uses of carbon is required.

The legislation should also quarantine this money so that it is spent on such things as railways and tramways in order to reduce the number of automobiles and buses, given that the latter use precious non-renewable supplies of oil, and maybe also spent on railways and tramways operational subsidies and nuclear fusion research.

My submission is attached.

I ask that this contribution to this issue be considered by the members of parliament on the Committee.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Oliver (copy with signature to follow by post.)

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1.0 Outcomes

Societal long term survival is an outcome.

The protection of the environment is a means, not an outcome as many would suggest. I agree that the higher species mammals have souls and therefore rights, and think much environmental theory muddled and misguided, though well meaning.

My opinion is that the pursuit of happiness by the higher species, human societal long term survival, and valued appreciated natural beauty of the wilderness are outcomes relevant to environmental regulation.

2.0 How To Organise Environmental Regulation

Minimal but effective regulation that is well targeted on the likely problem areas with as few questions on as few forms as prove absolutely necessary, as few regulators as prove absolutely necessary, and as little red tape for everyone as proves absolutely necessary require proper thought and consideration by legislators.

Technological change does impact on environmental regulation. If only the problem of clean nuclear fusion could be solved the world would have access to almost unlimited almost free electricity, apart from the heat radiation problem of radiating away as infra-red radiation the waste heat that results.

3.0 How To Organise Carbon Taxes

Let us look at the economics of paper. Much paper goes into junk mail. Other than the free one or two local newspapers, junk mail should attract a five cent tax per house per item to deter unnecessary use of carbon. Much junk mail is unread and if recycled gets made into packaging cardboard boxes or brown paper. Newsprint which is recycled well I understand gets made into newsprint with a percentage of woodchips added to maintain quality. Have a five cent tax on each newspaper sold. Take reams of A4, used everywhere and typically made from fresh woodchips for computer printers. Tax them 50 cents each (reams of A4 also release chlorine I believe during manufacture.) And impose a 50 cent vice tax on each dozen toilet rolls sold (it will reduce wasteful use).

An automobile will use a lot of petrol over five to twenty years. Have a 500 dollar tax per automobile. Some schedule of fixed flat taxes on classes of goods to make sure that there are price differentials for goods which do environmental harm. Simple to administer for the manufacturers. No endless reprogramming of the whole economy's software programs to collect, either.

Let the market thenceforth reduce the carbon use.

4.0 The Environmental Education Problem

I have had unsolicited telephone calls (and emails) about the environment, especially during the last federal election campaign, and whilst I might agree with some of the callers about the jolly green giant of the environmental movement Senator Bob Brown being the best person to vote for on the environment issue, I also consider education and culture outcomes relevant to how I might vote. However, the Greens need to lead on this issue and support strict environmental efficiency legislation so that energy and water efficiencies are made throughout the economy. Others need to listen to them on this issue.

5.0 Conclusion

As a jaded former ALP member who resigned from the party in 2005, I am disappointed in both sides of politics.

As a information technology worker - presently between jobs - with a mathematics degree my views on economics and the environment should be taken as not the views of an economist but those of someone interested in politics and the outcomes that I advocate reflect what I want for both myself and the poor and ordinary people I sympathise with, both now and in the future.

I ask that this contribution be considered by the committee.