

Politics and environmentalism essay samples

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Article Review: Being Green at Ben and Jerry's

The environment, i. e. climate change, has become a serious concern in the world. It is an issue that both citizens and legislators want to address. People make many attempts to contribute to and help in the conservation and protection of the environment. This is particularly true with regard to the consumption of gasoline and other fossil fuel.

The article, “ Being Green at Ben and Jerry's” written in 2002 by George Will, is a criticism of both the government's and environmentalists' efforts with regard to their environmental advocacy. These efforts seem to be mainly lip-service and “ feel-good” activities supporting various self-interests and may not have been necessary in a time with adequate resources.

The article traces through the years various attempts of government to find new sources of fuel. All these were done to keep the US from being dependent on other countries for its fuel needs. These efforts seem to be futile since there was supposed to be adequate supply of fuel in the past 25 years.

Meanwhile, the government did not seem to have undertaken efforts to keep demand down. It did not try to lower people's usage of cars and other fuel-

consuming activities. The article says that this was because the politicians did not want to antagonize voters. “ Opponents of increased energy production usually argue for decreased consumption. But they flinch from conservation measures.”

Environmentalists too did not seem to have done much. If anything, most of their efforts resulted only in people feeling good.

It concludes with a description of how some environmentalists try to help in protecting the environment. For instance, they consume Ben & Jerry’s ice cream instead of other brands because of the company’s claimed environmental efforts. What these people do not realize is that the production of this ice cream brands still adds to the problems. The “ conscientious environmentalist” should think about the pollution that the manufacture of the ice cream produces.

Written in 2002, the article may sound a bit harsh today as governments around the world are more seriously addressing many issues concerning the environment. Still, its criticisms may be valid for the period it was covering.

Hypocrisy of Environmentalists

The article is very disapproving of many environmental efforts of both the legislators and the population. Hardly any laws have been passed that were had been truly effective in protecting the environment. Neither the efforts of the people themselves seem to have worked. Self-interest seems to be the major hindrance. The legislators obviously do not want to antagonize voters. At the same time, the people themselves do not want to give up anything to contribute in the efforts. “ Beware the wrath of Americans who like to drive, and autoworkers who like to make cars that are large, heavy and safer than

the gasoline-sippers that environmentalists prefer.”

Also, some environmentalist activities can be described as mainly “feel-good indulgence”. People feel involved in environmental protection but actually are actually not doing anything. The article cites as an example the consumption of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream—“the most politically correct product on the planet”—as some people’s contribution to help protect the environment. Unfortunately, what people do not realize is that the production of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream actually does a lot of harm to the environment. Ben & Jerry’s website validates every detail of this claim. However, the company continually tests and monitors all of these and tries to reduce these negative effects. This is its chief contribution to environmentalism. The company did not seem to have made any real effort to abandon its old technology and processes for more environmentally-friendly ones.

The article had a prolonged discussion of government efforts in legislation to protect the environment. Only in the last three paragraphs and especially in the final one did it drive home its main criticism of environmentalists. They should recognize that some of their efforts are not accomplishing anything. In short, people—both legislators and the citizens themselves—are being hypocritical in their environmental protection efforts. People are paying only lip service. They do not want to make any sacrifices. Few would want to give up using their cars nor give up their desserts, especially their Cherry Garcia.

Sources

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