

Blog » BYU Sports

A win is a win, BYU
Cougars say after...

Opinion .

Search

Search

News Sports Blogs Opinion Money Lifestyle Entertainment Obituaries Jobs Homes Cars Classifieds Deals

Healthy environment, strong economy can co-exist

By robert adler

Tweet

First published 6 hours ago
Updated 6 hours ago

Article Tools



- » Comments (0)
- » E-mail this story
- » Printer-friendly version

Photos



Latest In Opinion

- » **Redistricting: Looks like the fix is in**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Clippings: Lede_Subhead_here**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Elizabeth Warren: The great populist hope**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Common core standards, liability or asset?**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Why I don't care about Dane Hall's alleged drug record**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Expectations for a University of Utah president**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Fair Boundaries redistricting maps stick to metrics goals**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Pyle: New rule for online newspapers: First, add no noise**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **As political civility takes a sabbatical: Keyword_here • PAUL ROLLY**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Exempting the rich from the social contract**
Posted 6 hours ago
- » **Scout pay too high**

The Utah Foundation recently released its first biennial Quality of Life Index, based on a rigorously designed survey of what a representative cross-section of Utahns consider most important to their well-being. Environmental quality was near the top of the list.

The Utah Foundation is not an environmental advocacy group. Its mission is “to promote a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce, and a high quality of life for Utahns” through thorough, well-supported research. Its key supporters include a who’s who of Utah’s business powerhouses, such as Rio Tinto, Rocky Mountain Power, Energy Solutions, Questar Gas, Intermountain Healthcare and Zions Bancorporation.

Yet despite the foundation’s economic focus and business-oriented support, the 2011 Quality of Life Index identifies air and water quality as one of the three top concerns among 20 factors in the survey. Other priorities include safety and security, public schools, quality health care and good jobs.

Moreover, the report indicated that despite the fact that Utahns believe the environment is so important, the quality of our air and water was “quite low,” 12th among the 20 factors. Therefore, the foundation suggested that air and water quality was among the factors that warrant the most future attention. Other factors that ranked high in importance but low in quality include public schools, affordable housing and other living costs, and good jobs.

These results contradict how environmental issues are often portrayed in Utah. Some refer to environmental quality as a concern of a small fringe movement, but the foundation’s survey confirms it is a mainstream value of Utah’s citizens.

The foundation’s findings also question the myth that environmental quality and jobs are antithetical values. In fact, the survey shows that Utahns value both a sound economy and a healthy environment as fundamental, co-equal requirements of their quality of life.

Fortunately, clean air and water are not incompatible with jobs and a healthy economy. In the four decades in which the Clean Air Act has been implemented, air pollution in the United States has been reduced by 63 percent while the economy has grown by 210 percent and the nation has created 60 million jobs. Many business people in Utah understand that bad air and dirty water are bad for both quality of life and for business.

Without doubt we face very serious economic challenges, but claims that we need to sacrifice our shared values of clean air and clean water to meet those challenges miss the mark. That view would force Utah into a false choice of giving up one core value to meet another. Indeed, because new businesses avoid states with serious pollution, it will be harder to improve our economy if we don’t clean up our air and water.

Although the Utah Foundation report does not address climate change explicitly, that issue cannot be ignored when addressing air and water quality. Scientists

Most Popular Stories

1. **Mormons can drink caffeine? ‘Dew’ tell**
2. **Uncertainty over Big 12 expansion leaves BYU waiting**
3. **After Steve Powell’s arrest, focus turns to Susan’s boys**
4. **Jeremy Johnson’s assets set for Saturday auction**
5. **BYU football: Cougars hold off UCF 24-17**
6. **Police release description of suspect in assault on gay man**
7. **Computer reconstructs movie scenes from brain scans**
8. **Old Dairy Queen bites the dust in east Salt Lake City**
9. **Neighbors have mixed feelings about Steve Powell’s arrest**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Healthy environment, strong economy can co-exist**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Critical thinking deficit**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Ignorance of Islam**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Powell search**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Reviving market**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Gays and the military**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Getting religion wrong**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Grading presidents**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **No new news**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Don't soak Utahns: No statewide tax for Powell pipe**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **'Straw Dogs' and rape**

Posted 6 hours ago

» **Simple jobs solution**

Posted 6 hours ago

predict that increasing temperatures will exacerbate air quality and water quality problems, and potentially reduce water supplies as well. So if clean air and clean water are important to Utah's citizens, actions to mitigate climate change should be a top priority as well.

Yet climate change has also been portrayed in an unnecessarily polarized way. We should be thinking about how climate change might affect the quality of both our environment and our economy.

And just like we have reduced pollution under existing environmental policies without compromising economic welfare, we should be searching for strategies to reduce or limit climate change impacts in ways that protect or enhance Utah's jobs and economic welfare.

Robert Adler is the James I. Farr Chair and professor at the University of Utah, S.J. Quinney College of Law, where he specializes in environmental and water law.

Tweet

Copyright 2011 The Salt Lake Tribune. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Public Safety

Neighbors have mixed feelings about Steve Powel...

0 Comments

Blog TV

McElhenney gets fat for "It's Always Sunny in P..."

0 Comments

Nation + World

NASA gives 1-hour window for falling satellite

0 Comments
