

Hack Your Showerhead:

Three Ways to Get Big Government Out of Your Home

by Jeffrey Tucker



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Introduction

Long ago and far away, government pretended to do good things for us like build parks, boost income, bring electricity to rural areas, and the like. Today, it is the opposite. It sees its role as restricting and tearing down what the private sector creates — for our own good. This is why it is constantly telling us that it must curb our lifestyles. The regulators restrict what we consume, control what we do, crack down on our ability to live a good life.

If some activity is going well, some new item is making life better, some food or gadget is newly popular, you can be sure that some bureaucrat is plotting to restrict its use or ban it. The ethos of the public sector has completely changed from 50 years ago. Instead of serving us, politicians on both the left and the right imagine that their main role is thinking of ways to control how we live, direct how we spend what money we make, and take away freedoms and rights once taken for granted.

Consider the example of the use of cell phones in cars. When everyone got one, people were just getting used to how to be both productive and safe. Phones started to be made that enabled hands-free talking. New cars were building the functionality into the dashboard. Voice activation was growing more sophisticated by the day.

Just as this was happening, the regulators got involved. Their brilliant idea: ban the whole thing! Because the politicians and regulators had nothing to do with creating the industry, they really don't have any concern over whether the sector thrives or dies. If there is a problem, pass a law. That's always their way these days. They have no more creative ideas other than rolling back progress.

There are certain obvious government regulations that are annoying. Environmental regulations prevent us from developing our property. We must restrict our water usage. We can only create so much trash and then it must be separated by type. We can't travel on planes with wine openers. We can't just hire or fire whom we want. We can't bank where we want. We can't even surf the Internet in peace without fearing that knock at the door.

All of this is true. But in this report I'm more concerned about a second type of government regulation that degrades our lives in ways of which we are not always aware. I've learned over the years how to

detect these. If there is something particularly annoying going on, and it doesn't make sense why, look more deeply. You are likely to find a bureaucratic rule of some sort lurking out there. It is usually hidden from public view. The cause and effect are hard to detect. But look hard enough and you find it.

Let me just give one example from the kitchen. Beef and chicken broth and stock that you buy at the store are famously bad. But is this the fault of the manufacturers? Hardly.

Government controls food labeling like Stalin ran the Kremlin, defining precisely what can and cannot be called a stock. The US Department of Agriculture is clear: a stock must have a moisture-to-protein ratio of 135:1. This means that the stuff is mostly water — an ounce of meat to a gallon of water — a result of these government definitions of what is and isn't stock.

But do people know this? Hardly anyone does! We all use stock in our homes. It is the foundation of vast number of meals. We pay and pay to try to get good quality ingredients. In this case, and there are a million more, it is not possible because the government restricts the manufacturers. You can't sell anything called stock that deviates from these mandates. People figure that the manufacturers are the problem, but the real problem is the government itself.

Now, this might not sound like a big deal (actually I think it is). But repeat this scenario a million, 10 million, 100 million times, for every product or service on the market, and you create the equivalent of a Soviet-style central plan that prevents society from improving and degrades our lives bit by bit until civilization itself is under threat. If our washing machines don't work, and our plumbing doesn't work, and we can't get rid of bugs on our property, can't get jobs for our kids, and so on, at some point we will wake up and find progress stopped and rolled back.

It has happened before in other places. Before the revolution in Cuba, the island was a booming, progressing, developing paradise. After the revolution, and socialism controlled the country, all progress stopped. Truly, it literally stopped, as in frozen in time, like the land that time forgot. Nothing new ever happened. Visitors in the 1990s would return with photos that might as well have been taken 30 years earlier except that everyone looked decrepit and depressed. After progress stops, decline sets in, as it did in Russia and China, where lifespans actually fell over time.

This stagnation can happen anywhere, even in the land of the free where freedom is becoming nothing more than a nationalistic slogan. The good news is that once you identify the source of the problem, you have your first clues about finding the solution too. It is not true in every case. Sometimes the bureaucrats have locked every door and thrown away the key. But other times, the answer is right before our eyes, but we never noticed it. These are the cases that excite me because they offer a real and practical way out.

