Ebndiv

Kristina Smiley
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Joe Knollenberg
2349 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Joe Knollenberg:

My name is Kristina Smiley and I am writing to you on behalf of my Biology class I am taking at Oakland Community College in Auburn Hills. I am concerned with the environmental issue of overpopulation. The resources to be considered when evaluating whether an ecological niche is overpopulated include clean water, clean air, food, shelter, warmth, and other resources necessary to sustain life. If the quality of human life is evaluated, there are then additional resources to be considered, such as medical care, employment, money, education, fuel, electricity, proper sewage treatment, waste.

Thomas Malthus proposed that while resources tend to grow linearly, population grows exponentially. He argued that, if left unrestricted, human populations continue to grow until they would become too large to be supported by the food grown on available agricultural land, causing starvation which then controls population growth. He noted that this had happened many times previously in human history and estimated that this would occur again by the middle of the 19th century. Malthus noted that human population could double in 25 years with sufficient food. On a global scale, human population growth has been constrained by food production increases as well as increasingly unequal access to food.

Despite advances in agriculture, the fresh water supplies that it depends on are running low worldwide. Some argue that this water crisis is only expected to worsen as the population increases. Besides the scientific harm to the environment, the moral right of other species to simply exist is being taken away by over population.

Americans constitute approximately 5% of the world's population. They produce roughly 25% of the world's CO_2, consume about 25% of world's resources, including approximately 26% of the world's energy. The average American's impact on the environment is approximately 250 times greater than the average Sub-Saharan African's.

Here are some statistics I think you should consider:

On average, one American consumes as much energy as

- 2 Japanese
- 6 Mexicans
- 13 Chinese
- 31 Indians
- 128 Bangladeshis
- 307 Tanzanians
- 370 Ethiopians

- The population is projected to increase by nearly 130 million people - the equivalent of adding another four states the size of California - by the year 2050.
- Americans eat 815 billion calories of food each day - that's roughly 200 billion more than needed - enough to feed 80 million people.
- Americans throw out 200,000 tons of edible food daily.
- The average American generates 52 tons of garbage by age 75.
- The average individual daily consumption of water is 159 gallons, while more than half the world's population lives on 25 gallons.
- Fifty percent of the wetlands, 90% of the northwestern old-growth forests, and 99% of the tall-grass prairie have been destroyed in the last 200 years.
- Eighty percent of the corn grown and 95% of the oats are fed to livestock.
- Fifty-six percent of available farmland is used for beef production.
- Every day an estimated nine square miles of rural land are lost to development.

(http://www.mindfully.org/Sustainability/Consumption-Industrialized-Commercialized.htm)

Thank you for taking your time to read my letter. I am curious to if this issue has been given any thought. I know it can quickly become a touchy subject when it comes to means of "limiting" people to stabilize population, but has anything measures been taken to help overpopulation?

Sincerely,



Kristina Smiley