

Economic Prospect
EPA Regulations on Mega City Trash and Recyclables
John Addison Teevan (38:3) April 1, 2020

At 5:15 a driver awakes from his dozing and puts his truck in gear. He's been in line since arriving at 3:54 this morning. It's 39 degrees and a wind is picking up papers; he can see some swirling nearby. He's concerned because he's known for a week that the Elkhart County Landfill will not be taking trash from Chicago very soon. He hopes that the new rule will not take effect until at least tomorrow. He rolls his truck ahead as the gates open at 5:20. The three Chicago rigs ahead of him are accepted, and he is too. Relief.

The EPA had ruled in mid-March that it was not sustainable for the 53 cities of over 1 million in their MSA to release trash, debris, or recycled materials beyond 20 miles of their city limits.

Chicagoans, New Yorkers and other cities simply must be sustainable. The EPA had reasoned that if you can care for your own wastewater you could care for your own trash. Imagine everyone from Cook County simply wrapping up a four-pound box of plastic recyclables and shipping it to you. What are you supposed to do with it? They don't care...just so it's out of their sight. "My city is too nice to have all this trash. Where can we even put it?" It seems so innocent, but it is not.

These cities typically do an excellent job of handling their sewage in their cities, and none better than New York City. For their sewage, Chicago, in 1900, built the 28-mile Sanitary Canal that became the Des Plaines River before flowing through Joliet. Joliet complained, but Chicago sent people out to test the water in the canal. They found that by the time it got to Joliet, the water was purer than the Joliet Park District swimming pools. Still, trash and recyclables are something else; in fact, until 2014 most of it was shipped to China.

Even though it may cost him his job, our driver thinks it odd that a 20-mile rule has not been in place before this. Big cities sending barges of garbage and recyclables to China was irresponsible. Some of it was lost at sea, but all of it was just shoved away from sight and sent to the poor nations of the world. After China stopped taking these shipments, Malaysia and Thailand took them for a while. But that ended and besides, it was still bad for the oceans.

Our driver has a load of mixed recyclables; no milk jugs or aluminum or paper, but all sorts of plastics. Contaminated, as if it mattered. Half of all meticulously hand-sorted recyclables are contaminated and must go to a landfill like this one in Elkhart. It's a job; good for our driver and good for Elkhart's landfill. One third of all trucks on any given day are from Chicago, but the landfill is groaning under the tonnage from the Windy City. He's smiling now; eating the Danish he kept overnight in his lunch box. He's glad that they took his load. After all, today is April 1, and the new regulations were supposed to start today. Really? April Fool. Stay safe.

Golden Rice is on its way: A new strain of rice will not only reduce the amount of land needed to feed the world, but it will contain Vitamin A that will prevent blindness in about a half million children annually. Sadly, it has taken since 1999 to get this strain approved and in the ground. Strangely, the required science process requires that every time a seed strain is abandoned all test seeds must be destroyed along with all the research. Fears of genetically modified grains has resulted in regulations that alone have cost ten years. In addition, as the public hears of concerns and delays, it is normal for a fear to grow about such crops.

On the other hand, the Rio Red grapefruit was genetically modified five times including neutron radiation, but it is not even listed, regulated, or labeled as genetically modified. How many issues, diseases, 'escapes', or other problems have been associated with genetically modified plants over the decades? None. People who claim to believe the science should probably believe the science, if that the real issue. No joke. (WSJ Nov 14, 2019 A13)

A Casualty of the Coronavirus? American oil companies that rely on fracking. Russia and Saudi Arabia are making their second attempt to bankrupt them with low prices. Many in America cheer this move. Not me.