**Latest concern for D.C.: Dog doo**

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| **by Jonathan Ellis June 8, 2014****W**ell, here we are. We’ve gotten to the point where some people apparently don’t realize that dog poo is a nuisance.Or that it’s a health threat.Or that it causes pollution.Or maybe they realize all that, but they’re slackers. Too lazy or too entitled to pick up after their dogs. The kind of people who need a belt buckle dragged across their faces at high speed.The latest episode of “America in Decline” played out last week on the front page of the *Argus Leader .*You probably saw the story: “Dog-poo crackdown picks up downtown: Pet-waste worries lead to grant money for pit-stop stations.”If you didn’t see the story, here’s a rundown. Apparently dog poo is becoming a bigger problem in downtown Sioux Falls. More people are living downtown. More dogs are living with people downtown.People are taking their dogs for a walk. Some of them aren’t picking up after their dogs.The limited downtown green spaces are prime staging areas for the urban dogs and their owners. The loser owners are leaving dog poo behind on the grass outside the mayor’s window — Outside the Mayor’s Window! — at  |

City Hall. The library green spaces are another depository, as are the open green spaces along North Phillips Avenue.

Lest you want to blame this on poor people who own dogs and live downtown, don’t. I went on the loft tour last month. From what I can tell of the laughably high rents in some of these buildings, the dog poo problem is being caused by people with plenty of disposable income — the kind of income that enables them to buy groceries, groceries that come in bags, bags that can be used to pick up dog poo.

So we’ve identified the problem: A population of downtown dwellers with enough financial resources to afford the rents and own a dog, but without enough common sense or cons ideration for their fellow humans to pick up after their dogs.

We need a solution.

Enter the federal government. That’s right. A problem being caused by a relatively small number of jerks demands attention from the federal government.

The Environmental Protection Agency was created to deal with some pretty important issues. So important that a Republican, Richard Nixon, created the agency. These days you get Republicans calling for the EPA to be abolished. But when it was created, the air quality was bad and rivers were so polluted they were catching on fire.

Last week, the EPA made moves to regulate carbon emissions from power plants in a bid to fight global warming.

So you’re familiar with the EPA’s lofty goals. What you probably didn’t know — I didn’t — was that the agency also has an interest in dog poo. The city received a $6,000 grant from the EPA to confront the downtown dog poo problem. The city is throwing in another $4,000. The federal and local money will pay for advertisements informing people that, you know, dog poo is a nuisance. Yes, it’s that bad. The government has to pay money to inform people that dog waste should be picked up and disposed of in a proper manner.

The money will also be used for “doggie pit-stop stations,” complete with plastic bags. I suppose these stations aren’t a bad idea, particularly in places where there’s grass. Most dog owners have been in situations where they’ve been a bag short. But rather than use federal money for the stations, maybe it would be better to use a local source of funding, from pet licenses, for example.

A quick Google search will show you that other cities have used EPA grants to deal with dog waste. The grants in other cities have been larger.

Dog waste is a legitimate concern for water quality.

But it’s sad to me that the federal government, with all its other concerns, has a dog poo program.

This is the same government that runs up debt every year, that can’t properly care for veterans and is generally held in low esteem by a healthy number of people who fund its services. If it’s giving out money for dog poo, what other grants does it offer?

It’s sad because people in downtown Sioux Falls and other cities can’t take responsibility for their dogs, creating the need for a government program that should really never exist. I don’t want to come off as self-righteous — I believe people should be left alone to do what they want as long as they’re not bothering other people. But that requires a certain code of consideration for others, whether it’s when you’re driving, at the grocery store or when your dog takes a squat on the sidewalk.

It’s said that cities require more government. When you have inconsiderate jerks living in them, I suppose that’s true.