

PRESS RELEASE FROM UK2020

Date: Sunday 20 September 2015

For immediate release

The logo for UK2020, featuring the letters 'uk' in a lowercase, serif font, followed by '2020' in a larger, bold, sans-serif font.

“Grow the economy, improve the environment”, urges former Environment Secretary Owen Paterson

Former Environment Secretary Owen Paterson has called for the public and NGO sector to abandon the “relentless pessimism of the environmental movement” and adopt a more positive strategy to protecting the environment.

Mr Paterson said, “For the past 50 years the environmental movement has been in thrall to a simple, powerful and utterly wrong idea: that the best way to save the planet is to curtail human activity.”

“But that is changing, and a new idea is gaining ground, under the term ‘ecomodernism.’ The key idea behind ecomodernism is that the more technology human beings adopt, the more they can decouple from dependence on the natural environment and live lives that are prosperous but green.”

Speaking ahead of a debate he is hosting in London on Thursday, titled ‘Ecomodernism: Restoring Science to Environment Policy,’ Paterson heralded ‘ecomodernism’ as “a new positive vision of how to save the planet.”

Mr Paterson laid out his case for ecomodernism in an article in today’s Sunday Telegraph. He criticised the way “the Green Blob still infests the official bureaucracy with its influence.”

The debate on Thursday will explore the ideas published by an international group of environmentalists in April called ‘An Eco-Modernist Manifesto.’

Three authors of the manifesto, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus of the Breakthrough Institute of California and Mark Lynas of Cornell University will be at the debate to make the argument for a new approach to environmentalism.

The eco-modernists argue that technological advance allows for much more efficient use of land and resources, thereby reducing the totality of human impacts on the planet. “Humans should seek to liberate the environment from the economy,” they argue.

“Transitioning to a world powered by zero-carbon energy sources will require energy technologies that are power dense and capable of scaling to many tens of terawatts to power a growing human economy.

“Most forms of renewable energy are, unfortunately, incapable of doing so. Nuclear fission today represents the only present-day zero-carbon technology with the demonstrated ability to meet most, if not all, of the energy demands of a modern economy.”

Seeking to counter the prevailing view that recent human activity has had overall a detrimental impact on the environment, the eco-modernists state: “Modernisation has liberated ever more people from lives of poverty and hard agricultural labour, women from chattel status, children and ethnic minorities from oppression, and societies from capricious and arbitrary governance.

“Both human prosperity and an ecologically vibrant planet are not only possible but also inseparable. By committing to the real processes, already underway, that have begun to decouple human well-being from environmental destruction, we believe that such a future might be achieved. As such, we embrace an optimistic view toward human capacities and the future.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

A full copy of Owen Paterson’s article is available [on the Telegraph website](#):

Event details:

Date: Thursday 24 September 2015

Time: 9.00 am - 11.00 am

Location: S T Lee Reading Room, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH

Speakers: Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, Chairman, UK 2020

Matt Ridley, Author

Mark Lynas, Cornell Alliance for Science, Cornell University, NY

Michael Shellenberger, President, Breakthrough Institute, CA

Ted Nordhaus, Chairman, Breakthrough Institute, CA

ALL MEDIA ARE INVITED

Please RSVP to info@uk2020.org.uk.

For all media inquiries, contact Beatrice Timpson of Media Intelligence Partners at beatrice@mippr.co.uk and 07803 726 977.

UK2020 is a think tank launched by Owen Paterson in November 2014 to create policies in line with a radical Conservative vision.

Since its inception, it has produced policies on the EU, climate change and taxation.

<http://www.uk2020.org.uk/>