Let's jump right in.

1. Enjoy Your Shower Again

If you head to the Delta Faucet website, you will see a notice about flow restrictors in their showerheads. "While it is possible to remove flow restrictors from showerheads, we strongly advise against it for several reasons. Flow restrictors for faucets are an integral part of most aerators and it is generally not possible or desirable to remove them."

Is that so? Of course it is not so. Showers in the old days were fantastic. They covered us with water — hot water — and kept us clean. Then government got involved to regulate how much water the bureaucrats think we should be using. The result was the mandate that every showerhead had to be deliberately degraded. The words on the Delta website reflect fear of government and have nothing to do with reality.

Today smaller manufacturers have found profits in advertising showerheads with “removable” flow restrictors. These are best but you can also remove them from the parts you get at the big-box hardware stores. Once I had to actually take a drill to the thing to make it happen but it can be done. And it must be done or else you find yourself running around in the shower trying to get yourself covered with the pathetic trickle that the government has mandated for us.

You might have some vague memory from childhood, and perhaps it returns when visiting someone who lives in an old home. You turn on the shower and the water washes over your whole self as if you are standing under a warm-spring waterfall. It is generous and therapeutic. The spray is heavy and hard, enough even to work muscle cramps out of your back, enough to wash the conditioner out of your hair, enough to leave you feeling wholly renewed — enough to get you completely clean.

Somehow, these days, it seems nearly impossible to recreate this in your new home. You go to the hardware store to find dozens and dozens of choices of shower heads. They have 3, 5, 7, even 9 settings from spray to massage to rainfall. Some have long necks. Some you can hold in your hand. Some are huge like the lid to a pot and promise buckets of rainfall. The options seem endless. But you buy and buy, and in the end, they disappoint. It’s just water, and it never seems like enough.

Here is one example of why, from the Santa Cruz City Water Conservation Office: “If you purchased and installed a new showerhead in the last ten years, it will be a 2.5 gpm [gallons-per-minute] model, since all showerheads sold in California were low consumption models beginning in 1992.”

And it is not just crazy California. The Federal Energy Policy Act of 1992 mandates that “all faucet fixtures manufactured in the United States restrict maximum water flow at or below 2.5 gallons per minute (gpm) at 80 pounds per square inch (psi) of water pressure or 2.2 gpm at 60 psi.”

Or as the Department of Energy itself declares to all consumers and manufacturers: “Federal regulations mandate that new showerhead flow rates can’t exceed more than 2.5 gallons per minute (gpm) at a water pressure of 80 pounds per square inch (psi).”

As with all regulations, the restriction on how much water can pour over you at once while standing in a shower is ultimately enforced at the point of a gun.

Manufacturers must adhere to these regulations under penalty of law, and to be on the safe side and adjust for high-water pressure systems, they typically undershoot. If you try your showers right now, you will probably find that they dispense water at 2 gallons per minute or even less. Together with other regulations concerning water pressure, your shower could fall to as low as 1.5 gallons per minute!

A rotten shower creates a rather serious problem for nearly everyone in the country. In the post-war period, Americans fell in love with luxurious showers, just because we could. A long shower with a blasting spray is a sign of prosperity, individualism, and good health. Popular lore holds that Americans are some of the most showered people in the world. If so, part of the reason is that we had great showerheads.

Enter the Regulators

Clearly the regulators, whose regard it as their job to crush luxury and convenience whenever possible, wanted to put a stop to this. That's the reason for the flow restrictors. Forget all that talk about saving water: these restrictions have a negligible effect on overall water use. In any case, whether we use more or less water should be governed by market forces.

To be sure, some companies have tried to get around the regulations by making models with multiple showerheads. This worked for a while because the regulations, if read literally, only regulate the amount of water a per-shower-head basis. But the companies that make double and triple-headed models have also faced investigation and harassment.

But then what can the government do about the length of showers? After all, there is no real way to regulate how much water we use and pay for. Maybe the shower heads have to have timers on them. And maybe the feds need to put up little monitors in our showers to make sure that we have stopped and started them.

