

One-Page Essay #4: Solution to the Anthropogenic Warming Problem

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You have been appointed Minister of the Global Environment in administration of Zaphod Beeblebrox, Philosopher King of the World. Historical note: Zaphod [or one of his descendants (or possibly one of his ancestors; there is ambiguity as a result of time travel)] subsequently becomes Emperor of the Universe as described in Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Your portfolio in the Beeblebrox administration is to solve the problem of Anthropogenic Global Warming. You can redirect resources, establish or terminate entire industries, or impose any regulation or sanction. You have unlimited ability to tax or to subsidize. You are term limited to a decade. There is, however, an unlimited liability clause in your contract. A decade after you leave office there will be a worldwide referendum on your job performance. The electorate will choose among three options: a) Lavish pension allowing you to live in opulence; b) Dignified but austere obscurity (think witness protection); or c) Termination with extreme prejudice. Plan wisely!

You will need to prioritize reform of the industries and technologies that produce the most greenhouse gasses. Do you want to limit coal burning to metallurgy? Switch electrical generation entirely to natural gas? Solar? Wind? Nuclear? Carbon sequestration? How about cars? Should we outlaw or tax them? Make them all gas or plug-in hybrids, or pure electric? Maybe it would be better to switch transportation to rail. What about a carbon tax or permits to produce or use fossil fuels? How do you plan to enforce efficiencies in manufacturing, lighting, household appliances, etc.? What about population growth and living standards? You will need to look ahead in the text and put some numbers with your recommendations to write a convincing plan.

Maybe the best course is to force everybody to eat granola and tofu, having 1.2 children per couple, but otherwise living like monks or nuns for the environment's sake. Alternatively, you might argue that rich societies deal with environmental challenges better than poor ones. Let's just suck up all the resources and leave the problem to our descendants. That might be a rational choice, given that civilization probably won't crash during the next twenty years and the electorate's decision on your fate is irrevocable (you hope).

Prepare your plan in the Churchillian 500 words as usual, remembering that Zaphod has even more severe ADD than Sir Winston did. Your plans are due Monday 02 April 2018. Please submit them to me in hardcopy and electronically to the Turnitin account for this class. I'll pick the best ones and send them on to Zaphod. The fates of Humanity and of the Planet are in your hands.