



## Two small bits on cars and global warming

Posted by [Yankee](#) on April 5, 2006 - 9:53am

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

Tags: [citroen](#), [engine](#), [gasoline](#), [global warming](#) [[list all tags](#)]

First, yesterday [Treehugger reported on](#) the new Citroen C2 with "stop/start technology" that cuts the engine when the driver steps on the brakes, and restarts it within 400 milliseconds of letting up on the brakes. In addition to the gasoline savings this will provide, Citroen is also offering a "a cashback incentive of £1,696 (US\$2,963, "sufficient to cover one year's London Congestion Charge") to buyers of the new C2 Stop & Start." And, the price of the car is reasonable: £10,690 (US\$18,674), not including the cashback incentive. (see also [Green Car Congress](#))

I'm sure I need not point out that it seems contrary to Citroen's goal implicit message (thanks, Donal) to offer the cashback savings that's no-so-coincidentally the same as London's congestion charge.

---

Then, if you will allow me a little bit of topic leeway here, I thought that some of you might find a current discussion on global warming at [Environmental Economics](#) interesting. On April 3, Tim Haab and his inner (really, not so inner) economist—responding to a [post by George Will](#)—wondered whether global warming is really going to be all that bad for the economy:

Now I'm not going to claim that climate change is a good thing, but I have claimed [before](#) that there are benefits to climate change. Who's to say that higher sea levels won't provide long-term benefits--despite the short term discomfort of relocating large populations?

Heck, I'll go so far as to propose we use an "Indiscretionary Principle" and proceed on the current course and see what happens. We can always adapt later...right?

Of course, he caught a lot of flack for that in the comments, so yesterday, [he tried to explain himself](#). He compared his inner human to his inner economist, coming up with a set of questions for both sides to answer. Here's one of them:

**Assuming global warming is happening and it is caused by human behavior, should we do something about it?**

Internal Human: Of course, you moron. Global warming is bad and we caused it so we have to stop it, reverse it, do whatever we can to save the earth for future generations.

Internal Economist: Well, that depends. Simply because we have demonstrated that

global warming is happening and that we caused it, that doesn't automatically imply a call to action. What are the consequences of action versus inaction? Is climate change necessarily the equivalent of climate degradation? Why is change always bad in this context? Shouldn't we compare the expected benefits and costs of action against the expected benefits and costs of inaction rather than simply declare: Change is bad..therefore we must prevent (or reverse) the change?

I am not posting this because I'm looking for some economist-bashing, so please make sure to play nice, everyone.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/us/).