You might say that water needs to be conserved. Yes, and so does every other scarce good. The peaceful way to do this is through the price system. But because municipal water systems have created artificial shortages, other means become necessary. One regulation piles on top of another, and the next thing you know, you have shower commissars telling you what you can or cannot do in the most private spaces.

And also consider this. According to the government's own water usage statistic, domestic use constitutes only 1 percent of the total, and that includes all the water we use on our lawns. In other words, whether we use a lot or a little bit of water in our showers means absolutely nothing as regards our nation's consumption of water. Why are they doing this to us then? Just to spread that sense of obedience and misery, I suppose. But has central planning ever been more ridiculous, intrusive, and self-defeating?

The Fix

Most manufacturers adhere to the regulations, and the government has pushed them to make their products ever more useless. But savvy consumers know how to get around the problem. Many people now hack their showers — or customize them, if you prefer. You can take your shower head down, pull the washer out with a screwdriver, and remove the offending intrusion that is restricting water flow. It can be a tiny second washer or it can be a hard plastic piece. Just pop it out and replace the washer. Sometimes it is necessary to trim it out using a pen knife. I've even used a drill.

Using such strategies, you can increase your water flow from 2 gallons per minute to 3 and even 4 gallons per minute. You can easily clock this using a stopwatch and a milk carton.

Using this method, I was easily able to expand my gallons per minute on each shower in my house to an average of 3.4 gpm, thereby recreating that childhood sense of gushes of water pouring down.

2. Get the Government Out of Your Laundry and Dishwasher

I'm old enough to have a vague memory of clothes so white that they were called bright. This happened despite the absence of additives — the ridiculous varieties of sprays and bottles and packets that festoon our cabinets today and that we throw into the wash to try to boost the cleaning power of our pathetic machines and increasingly useless laundry soap. If this stuff is so wonderful, why isn't the detergent made from it?

Then I experienced an amazing blast from the past. I added a quarter cup of trisodium phosphate (TSP) and otherwise "treated" nothing. The results were nothing short of mind-boggling. Everything was clean — clean in a way that I recall from childhood.

Next came my confrontation with the local dry cleaner, which I've used for years. I explained what happened and how puzzling it is that by using TSP I was able to clean my clothes more thoroughly and perfectly than his commercial service.

He was not shocked. He completely agreed, though sheepishly.

I pointed out that TSP, which is a natural element discovered in the 16th century, is amazing not because it cleans — it needs soap to do its thing — but rather because it rinses, whooshing away all dirt, oil, stains, as well as all leftover detergent. Bleach whitens but it ruins fabrics, and that's not good. What is needed is a good rinsing agent that leaves clothes not only perfectly clean but also smelling fantastic. TSP does it, and that's why it has long been an essential ingredient in laundry soap.

Once again, he agreed.

Does he use it? No. And why not?

It is not "commercially viable," he said.

How can this be? It is not expensive. It is freely available at the hardware store in the paint section. If something works, the laundry service pleases its customers more. That means more business and higher profits. Isn't the goal to clean clothes well and do a good job for customers?

Yes, true, he said, but, again, TSP is not "commercially viable." He politely deferred all further questions to the Dry Cleaning and Laundry Institute, whose website provides no information at all to nonmembers. However, the Laundry Institute did answer my email. It admitted that trisodium phosphate produces cleaner laundry.

Bingo. Cleaner laundry. Cleaner than what? Anything else. Not "commercially viable" means that governments will no longer permit laundries to clean your shirts. You can add TSP at home — government hasn't restricted that yet — but commercial houses cannot. However, the Laundry Institute did say that "there are other ways to achieve a clean shirt." What are they? He didn't say. He said: "You will have to do some leg work to find a cleaner that meets your needs."

My needs? My needs are for clean clothes, same as the laundry needs of the whole of humanity since the beginning of time. The whole purpose of laundries is to meet that need.

Here's the problem, however. The goal of the regulators who regulate the laundry is not to improve

your life. It is to wreck your life a bit at a time by pressing increasing numbers of restrictions and mandates upon private producers.

