

News on the environmental front usually means bad news for the golf industry.

Dr. Frank Rossi's excellent article, "Environmental Complacency," which appeared in the last issue of *The Florida Green*, corroborates my long-held belief that the general public seems to prefer "gloom and doom"

## The Skeptical Environmentalist

stories as dished out by the media. Valid scientific research is summarily dismissed or attacked as so much industry propaganda. Superintendents are often left alone to fight the battles that owners and golfers should be fighting, not to mention dealing with the squeeze on their budgets as costs for environmental compliance and sensitivity increase.

But you've heard all this before, and my purpose today is to pass along what I hope will be good news and ammunition for the future. By the time this article is published, a new book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, will be available, and, hopefully, make an impact on society's environmental philosophy. The fanatics and those whose livelihood depends on environmental anxieties will just cry "sellout," but there's a chance those whom I see as "mainstream environmentalists" will begin to see the light if they read this book.

*The Skeptical Environmentalist* was written by Dr. Bjorn Lomborg, a 36-year-old political scientist and professor of statistics at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. What makes Dr. Lomborg unique and why I think his book may be so important, is that he was a member of Greenpeace for four years, and actually began the work that became the body of this book to debunk certain "simple American right-wing propaganda," such as Dr. Julian Simon's population hypotheses and others that questioned the environmental agenda. As Dr. Lomborg and his statistics students began researching information from such agencies as the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, The

International Panel on Climate Change, and others, he came to the realization that his long-held beliefs were actually getting debunked.

Thus was born *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. Dr. Lomborg's meticulous investigation produced almost 3,000 footnotes to substantiate his new position that statements and tenets of environmental organizations like Greenpeace, the Worldwatch Institute, and the World Wildlife Fund are exaggerations or outright myths. He has labeled this persistently gloomy environmental holocaust doctrine "The Litany."

To quote Dr. Lomborg, "The Litany has pervaded the debate so deeply and so long that blatantly false claims can be made again and again, without any references, and yet still be believed. This is not the fault of academic environmental research, which is balanced and competent, but rather of the communication of environmental knowledge, which taps deeply into our doomsday beliefs." He is also critical of journalists who continue to spread "The Litany" without question or criticism.

In his book, Dr. Lomborg asserts that agriculture is sustainable, pollution is declining, the rate of human population increase is past its peak, forests are not disappearing, that there is no wholesale destruction of plant and animal species, acid rain does little damage to forests but does damage lakes, and that even global warming is not as serious as commonly portrayed.

He warns that the internationally approved Kyoto objectives for reducing carbon dioxide emissions will have minimal impact but enormous costs for implementation, as currently-used computer models stress greenhouse gases over the other three factors—clouds, aerosols, and the sunspot cycle—without supporting data.

Dr. Lomborg believes that the environment must be protected and that regulation is necessary, but exaggerating the problems distorts society's priorities and makes it difficult to decide on proper strategies. His motive is to simply tell the facts and present a brighter and more balanced view than "The Litany."

How refreshing.

This article is based on a book review I stumbled across while online, but I couldn't wait to actually obtain and read the book to share such a positive environmental development with my peers.

### MARK MY WORDS



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