



WASTE REPORT for December 21, 2015

'Tis the Season to be Wasting, Fa La La La - La - La La – La - La
(Your Government Sponsored Christmas Tree)

On Friday morning, children and parents all across the world will gather around the Christmas tree to see what Santa left. **Maybe you finally got the kids got the National Science Foundation’s [climate change video game](#) they’ve been begging for.** Just kidding, we know no one actually asked for that. Even though they already paid for it.

But at the center of all those gifts is a dwarfed evergreen decorated with blinking lights and memories of Christmas past. **Perhaps you and the family went out to cut down your tree this year, and maybe it was a TV commercial on Thanksgiving Day that inspired this joyous family experience. But, even if your tree is fake, your tax dollars paid for that commercial.**

So, why is Uncle Sam making TV commercials for Christmas trees? Well, as *The Waste Report* showed in our [Thanksgiving edition](#), virtually all crops (including Christmas trees) are a “specialty” product according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This makes them eligible for special marketing assistance grants. Combine overly broad **eligibility criteria, intergovernmental bureaucracy, and agencies flush with your tax dollars, and BOOM, Christmas tree commercials.**

In this case, **the Georgia Christmas Tree Association got \$50k in federal funds, “to boost the sales of Georgia Grown Christmas trees by implementing a 30 second cable TV ad that would run for four days over the 2012, 2013, and 2014 Thanksgiving weekends.”**¹

One might think Georgia must have a fledgling Christmas tree industry to need Uncle Sam’s help. While Georgia is not a Christmas tree juggernaut like Oregon or North Carolina, with over 50,000 trees, they are hardly a slouch either. In fact, **Georgia produces more trees than 28 other states, including Idaho and Montana.**²

True, a Christmas tree might not be an everyday purchase, but with about 30 million real trees sold every year³ this is hardly a niche industry either, making its classification as a “specialty” all the more absurd.

By the way, come Valentine’s Day, if you see an ad reminding you to get roses for your sweetheart...yep, that too could have been funded by Uncle Sam as specialty crop marketing.

Merry Christmas!!! See you in 2016



Is this one of those [\\$13k treadmills](#) Dep. of Energy Tried to buy?

HINT: This One Is The Climate Change Video Game



¹ USASpending.gov; Grant Number 12-25-B-1455

² <http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Portals/22/Files/STATES%20BY%20TREES%20HARVESTED.pdf>

³ <http://www.statista.com/statistics/209249/purchase-figures-for-real-and-fake-christmas-trees-in-the-us/>