Conspiracy of Silence

One of these mandates has removed TSP from detergent — and with catastrophic results. No one wants to talk about this. There is a major hush-hush culture here because business, understandably, doesn't want to face a consumer backlash, and government doesn't want to acquire the reputation for being the civilization wrecker that it truly is.

These kinds of regulations are capable of driving an entire industry into the ground, as people with the intense desire for clean clothes — the very people who are willing to pay for laundry services — increasingly resort to home cleaning and ironing. An entire step in the structure of production is eliminated, as laundry autarky replaces the division of labor, which is the driving force of cooperative human effort.

It's no wonder that the industry wants no talk of this problem. Its very *raison d'être* is under attack. If laundries can't clean clothes, they have to shut down.

Does government care? If you read between the lines in the almost-candid moments of government statements, you can see what is going on here. In 2009, Clive Davies, a product engineer with the EPA, granted an interview with the *New York Times* that focused on home products. You might wonder what a product engineer is doing working for the government rather than the private sector. This interview shows why. Every one of the questions he is asked concerned the effect of home products on the environment. Not even one actually probed the essential question of whether the products actually work.

Mr. Davies's job is to decide whether to affix a supposedly valued designation to products: *Designed for the Environment*. It's pretty clear that anything that actually cleans, washes, or scrubs probably can't earn the designation. An empty box that claims to be detergent stands a better chance of gaining the government seal of approval than a detergent that actually works.

Then we get to the end of the interview, in which he is actually candid about the goal: the elimination of detergents (meaning the elimination of clean). Davies concedes that this would be the best possible result. And what does he recommend instead? Vinegar and "elbow grease" — the old-fashioned phrase for "scrub harder."

Thus spake the government. That's the future as these bureaucrats see it. It's a future of elbow grease, meaning manual labor unassisted by any products of free enterprise like machines and detergents that work.

It's a future in which our clothes are dirty, we have no soap that works to wash our bodies, our dishes are full of gritty film, our floors are grungy, our windows are smudgy, everything more or less stinks like vinegar, our toilets don't work, our trash is hurled in a pile out back, and vast amounts of our time are spent scrubbing things instead of reading, singing, writing, or conversing. It is a future just like the long-ago past, complete with wash tubs, wash boards, and outhouses — along with their attendant dirt, disease, and deprivation.

The main issue here is that Americans (Europeans too) are having their living standards systematically

degraded by regulators who apparently hate our modern conveniences like washing machines and want to drive us ever more into an impoverished state of nature.

And don't tell me that phosphate-free dish soap works just as well. It's a laughable claim. If you buy some phosphate and add a tablespoon to the load, you enter a new world once the washer is finished. Things are actually clean like you might remember from childhood.

The sales of new home appliances have soared over the last five years, according to industry reports. The data are not broken down by type, but I'm willing to bet that quite a few washing machines have been sold to unsuspecting customers who had no idea that the real problem was with the detergents, not the machines. Hardly anyone I have spoken to has understood this problem, but all confirmed the fact that their clothes are not getting clean.

The ban on TSP in laundry soap that took place in the early 1990s, apparently codified in a 1993 law. The idea, or the excuse, was to stop the increased growth of algae in rivers and lakes (phosphate is a fertilizer too), even though there are other ways to filter phosphate, home use contributes virtually nothing to the alleged problem, and there is no solid evidence that plant growth in rivers and lakes is a harm at all.

In any case, consumers gradually noticed that stains were becoming more stubborn than ever, and thus did a huge new range of products start appearing on the market. These products permit you to treat your clothes before you wash them. Today our cabinets are filled with such products — spray and wash, bleach pens, stain removers, boosters of all sorts — and we use them by the gallon.

Does anyone stop and wonder why such products are necessary in the first place, and, if they are so good, why aren't they in the detergent so that the whole of the load gets clean and not just the treated part? The reason, most fundamentally, is that the formula for detergent was changed as a result of government regulation.

The difference wasn't obvious at first. But as time has gone on, other changes began to take place, like the mandates for machines that use less water with "top loading" model, along with mandates for tepid temperatures of water in our homes. In the end, the result is dramatic. It all amounts to dirty, yellowing clothes.

