

GreenPlumbers® USA is a for-profit franchise of Green Invest Inc. of Australia. Steve Lehtonen, a former executive vice president of PHCC of California, along with his daughter, Megan, who has a degree in journalism and public relations, are the franchisees of GreenPlumbers® USA.

According to an article published in "Plumbing and Mechanical," Lehtonen "helped kill state legislation on high-efficiency toilets – and then worked with the same legislator to help make the same bill a new law." Why the change of heart? A trip to Australia....

On a 2006 trip, Lehtonen learned about the country's GreenPlumbers® program. Seeing the potential for the GreenPlumbers® movement in the U.S., a 15-year deal was struck to bring the program to the United States. Thus began the GreenPlumbers® USA juggernaut.

According to Steve Lehtonen, "plumbers had long held their mission to be protecting the health of the country." He continues, "because of climate change and global warming, our new mission is to protect the resources of the planet." Really?

GreenPlumbers® USA calls for a "complete culture change in the plumbing industry." They have designs on an entirely new training and licensing scheme for plumbers in North America. Joining GreenPlumbers® USA will set you back \$5,000 for membership, plus \$200 per month thereafter. And none of this includes the cost of your 'green' education.

Wisconsin is a state with a uniform plumbing code. We do not simply adopt one of the national codes and "Wisconsinize" it. Instead, we have an active Plumbing Advisory Code Council that reviews all of the codes and discusses all of the real-world situations that are causing confusion and, more importantly, that are threatening public health and safety.

Working closely with our regulatory agency, we have developed a code that serves the residents of our state well. More than that, we have developed a code that recognizes the changes happening in our industry – particularly water conservation and reuse – and our code has been adapted to these new technologies.

Code training is the foundation for our industry's continuing education efforts and our apprenticeship training programs. What we teach and learn

in the classroom is what we are tested on – whether on a journey-level exam or in the field. Wisconsin plumbers are qualified to do ALL of the work of the trade and we will continue to be ready and able for years to come.

We should all be uncomfortable with any hint of a national standard that would require ADDITIONAL training or certification to do the work we are already doing. Our customers and their health and safety are our first concern – not the lining of our pockets. There is money to be made in codes and in certifications, but that CANNOT be the reason for dismantling codes and licensing requirements that work perfectly well.

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We've adapted dozens of times to new technologies without help from for-profit entities. And we'll adapt just fine again. Plumbers are already among the most highly educated and trained professionals in the construction trades. Perhaps a suitable continuing education class on new technology would do the trick.

Green plumbing is one more aspect of the whole green jobs movement – an environmental movement to be sure, but also a political movement. Sustainable Development may have a little to do with conservation and public health, but it has much more to do with control. Mixing metaphors, maybe folks who embrace the green plumbers concept have jumped on a financial bandwagon, but they could well have missed the boat – overlooking the control issue.

Using the now-discredited man-made global warming theory as the underlying "emergency" to attempt to completely change our standard of living and our way of life, we are constantly indoctrinated with the urgent need to reduce our carbon footprint while our government, non-governmental organizations and famous scare mongers like Al Gore, Nancy Pelosi and John McCain do absolutely nothing to reduce theirs. Perhaps they know something we do not.

Professor Mojib Latif of Germany's Leibniz Institute, recipient of several climate-study prizes and a

lead author for the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), previously stated unequivocally that man-made CO2 emissions are causing the planet to warm dangerously. In September of this year, he recanted during a speech in Geneva at the UN's World Climate Conference, conceding the earth has not warmed for nearly a decade and that "we are likely entering one or even two decades during which temperatures cool."

Thirty thousand scientists, including John Coleman, the creator of The Weather Channel, are suing Al Gore for fraud. The courts in Great Britain have ruled much of Gore's movie, "An

Inconvenient Truth" to be false. Are we being played? The answer appears to be yes.

Make no mistake - there is big money to be made using environmental scare tactics and the green movement. From cap & trade to \$500 million loans from the U.S. government to build green sports cars in Finland (a project in which Al Gore is involved), to countless others, green is presenting new opportunities. But opportunities for what? Money, power and control, or to serve our customers?

Is it the role of the industry to be the new purveyors of social justice? Is it a plumber's job to take inventory of water usage in private homes and businesses that may eventually be turned over to the government? Are we being asked (forced) to accept a solution in search of a problem? Can we just address this issue on our own in Wisconsin and focus on our customers – providing environmentally sound plumbing systems that continue to place a high priority on public health and safety?

If we're going to go green, maybe we should take a stand, support our industry, and make the rest of the country "green" with envy.

Jeff Kuhn is the immediate past president of the PHCCIMP - Wisconsin Association and president of S & K Pump & Plumbing Inc., Brookfield. He also serves on the Wisconsin State Plumbing Code Advisory Council.