

# NEWS

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Social values and images based on pioneering concepts of man pitted against nature in a struggle to subdue and exploit a foreboding wilderness lie at the root of America's current environmental problems, David G. Barry, Vice President and Provost of The Evergreen State College at Olympia, said today.

Addressing the Fall Graduation Convocation at the University of Oregon, Barry said, "Our technological society and its related economy are linked with a 19th Century theory based on unlimited exploitation of nature and which we have as yet to adequately modify or adjust to serve us in the face of our new circumstances."

These circumstances, Barry said, "Tell us clearly that man is a part of all natural cycles and not a creature privileged and apart. He is part of the closed system we call the planet Earth."

"We have run out of free land, air, water and soil," Barry continued. "We have nowhere else to go. We know that growth in population is our central problem and that growth without control--perhaps any growth--is no longer automatically consistent with what we consider to be the quality of life.

"We know that the Gross National Product is no longer an adequate measure of where our technological society is going unless it is balanced against our Gross National Effluent.

"The Gross National Effluent is the recognition of the fact that we are part of a closed system, a statistical estimate of the cost of all those negative feedback consequences of the GNP--of unlimited production, the cost of the additional travel we do to escape dirty environments, the additional cleaning costs for our clothing, the additional medical services, the goods prematurely replaced because of soiling or corrosion,

Dick Nichols, Director  
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the cost of the oil slicks, the algae-clogged lakes and rivers, the choking haze of smog, and the cost of pollution monitoring and control equipment."

"And, perhaps most important of all, the disillusionment of many young people-- their loss of hope for a future."

Barry told the Oregon graduates that America faces a period of threatened shortage of resources, coupled with "a burgeoning human population whose growth will increase demands for material goods and services whose production will create increased energy demands."

"The whole of the processes of growth, production, and consumption will contribute so many pollutants into our environment that life itself may be threatened," he added.

"What we are sure of was well described by Aldous Huxley in the Politics of Ecology: 'Thanks to our rapidly advancing science and technology we have very little time at our disposal. The river of change flows ever faster, and somewhere downstream, perhaps only a few years ahead, we shall come to the rapids, shall hear, louder and ever louder, the roaring of a cataract.'"

He said the country still is in transition from the old pioneer, exploitative ethic "to a newer one based on ecology and responsibility for choice in stewardship over our environment" and that "Congress is adjusting to the need for transition about as fast as American thought in general is adjusting to the new environmental imperatives."

"Ecology as a view of nature is a personal matter," Barry remarked. "It will be expressed best in how we manage our daily lives as well as how we manage our industries, our technology and our society. Personal choice is the key to solution of the problems-- whether it be in reduction of population or the rejection of those aspects of technological society which dissipate our resources and which produce needless pollution."

Barry concluded, "The environment of the future, the legacy which our decisions will pass on to our children, will reflect the images and the understandings which we translate into our political action systems. As individuals, each of us must work to persuade others to the proper course of action. Each one, convince one."

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