

Resources & Sprawl

In every traffic-choked, infrastructure-stressed, park-congested, school-overcrowded community of the land, Americans live with the same fear: that their quality of life will forever deteriorate under an inevitable, never-ending population explosion. Woods, brooks, and fields at the edge of town that once helped soothe their souls have been cleared, scraped, paved, and built on. Every ride or hike through countryside near the new urban edges is like a walk through a hospital ward for the terminally ill – the days of these nearby open spaces are numbered.

U.S. population grows by 3 million a year. That, according to federal data, is roughly half the cause of the destruction of 2.2 million acres of natural habitat and farmland each year. But the relentless deterioration is not inevitable – government has the power to correct this.

With native-born Americans adopting a slightly-below-replacement-level fertility since 1972, the only cause of long-term U.S. population growth is immigration and the high fertility of immigrants. For three decades the federal government has increasingly sabotaged the American people's dreams for environmental quality by snowballing total immigration over traditional numbers by 400-700%.

Lest anybody misunderstand, the immigrants themselves are not to blame. Rather, the responsibility for environmental damage rests with the officials who have set and allowed the unprecedented immigration levels.

Some supporters of high population growth contend that immigrants can't cause sprawl because they are so poor and huddle in crowded urban tenements. Federal data, however, show that the majority of immigrants live in the suburbs. Many construct housing in the rural strip around the suburbs. Many more buy existing suburban houses from American natives who would not otherwise have the money to construct their houses on the rural edge. The children of immigrants flee the urban core cities at exactly the same rate as the children of natives. For many reasons, massive immigration drives massive destruction of natural habitat.

America at the first Earth Day in 1970 was filled with 203 million people and now has grown by 100-plus 90 million. The Census Bureau projects that current immigration policies will drive our population to 420 million by 2050, nearly three times the 1950 number. We can stop that from happening and allow for a decent quality of life for America's future human, animal, and plant inhabitants.

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