



Panel on Property Tax Reform and the Environment Opens Annual CGO Conference in Ottawa

Canadian host Frank Peddle introduced a distinguished panel at the October 11 opening day of the annual conference of the Council of Georgist Organizations. Addressing the topics were Economics professor Dr. Mason Gaffney; journalist and author James Kunstler; Western Canada real estate appraiser Steve Rickard; and Alex

Cullen who is a councilor in the Regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, Ontario.

Economics and pollution.

Mason Gaffney, professor of Economics at the University of Southern California-Riverside, addressed economics and the environment, and specifically non-point pollution. Explaining that non-point pollution is that which comes from non-point sources (dust wind-blown from pesticide treated fields, watershed runoff etc.), he noted this is pollution which you can't meter or put a price on. The damages are spread unequally over other nonpoint receptors.

Thus economists arrived at a green tax, a surrogate tax on input proportionally on landowners. Thus fertilizers, highway salt, pesticides, etc. would bear the tax. The problem is that such taxes overlook the locational element

in the pollution, and imposing the tax on fertilizers and pesticides can have the unintended consequence of forcing use of more lands and spreading the problem more widely.

One more problem of imposing excise taxes on pesticides, for example, is bootleggers who resort to the underground economy. When the black market becomes the respectable market, there is pressure to eliminate regulations, and a resultant consequence of bailing out owners of stocks on hand (i.e., Chlordane when contaminated milk brought about its ban.)

Another problem of taxing surrogates is that it fails to distinguish among the individual applicators, taxing the most careful for the sins of the least careful.

Guidance from Entomology professors cannot be relied on since many

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West Virginia Two-Rate Bill Passes House

House Joint Resolution 19 was introduced Feb. 20 by Delegate Bruce Petersen. After being referred to the Committee on Constitutional Revision, it passed the West Virginia House with the two-thirds majority required. Designated the "Land Value Tax Option Amendment," the purpose of the proposed amendment is "to allow municipalities, by local option to adjust levy rates by decreasing the levy on personal property and improvements while increasing the levy on land values. Due to the nearness of the end of the session, reports Dr. Arthur Rybeck of Wheeling, W.V., the Senate did not take action.

HRJ 19 fared better than its companion bill, HRJ 18, which was also introduced by Delegate Peterson, and likewise referred to the Committee on Constitu-

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Nobel Laureate William Vickrey dies

It was Dr. Nicolaus Tideman, president of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, who announced the death of William Vickrey to those attending the Council of Georgist Organizations conference in Ottawa Oct. 11. Effort had been made to contact Vickrey and invite him to come and address the Georgists after the Taxation, Resources and Economic Development meeting in Cambridge, Mass. Vickrey was

driving to that meeting when he died of an apparent heart attack about 20 miles from his Hastings-on-Hudson, NY home. He was 82.

A long time colleague, Dr. Mason Gaffney, shared memories of Vickrey with conference attenders. Gaffney had impulsively phoned and congratulated Vickrey the evening it had been announced that Vickrey had won the

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