



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on May 7, 2018

Climate-change Believers Pollute More Than Skeptics, Study Says

A new study confirms what climate-change skeptics have long suspected: Most global-warming believers are hypocrites who pollute the planet worse than those who don't buy into their doomsday scenarios.

University of Michigan researchers conducted a [study](#) of 600 Americans, comparing their stated climate-change beliefs to their individual environmental actions.



The researchers identified three groups of Americans: “(1) the ‘Skeptical,’ who believed least in climate change; (2) the ‘Cautiously Worried,’ who had moderate beliefs in climate change; and (3) the ‘Highly Concerned,’ who had the strongest beliefs and concern about climate change.”

Over the course of a year, the research subjects were periodically asked about their climate beliefs and their level of support for various supposedly climate-friendly government policies such as gasoline taxes. At the same time, they were also quizzed about the frequency with which they engaged in four allegedly climate-friendly activities: recycling, using public transportation, purchasing “green” products, and employing reusable shopping bags.

Not surprisingly, “Highly Concerned” individuals were the most supportive of bigger government while “Skeptical” individuals were the least. However, when it came to their own actions, the pattern was reversed: The more likely a person was to buy into climate change, the less likely he was to actually do anything about it other than clamor for more coercion. “Skeptical” individuals actually engaged in environmentally friendly activities more often than those who claimed to be “Highly Concerned” about the future of the planet.

“Belief in climate change,” the researchers concluded, “does not appear to be a necessary or sufficient condition for pro-environmental behavior.”

None of this comes as a shock to regular readers of conservative and libertarian news sources, which have long reported on the hypocrisy among climate-change movers and shakers, such as [Al Gore's enormous energy consumption](#), the huge numbers of [carbon-spewing private jets flown to climate conferences](#), and the massive amounts of [litter left behind after climate protests](#).

Such facts seem to be unknown to — or ignored by — rank-and-file climate-change believers. Yet as [Watts Up With That?](#) notes, this study reveals that:

The leaders of the green movement are not duping followers with their hypocrisy, they are an expression of the top to bottom hypocrisy of their entire movement. The most vocal climate supporters are actually the people who care least about the planet — all those noisy expressions of concern are camouflage to conceal the fact they are deeply selfish people who can't be bothered to make a personal effort to improve the world they claim to love.

I pick up trash outside my house — because I like having a nice house, I like living on a nice street.



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I don't think it is someone else's [sic] job to make my little corner of the world a better place. If I thought CO2 was a problem I would make a personal effort to reduce my carbon footprint.

Perhaps that sense of personal ownership, of responsibility for one's actions, is what is missing from the green movement — a point made by the authors of the study.

Tom Jacobs, in a [Pacific Standard](#) piece, believes that "the psychological phenomenon known as moral licensing" explains climate believers' inconsistency:

Previous research has found doing something altruistic — even buying organic foods — gives us license to engage in selfish activity. We've "earned" points in our own mind. So if you've pledged some money to Greenpeace, you feel entitled to enjoying the convenience of a plastic bag.

Regarding climate change skeptics, remember that conservatism prizes individual action over collective efforts. So while they may assert disbelief in order to stave off coercive (in their view) actions by the government, many could take pride in doing what they can do on a personal basis.

Of course, if climate believers were merely hypocrites, they could be largely ignored (except insofar as they try to impose their preferred policies on the rest of us). Unfortunately, observes PJ Media's [Rick Moran](#), "This 'moral license' to pollute goes hand in hand with a towering moral egoism that justifies trying to destroy people who disagree with them" by, say, denying them [service](#) or [political office](#) — or even [killing them](#).

Evidence that puts climate believers in their place is welcome. Evidence that ends their influence would be even better.

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