This is the exact opposite of what we expect in markets, in which products are ever better and cheaper due to innovation, expansion of the division of labor, and competition. But with government regulation, the results are deliberately the opposite. We pay ever-higher prices for shoddy results.

Do we see what is happening here? I can detect very little in the way of public knowledge, much less outcry. In the old Cold War days, I recall wondering how it was that the Soviet people could have put up with state-caused impoverishment for decade after decade, and wondering why people didn't just rise up and overthrow their impoverishers. Now I'm beginning to see why. If this all happens slowly and quietly, there is no point at which the reality of cause and effect dawns on people.

One final note on my conversation with my dry cleaner. He gave me the heads-up that the main ingredient used for dry cleaning, perchloroethylene, is not long for this world. California and New York are considering bans, and the rest of the country comes later. After that, it's all over, and the last one to leave civilization will have to remember to shut off the fluorescent light.

This is the whole trajectory of life under government control. They are the predators; we are their prey. And this isn't just about clean clothes. It applies to every regulation, every tax, every expenditure, every stupid war, and every monetary manipulation. Everything government does comes at our expense, and the costs are both seen and unseen.

The Fix

A quarter cup of real TSP (don't buy the fake thing) combined with your usual laundry soap will yield wonderfully clean clothes, provided you were suckered into buying one of the government-approved front-loading models of machines. Clean clothes require 1) lots of water, 2) lots of heat, and 3) detergent with phosphates. Then you can throw all those other silly products in the trash. The bleach, which absolutely wrecks cotton, can go too. Thanks to the government, you can only find in the paint section of the hardware store.

3. The Great Lawnmower Hack

When I was a kid, lawn mowers worked. You pushed them and they cut grass. The grass went into the bag. Then you emptied the bag. The results were great. There was no grass to rake. It all went into the bag, because that's what lawn mowers did.

Then the feds got involved. Or so I now gather. I didn't know this for a long time. Every time I would buy a mower, I would be disappointed in the results. I kept buying mowers with ever-larger engines. Then I would buy them with different bag designs, and then a different brands, and then different features. Nothing worked.

The problem was always the same. I would mow and most of the grass would go in the catcher. But some didn't. Some landed on the lawn in a line. When the grass was wet, it left an even bigger trail. Or when I would go from the grass to the sidewalk, a big clump would fall out from underneath the mower onto the sidewalk, requiring that I get a broom and sweep it up. Then I would have to empty the bag long before it was full.

It took me many years of thinking to figure out the problem. After all, I never had this problem when I was a kid. Have companies started making lawn mowers that don't work? Are manufacturers worse than they used to be? It all seems crazy. I would mow with a smartphone in my pocket that could check my blood pressure, make the sound of a flute or surf the Web. Why can't private enterprise seem to make a mower that works?

I would try to forget about the problem, adjust to the downgraded reality and finish up the growing season. But the next year, it would all come back to me. Grass trails. Clumps on the sidewalk. Emptying too often. Buying a new mower and finding the same problem all over again.

What is the source of the problem?

The spinning blade cuts the grass and creates a flow of air that lifts the grass and throws it into the catcher. A flow requires circulation, and where does the circulation come from? It can't be a vacuum seal. You can't create a small wind tunnel without a source of air. Where is this coming from? Nowhere. The base of the lawn mower is flush against the grass. The blades spin but create no suction effect.

Why is the base so low to the ground? I tend to mow my grass pretty low just because of the variety of grass and the topsoil level. But doing this causes a perfect seal between the mower and the ground, cutting off all airflow and denying the blade the air it needs to create the wind tunnel to empty the grass.

It is pretty obvious, right? So why have manufacturers not responded by raising the steel casing on the lawn mower? Why would they keep selling mowers that don't work well? I'm hardly the only person who has the problem. Lawn mower forums all over the Internet are filled with people asking exactly the same questions and having the same symptoms. The manufacturers are shy to mention the real reason. They talk about changing blades, removing obstructions and things like that. Users know better. There is another factor.

