

# Re: NASA – National Atmospheric and Space Administration

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simberg.interglobal@xxxxxxxx (Rand Simberg) wrote:

Not if it's a foregone tax revenue from an activity that wouldn't have otherwise happened. Not saying that's the case here, but "foregoing tax revenues" is a slippery topic (similar to the argument about supply–side economics). It costs the public nothing to "forego tax revenues" if in the absence of such a policy, there would have been no revenues to tax.

Agreed that it's slippery. One could argue from a pure small–government, leave–the–market–alone PoV that \*any\* policy with the intent to foster investment in area X (which means that capital isn't available for Y or Z) is a thumb in the scales, as surely as a direct subsidy or a targeted sin tax.

I don't mean to deny the shades of gray; I mean that my preference is, as much as possible, to reduce the number of labels used for "government fosters X" and put all means of doing so on an equal footing. The politics and law of allocating public spending are complex enough, and give rise to more than enough subterfuge and misdirection, without pretending that the numbers on the balance sheet come in orange, patchouli, and Methodist as well as red and black.

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