

GREEN COAT TAILS

Linking Geonomics to environmentalism

Jeff Smith

If Georgism is ever to become the law of any land, it will have to do so on the backs of activists in other movements. Georgism has lost three-fourths of the basic ingredients for success. While we have Money (dollar per follower, probably more than any other movement has had in history), we lack Members, Media Coverage, and an intelligible Message. This is due to an impoverished vocabulary (hence my coinage of *geonomics*, *geonomize*, *deed fee*, *ecology security deposit*, *citizens dividend*, etc.). As the world continues to change and Georgists don't, our movement shows little sign of recapturing the basic M components of success.

Hence the piggy-back strategy. Environmentalism is the most logical candidate for our host movement. Their call to spare Earth is the flip side of our call to share Earth (by sharing her worth). We are two sides of the same coin. Together - with our logic and their emotional appeal, hoards of foot soldiers and deep pocket support - we would be unstoppable.

The "green" movement is loaded with others of my ilk waiting to embrace the Georgist message. Indeed, many already have. Being swallowed up by the greens is the best thing that could happen to the Georgists. Instead of being lost inside the behemoth, we would be the trimtab factor - the hand on the hand on the tiller. Our role is that of doctor of dogma.

- (1) We would make sure the tax shift includes the reform of the (usually local) property tax so that it falls not on improvements but on locations; greens who lobby on national and/or global issues sometimes overlook this component of the total shift.
- (2) We could broaden the array of mechanisms for collection to include user fees, even to emphasise them over taxes.
- (3) We could employ the same argument of ethics and efficiency to make vouchers and an EarthShare the preferred choices over subsidized "services".
- (4) We could make current the neologism *geonomics* so that our theoretical insights are carved in stone.

That is the role we could play - try to make sure the public presentation of the tax shift is broad, deep and complete. How we link up with greens and green groups is how activists always ally:

- Get on each others' mailing lists
- Attend each others' events
- Invite one another to submit to each others' publications
- Co-sponsor events
- Co-author questionnaires for candidates, position papers, draft legislation, etc.
- Jointly lobby legislators, editors, business leaders, government officials

The strategy can be summarised as follows. Mission: co-author a geonomic bill with greens. Objective: win green trust. Strategy: engage in respectful dialogue. Tactics; attend their, and invite to join our, events and publications.

When can we expect results? Most Georgists expect to never live long enough to ever live in a georgist society. Abandon all despair ye who piggy-back here! Noting how fast pollution taxes are becoming law in the West, the total geonomic package could be implemented in equivalent time. Within two years, the first major step would be taken in Oregon or Denmark. Within seven to ten years, some

progressive region could be fully geonomic.

Georgists as a whole are not activists in the conventional sense (indeed some are even anti-activist). Yet one needs no experience, just honesty and determination and other Boy Scout qualities. If we could somehow incorporate the market into our "movement", so that we would reward not the Great White *de jour* but those producing measurable results, not only could I live comfortably (and hence garner even more successes) but by now many others would have turned to this piggy-back strategy.

JEFF SMITH is President of The Geonomy Society, based in Portland, Oregon. The University of Kharkov in Ukraine has invited him to teach geonomics in a two week seminar this summer.