I was just looking at the detailed regulations for lawn mowers. In particular, the relevant passage is 16 CFR PART 1205 — the Safety Standard for Walk-Behind Power Lawn Mowers. Here we find that the height of the lawn mower case must be low enough to pass a "foot probe" test. No matter how high or low the wheels are adjusted, it cannot be possible to stick your foot under the case.

Now, when I was young, you could stick your foot under the mower. We didn't do that, of course, but we could. Therefore, there was suction. The air sucked from underneath and swirled up and out in the grass catcher. It was like running a vacuum cleaner over a floor. It shaved the grass, and not one grass blade was left anywhere in sight. It all went into the catcher.

The new regulations, which apply only to walking mowers that you use at home, went into effect sometime after 1982. I still used my old mower for years after that date. In fact, I didn't have a reason to buy a new one until about 15 years ago. That's when my troubles began.

Now I know the cause. The bottom line is that federal regulations have degraded the lawn mower. In the name of safety, the government has forced all manufacturers to sacrifice functionality. They are forced to sell equipment that doesn't do what it is supposed to do. All the while, I've been blaming private enterprise. It turns out to be the fault of government.

The government's central plan for walk-behind mowers is mind boggling. That bar you have to squeeze and hold on the handle to make the wheel move? Mandated by government. That annoying plastic piece that covers the blow hole for the grass that you have to push out of the way? Mandated by government. The government has mandated the blueprint for the whole machine and thereby frozen its structure in place with an inferior and unalterable design.

It is not enough that regulations have invaded the bathroom, ruined our showers and toilets, degraded our detergent, made it ever harder to unclog drains and made essential medicines hard to get. Now I find that regulations have even made it difficult for me to do something completely American like mow my own lawn!

This also explains why so many of my neighbors are using lawn mowing services that have giant riding lawn mowers. It turns out that these particular regulations do not apply to them. It wouldn't surprise me to find that lawn services were actually instrumental in lobbying for these safety regulations. This is how commerce works these days: Compete for a while, but when that doesn't work, turn to the government to wreck the competition.

Government hates lawns — except at the White House, of course. They consider private lawns to be wasteful and vain, a symbol of conspicuous consumption. If they had their way, we would all have

rocks in our front yards. Or maybe we wouldn't have front yards. We would have little window boxes, and surely that would be enough for us.

It's all in the interest of your safety. And security. What about your freedom? It's been mowed under, and it landed like clumps of grass on the sidewalk.

And Another Thing...

Above, I touch on one major aspect of the problem: the clumping problem from the bagging process. There are more problems, such as how the "self-propelled" mower moves more slowly and pathetically than it used to. Government regulations mandate that the wheels must stop moving within three seconds after the propulsion bar is released. That mandate required manufacturers to weaken the engines.

And why is it that we can't just push our mowers forward with our fingers, rather than having to hold down a long bar with both hands? This, too, is a government mandate. The bar must be there, and it must be held down with both hands. This is the way it has to be because the government has actually drawn up an official blueprint for gas-powered, walk-behind, grass-bagging mowers. There can be no progress under these conditions.

The problem my article focused on was how regulations mandate that steel casing go all the way to the ground to prevent a "foot probe." This cuts off the airflow that makes the grass fly up and into the bag.

Your ability to collect your grass in a bag was mandatorily sacrificed for your own good. What? You have no interest in sticking your foot underneath a running mower? Doesn't matter. Government is protecting you.

In any case, here is a short history of life: Government erects barriers to progress, and then the market finds some workaround that is not perfect but helps blunt the effects of government's attack. It's true in the lawn mower case as well.

The Fix

There are two engineering issues to overcome: airflow and grass redirection. A company called Arnold, which specializes in parts for outdoor equipment and prides itself on innovation, invented what it calls the "extreme blade" that does two things. It uses an elevated blade tip for redirecting grass into the bag, and it also puts extra slits into that tip. The slits help use the existing air in the sealed lawn mower casing to create a windy circulation, as well as to chop up the cut grass even further so that the clippings are lighter. The result is absolutely marvelous.

