Published on *Adam Smith Institute* (http://www.adamsmith.org)

Freeing the green in all of us [1]

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There seems to be at the moment fad for prefixing the word libertarian with a politically descriptive term and proclaiming that the latter justifies the first somehow and that they are mutually beneficial.

A recent example I came across was "On Being a Green Libertarian" in the latest copy of *The Individual*, a publication by the Society for Individual Freedom.
The author of the article argues that his green beliefs can in fact be joined with libertarian ideology, creating an effective process for environmental protection. He correctly identifies the key tenets of libertarianism, as well as the irrational behaviour of most of the environmental movement in their clamouring for more legislation to enforce their arguments. But fails to expand on how the two ideologies can be married together successfully.

Most libertarians would suggest pricing, property rights and the common law as the answer. For example, if someone suffers from the ill effects of pollution then they can seek compensation through the courts. The person who pollutes will then be forced to price that compensation into their product before selling it on the open market. The negative environmental externalities would be internalized in the price, and people would then be free to buy their electricity (for instance) as they saw fit. People would base their spending decisions on their own personally ranked concerns, be they environmental, price or otherwise. The cost of developing nuclear power stations, tidal barrages etc would all be laid out in the prices offered to consumers, leaving them free ? but not coercing them ? to allow their beliefs to come into play. But power generators would indeed be reacting to the greatest demand, and how best to turn a profit ? the free market at work.

In an ideal world it would be up to the 'greens' to argue, with well founded ideas, the best way forward and not seek to impose their ideology upon others through purely legislative means. They would change people's views so that they would then demand greener products from greener manufacturers.

Let the people decide how green they wish to be. They'll be libertarians...but with a hint of green.

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