

Cycling is bad for the environment

5th March, 2013



An American lawmaker has said cycling is bad for the environment. He also said cyclists should pay a tax to ride their bikes on the roads. Ed Orcutt, a representative

from Washington State, sent an e-mail to the owner of a local bike shop to outline his thinking. He wrote: "A cyclist has an increased heart rate and respiration. That means that the act of riding a bike results in greater emissions of carbon dioxide from the rider. Since CO2 is...a greenhouse gas...cyclists are actually polluting when they ride." Mr Orcutt said: "You can't just say that there's no pollution as a result of riding a bicycle....You would be giving off more CO2 if you are riding a bike than driving in a car."

Mr Orcutt also believes cyclists should be taxed to use the roads. He said it was unfair that motorists have to pay all of the costs of building and repairing roads. He wrote: "Currently motorists are paying to use their cars on the roads...so if cars pay for the roads they are using, it only makes sense that bicyclists would also be required to pay for the roads they use when they are actually biking on them." Dale Carlson, owner of the Tech Bike Shop said Mr Orcutt's ideas were wrong. He wrote: "People who choose to ride a bicycle instead of driving a car actively reduce congestion." He added: "They save wear and tear on our roads and bridges, and reduce the [need for police] to patrol our highways."

Sources: blog.cascade.org / seattlebikeblog

Writing

Car drivers have to pay tax to use the roads, so cyclists must pay road tax too. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

cycling / road tax / increased heart rate / CO2 / greenhouse gas / polluting / driving / cyclists / unfair / motorists / repairing roads / reduce congestion / wear and tear

True / False

- An American environmentalist said cycling harms the environment. T / F
- Ed Orcutt said cyclists should pay a tax to ride on the roads. T / F
- Ed Orcutt said cycling increases CO2 in the environment. T / F
- Mr Orcutt said a cyclist produces more CO2 than a car driver. T / F
- Orcutt said it was fair that motorists paid road tax and cyclists didn't. T / F
- A bike shop owner disagreed with Mr Orcutt's ideas. T / F
- The bike shop owner said cyclists increase the number of traffic jams. T / F
- The owner said more cyclists would mean more police cars on the road. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. roads | a. damage |
| 2. outline | b. producing |
| 3. carbon dioxide | c. car drivers |
| 4. greater | d. decrease |
| 5. giving off | e. highways |
| 6. motorists | f. traffic jams |
| 7. repairing | g. larger |
| 8. congestion | h. summarise |
| 9. wear and tear | i. fixing |
| 10. reduce | j. CO2 |

Discussion – Student A

- Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
- Do you think there should be a cycling tax to help pay for roads?
- Is it unfair that motorists pay for the building and repair of roads?
- What problems would be reduced if people cycled instead of drove?
- Are we becoming more or less of a car-driving world?
- Could you / your family survive without a car?
- How would your life / health change if you cycled everywhere?
- What questions would you like to ask Ed Orcutt?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. An American | a. tear on our roads |
| 2. cyclists should pay a tax | b. of riding a bicycle |
| 3. the owner of a | c. to ride their bikes |
| 4. an increased heart | d. have to pay all of the costs |
| 5. there's no pollution as a result | e. sense |
| 6. He said it was unfair that motorists | f. local bike shop |
| 7. it only makes | g. patrol our highways |
| 8. bicyclists would also be | h. lawmaker |
| 9. They save wear and | i. required to pay |
| 10. reduce the need for police to | j. rate and respiration |

Discussion – Student B

- What did you think when you read the headline?
- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'cycling'?
- What do you think of cycling?
- Do you agree with Ed Orcutt that cycling is bad for the environment?
- Should cyclists cycle less to reduce CO2 emissions?
- What do you think cyclists think of Mr Orcutt's comments?
- What are the benefits of cycling?
- Is your town good for cyclists?

Spelling

- An American amealrkw
- lscytcs should pay a tax
- greater isimssneo
- CO2 is a eerusnoghe gas
- poiulgInt when they ride
- as a rteusl of riding a bicycle
- sotismort have to pay all of the costs
- narrigipe roads
- be erueirqd to pay
- adnitse of driving
- actively reduce togienscno
- loptar our highways

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. j	4. g	5. b
6. c	7. i	8. f	9. a	10. d

Role Play

Motorist - You think it's unfair that cyclists use the roads but do not pay tax. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell the cyclist (s)he must pay tax to cycle on the roads. Tell him/her that there is more CO2 from cyclists' breath than from cars, so they should cycle less.

Cyclist - You think all cars should be banned. Tell the others three reasons why. You think cycling is the healthiest transportation and everyone should cycle to save the environment. You think all society would be better if people cycled instead of drove. You think there is no such thing as "green" gasoline.

Environmentalist - You think cars are a major reason for global warming. You think people should switch from cars to bicycles. Tell the others three reasons why. You disagree with everything the motorist and oil company boss say. The oil company boss is interested in money, not the environment.

Oil company boss - You are tired of people saying cars create global warming. Tell the others three reasons why. Your company produces "green" gasoline that helps protect the environment. Cyclists who want drivers to stop driving and use a bicycle are crazy. Everyone needs a car (or two).

Speaking – Bad for Earth

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| • cycling | • airplanes |
| • cigarettes | • air conditioners |
| • Coca Cola | • GM food |
| • golf | • McDonald's |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.