

The 4th Annual Center for Environmental Policy Luncheon featuring Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore

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Too often the discussion about environmental protection pits economic prosperity against the health and beauty of the environment. The sold-out 2006 Center for Environmental Policy (CEP) luncheon, attended by 215 people in Seattle on July 25, focused on the need for collaborative and science based solutions that recognize the need for policies as they seek to combine prosperity with environmental stewardship. Science-based environmentalism provides a workable relationship that satisfies both groups and allows the facts to dictate the policy.

Todd Myers, Director of the Center for Environmental Policy, opened the 4th Annual Luncheon by presenting the framework under which, environmentalism might find a sustainable balance in a polarized environment. Market-based competition provides the best opportunity to develop environmentally sound policy that protects resources without crippling responsible economic development.

The Center for Environmental Policy, a project of Washington Policy Center, works to promote market-based environmental solutions by publishing studies, submitting editorials, testifying before the legislature and holding workshops on important environmental policy issues. In the past year, CEP testified by invitation before the Washington Legislature, provided a legislative briefing in Olympia, published editorials in some of the state's leading newspapers, released a study on the potential banning of flame-retardant materials and distributes a monthly "Environmental Watch" that examines the claims of environmental activists.

Todd explained that the market is better at creating new technologies that reduce the impact on the environment. The creation of the hybrid vehicle is an excellent example of this principle. In 1990, California mandated electric cars comprise a certain percentage of the market. This policy, however, did not anticipate the creation of hybrid vehicles, which were more appealing to consumers. Ultimately, California changed the law to take advantage of the new technology. Initially, the government had attempted to force innovation in a different and, ultimately fruitless, direction. By providing a product that takes the concerns of the environment and entrepreneurial opportunity into account, the pairing of these two, seemingly antagonistic interests have formed to provide a market-oriented solution that satisfies both parties.

The Luncheon continued with the presentation of the Environmental Innovator Awards, recognizing individuals and organizations who have worked to bring about reasonable market-

based solutions to environmental issues. This year's award was presented to the State Board of Natural Resources, the American Forest Resource Council, the Washington State Environmental Council, and the Audubon Society. These four groups were part of a recent agreement to support sustainable forestry on state lands. State forests had been an ongoing battleground in the so-called "Timber Wars" that had pitted environmental groups against the forest industry for the past 20 years. The award recognized all of the groups' commitment to a science-based process built on collaboration and a commitment to forego lawsuits.

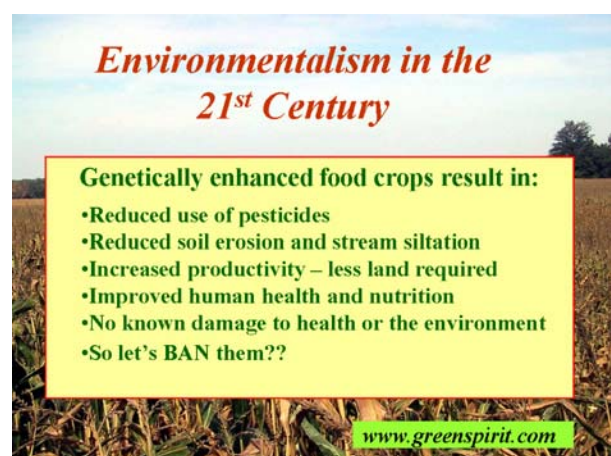
After the awards presentation, the keynote speaker for the luncheon, Dr. Patrick Moore, discussed what he sees as "Environmentalism for the Twenty-First Century." He began by discussing his experiences during the early stages of the environmental movement in the 1970's with Greenpeace, an organization he co-founded. His efforts to end nuclear testing, protect whales and end the seal hunt in Canada grabbed headlines worldwide and brought the environmental movement to the forefront of public opinion.

Gradually, Dr. Moore began to notice a shift in thinking within Greenpeace and the environmental movement as a whole. They began to drift away from a factual approach based on science and instead, entered into an extremism void of those principles. Politics moved in and displaced a science-based approach to environmentalism. The movement became defined not by what it was for, but by what it was against.

Dr. Moore argued that environmental extremists have fostered an agenda that is decidedly anti-human, anti-science and technology, anti-trade and globalization, anti-business and ultimately, anti-civilization. He cited a quote from environmental activist Herb Hammond, who noted that "of all the components of the ecosystem, humans are the only ones we know to be completely optional." These activists voice such an extreme point of view that rationale and common sense are forgotten and forced to sit idly by and watch as emotionalism and sensationalism trumpet the cause.

