

# MOSCOW-PULLMAN DAILY NEWS

## Letter: Enhanced CO<sub>2</sub> is not a benefit

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

It's time we stopped living in a dream world where increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> is seen as a benefit (Varnel Williams, Letter to the Editor, March 17). After citing an "authority" that never worked with enhanced CO<sub>2</sub>, he conveniently ignores ocean acidification, a problem arising from enhanced CO<sub>2</sub> that has already manifest itself on the Washington coast. He then charges forward with a "more CO<sub>2</sub> is better" philosophy, suggesting that it brings about marvelous improvements in plant growth.

In the real world, enhanced CO<sub>2</sub> has been shown to increase the growth of some plants by a small amount - but only when there are enough nutrients for the additional

growth, or there are no simultaneous increases in temperature.

The rising CO<sub>2</sub> effects on plants come with other surprises. Sometimes plant growth increases while protein and nutrients decrease - the opposite of what is usually desired. Sometimes insects thrive on plants grown under enhanced CO<sub>2</sub>. Young trees might respond but mature trees don't. The unknowns and surprises go on and on. Enhanced CO<sub>2</sub> is not a benefit.

Reality is not the simple picture Varnel paints. Climate change is already occurring, and we need to be discussing solutions. The revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend proposal by Citizens'

Climate Lobby (<http://citizensclimatelobby.org>) (<http://cclpalouse.org>) would place a gradually rising price on carbon fuels which would spur energy innovation and the development of alternatives.

These fees would be rebated monthly to American households, protecting them from economic impacts during the transition away from carbon-based fuels. Markets and consumer choice, rather than regulation, would determine what technologies would be employed to make this transition.

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