

07/06/2006

Re: Global solution

Editor,

Columnist Robert Samuelson is only partly correct when he says global warming is "really an engineering problem", yet he also claims new technology and energy efficiency are unlikely to significantly reduce greenhouse gases. I understand his lack of optimism, but in fact there are measures we can take, starting today, that will completely eliminate any further increases in greenhouse gases and furthermore actually decrease them when combined with future technological improvements and greater efficiency.

All we have to do is stop breeding like rabbits! Samuelson correctly points out that the world population will increase to 9.1 billion by 2050, implying a 42 percent increase in greenhouse gases. But this projection assumes that our reproductive proclivities are entirely out of our control, when in fact we have the technological means right now to keep the world population stable. Consider the following: if everyone who had children simply limited themselves to having two children, we would not only still replace ourselves and provide security for our old age, but we would also slowly decrease the number of people producing greenhouse gases, whether it be by driving cars or burning rain forests (because some people do not have children or die before reproducing).

Some might note that this makes global warming a moral issue of a different kind- because ultimately this is an issue of reproductive responsibility. Are we capable of exercising control over our own organs? You name the problem: waste disposal, pollution, global warming, famine, standards of living, education and wilderness preservation, and they only get worse with increasing population. Right now we exhibit the reproductive morals of a rabbit, the question is: are we also limited to having the intelligence of a rabbit?

John Donovan
Eugene, OR