Patrick Moore no longer agreed with the misdirected path Greenpeace was embarking on and so withdrew from the organization. He later formed his own organization in 1991, GreenSpirit, basing his research on reason and science, not sensationalist shock tactics and political capitulations. His use of science has led to a more measured response to many of the environmental issues we are facing today.

One example he highlighted was the use of genetically modified foods and the environmental community's opposition to it. Every year 500,000 children become blind due to a deficiency in Vitamin A. As a result, Golden Rice has been genetically enhanced to increase the quantities of Vitamin A and provide the necessary vitamins and minerals to allow children the opportunity to engage the colorful world around them. However, environmental extremists are not as concerned for these children as they are for the potential carryover of these genetically enhanced foods into native



species of rice, claims that have yet to be scientifically substantiated.

In fact, genetically modified crops provide three positive impacts for the environment in which they're used. First, these crops are often enhanced to resist many of the diseases that other foods are susceptible to, as a result, less chemical pesticides are used to ensure a healthy produce. Secondly, they increase the productivity rate resulting in less land needed to produce the same amount of crop. This extra land can then be restored to forests and other natural habitats. Finally, herbicide tolerant crops require less tillage and cause less erosion. These verifiable, positive impacts stand in stark contrast to the mythical accusations proposed by environmental extremists.

"There are no experimental data to support the hypothesis that increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are causing or can be expected to cause catastrophic changes in global temperatures or weather."

The Oregon Petition – Opposed to Kyoto – Signed by 19,000 Scientists and Professionals.

Dr. Moore continued with a topic that has been in more headlines across this country than probably any other environmental issue, Global Warming. Patrick Moore does not question the fact that the world is warming and even agrees that the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere is increasing. However, he also looks at the big picture, placing today's events into the framework of history. He noted that the earth has been warming for the past 500 years and that at one point in history, the earth was almost entirely tropical, when there were no such things as glaciers.

"There is new and stronger evidence that most of the observed warming over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities."

International Panel on Climate Change – 3rd Assessment Report.

"I am certain that there is too much certainty in the world"

Michael Crichton, "State of Fear", 2004

Nevertheless, we should not ignore the effects of global warming or disregard ways in which we can reduce our effect on it. Dr. Moore used the analogy of an insurance policy as a way to approach the global warming issue. We may be the cause if it, we may not and no one knows for sure, but to be careful, we should take measures to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, which account for 86% of the world's energy.

The solution to these problems, as proposed by Dr. Patrick Moore, is an expansion into renewable and nuclear energy. Again, environmental extremists respond by attacking these more realistic energy alternatives. For environmental activists it's all or nothing, there is no middle ground and as they seek an idealistic approach, they end up harming the very thing they set out to protect. Hydro-electric power, wind and nuclear energy and viable alternatives to fossil fuels, yet the environmental movement rejects them as options and instead pursues more expensive and ineffective means.

One renewable resource, that is often overlooked, is wood. Dr. Moore sees trees as a viable answer to energy issues today. By using wood, we reaffirm its vast array of practical applications and encourage the continued growth of forests. Environmentalists have asked the United Nations to reduce the consumption of wood and pursue "environmentally appropriate alternatives." These people seem to disregard the millions of people who are dependent on wood for shelter and warmth, not to mention that the production of wood alternatives such as steel,

plastic, concrete, etc, have far higher emissions of CO₂. These environmentalists also seem to forget that if we no longer value the forests, then that land will be cleared for things we do deem important, like farming and housing. The best way to protect and even expand the forests is to make them more valuable.

Dr. Moore concluded by outlining an eight-step plan that would begin to provide a sound, holistic response to environmental issues.

1. Focus on practical renewable energies, such as wood, wind, hydroelectric and nuclear.
2. Voluntary population management: women's rights and education are vital in this effort.
3. Develop logically consistent global analysis to use science effectively.
4. Become better gardeners of the earth.
5. Control urban sprawl. Use zoning laws to guide land use.
6. Reverse deforestation in the tropics.
7. Reduce fossil fuel consumption and increase nuclear energy.
8. Reduce poverty, disease, and malnutrition. Reducing poverty would allow people to focus on the environment and other things and not simply on survival.

The environmental movement now emphasizes sensationalism at the expense of factual science. Political agendas are pronounced and given higher priority than working to resolve environmental issues in a realistic and practical way. We must return to logic and science as the basis for our policy decisions. We must continue towards a sustainable future through practical means and a market-based approach. Responsible environmentalism, rooted in science, is the most effective and efficient way of achieving that goal.

To watch the presentation or learn more about the CEP, visit www.nwenvironmentalpolicy.org or the Washington Policy Center's web page at www.washingtonpolicy.org.