Bagging a climate change victory [1]

Written by **Tim Worstall** [2] | Sunday 25 November 2007

As we know, Gordon Brown has announced that we're all about to be free from the great plastic bag tyranny. No longer will great gobbets of oil be used to manufacture them, emissions will fall and we'll all be ushered onwards to the Gaian Nirvana.

Except, at least if Dominic Lawson is correct here, that's not what will actually happen [3] :

> The only problem with that is that plastic bags, though undeniably irritating when left lying around, are essentially the by-product, rather than the cause, of fossil fuel generation. Approximately 98 per cent of every barrel of oil, once refined, is consumed as petrol or diesel. If the remaining two per cent of naphtha was not used for packaging, it would almost certainly be flared off ? which is pure waste.

Ah, so we're going to get the emissions anyway, without the convenience of the plastic bags, plus we'll get the emissions from whatever we all use instead: paper or perhaps sturdier reusable cotton or something. This really doesn't sound like something that's going to be beneficial to the environment, however well it might play to certain sections of the voting public.

I'm reminded of the phrase [4] "Don't just do something, stand there!" For whenever people in government do have these bright ideas about what do about climate change, as with bio-fuels [5] , they manage to make the problem worse, act entirely counter-productively.

blog comments powered by Disqus [7]