

# **A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift**

by  
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## **Do Our Presidential Candidates Care About the Environment?**

During the Democratic debates earlier this year, there were discussions about some environmental issues, particularly about climate change. This probably became an issue when each of the candidates were asked to name the biggest issue facing our country. If you recall, Bernie Sanders said it was climate change. I applauded him for that because it is not an issue about which most people care. They really care about what is going to affect them next year or the following year. There are too many people that don't worry about an issue that will have an impact after they leave this earth.

During the Republican debates, I was first amazed that climate change was never an issue, but I should have known better. Many of the Republican candidates have been supported by companies in the energy field, and these candidates must respect the businesses of their supporters. When the television networks negotiated with the Republican National Committee to broadcast these debates, it wouldn't surprise me if one of the conditions stipulated by the RNC was that the moderators could not ask any questions about the environment. This way they wouldn't have to decide whether to answer the question in favor of their financial supporters or answer it in favor of their voting supporters.

I have watched two debates between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, and I have not heard one question about the environment. The second debate came close when each was asked about their position on the energy industry. Both responded that since we are now energy independent, we should build our energy industry with new technologies, renewable energy, and even export it. But there was no comment about the impact on the environment.

Since we are not hearing much about their position on the environment, we need to go back to comments made before these two recent debates. I believe that Hillary Clinton is following the position of the current administration and will support action to fight climate change. While Obama really didn't do too much during his first term, he has changed his position and wants to sign the recent Paris accord. Hillary Clinton has made statements that she is concerned about climate change but seems to be careful about offending the energy industry. There are two other major environmental issues that are not brought up at all. I have not heard anything about the over consumption of our natural resources or anything about what I consider the single biggest environmental issue – that of the quickly depleting quantity and quality of water.

We have all heard Donald Trump state that climate change is a hoax. More recently he has put the blame on this hoax being orchestrated by China. I am not sure why he is blaming China other than to slowly change his position in the event he is elected president. Since he is probably being funded by some wealthy energy companies, he doesn't want to offend their position so he says very little about climate change – other than it is a hoax.

I believe that if he is elected president, he will surround himself with the most intelligent and capable people he can find that will work with him. He has such a big ego that he will do whatever possible to be successful. If, in fact, this happens, there should be some people who will convince him that climate change is for real, and for the benefit of all Americans and the rest of the world, he needs to do something about mitigating climate change.

He may even wake up and propose a carbon tax that must be implemented by every major economy in the world. Assuming that China agrees to it, which I doubt, the price of manufactured products from China will increase significantly because so much of its energy production is with dirty coal. If you add the carbon emission generated for shipping the products to the U.S., they may not be much cheaper than U.S. products, if at all. A universal carbon tax could also shift the manufacturing of these products to Mexico which will probably make them cheaper than from China because of the considerably shorter shipping distance. Who knows, maybe this will improve the Mexican economy and reduce the immigration of Mexicans into the U.S. – or maybe some will even return home. Just think, if Trump accepts climate change to be real and tries to do something about it, he may even help his other goal of bringing jobs back to the U.S. First he has to win the election, and then someone needs to convince him that climate change is not a hoax but real. Is this possible?