The blade is more expensive. And you have to go through the trouble of taking off the old blade and adding a new one. Most consumers won't even think to do this and imagine that they aren't qualified to even try. They will never figure out that there is an answer to their woes. After all, I went through three mowers in 10 years before being clued in that some company had invented a workaround to the problem of government regulation.

This is the archetypical case of how all these things happen. Some product works great, and then the government wrecks it through a stupid new mandate. The thing stops working. Consumers get mad and blame the product maker. A few years go by and some entrepreneurial company jumps out in front with a decent workaround. Meanwhile, millions of consumers are stuck with the stupid old thing and get

mad and don't know the fix. They start to blame the manufacturers for their woes. In the worst case, the company that finds the fix patents the answer, which means that others can't copy the solution.

This scenario pertains to a vast number of products, including many that we haven't noticed along the way are gradually depreciating our standard of living. We just get used to it. Government regulators have a field day with our liberties, and we live vaguely vexed lives.

Another Fix... for the Well-Healed

Another workaround — and really the best approach — to get around government regulations is to buy the product that is so revolutionary and amazing that there aren't government regulations yet crafted that ruin it.

It is called the Robomower. It is amazing. It mows your lawn for you. That's right. You turn it on and the whole yard gets mowed on its own.

A reader actually told me that the whole thing works wonderfully well. But the price is unapproachable: \$1,500–2,000. The producer has a lockdown on the patent. That situation will exist for some time, thereby preventing the price from falling and restricting this wonderful innovation to only the elite in society. The way that patents slow down innovation and limit access to cool stuff is a subject for another day.

Regardless, if you have a drink in your hand (provided by private enterprise), offer a toast to the free market and its ever-amazing capacity for overcoming the barriers to the good life that government puts up.

I Have Many More Hacks I'd Love To Share...

These are just three of the dozen or so workarounds I've discovered over the course of my career. I've written up ALL these loopholes in a new report called *Hack Your Showerhead: Plus, Nine Other Ways to Get Big Government out of Your Home*.

As executive editor of Laissez Faire Books, I'll gladly send you a copy of this FULL report, free of charge. In return, all I ask you do is agree to be part of an exciting new change in our business...

I'd like to invite you to become a charter member in the brand-new Laissez Faire Club — the first comprehensive, digital-age society of big ideas.

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Your membership starts with the FULL report I've just told you about, *Hack Your Showerhead: Plus, Nine Other Ways to Get Big Government out of Your Home*. This report shows the best ways that you can fight back against other ways the regulators are trying to wreck your way of life. The way to receive the report is to become a club member.

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In addition, this set will include a new edition of Frédéric Bastiat's classic essay *The Law*, with an introduction by Agora Inc.'s founder, Bill Bonner. Having reread this monograph recently, I'm amazed at just how timely it truly is. I can see why it has inspired so many over the course of a century and a half. In some ways, this one essay is all you need to understand the social, economic and political orders. It opens eyes as nothing else.

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In addition, your charter membership to the Laissez Faire Club:

provides you with free, high-quality e-books that we publish every week. You can access them from your laptop, e-reader, smartphone or desktop. Read just 1/10th of these books and you'll be the smartest person on your block

grants access to videos and podcasts that allow you to read and absorb the ideas in those books more quickly, saving you hundreds of hours of reading time

connects you with fellow members in business, finance and the world of ideas. This allows you to leverage hundreds of years of experience as you learn, discuss, socialize and share and pass ideas back and forth

saves a boatload of money on every printed book in the Laissez Faire catalog, with a clean 20% discount on all 1,000 titles.

Those are a lot of benefits, I know. So let's cover some of those things in more depth...

FREE E-BOOKS: When you become a charter member to the Laissez Faire Club today, you'll enjoy one new book per week. But it doesn't come in a packet. It is delivered through the website and arrives for your e-reader. It could be an early release of a new book by one of today's most-remarkable writers. It could be a great classic.

Regardless, each one will be what is called an "essential read." Each one is custom-built with new introductory material and other tools.

This weekly delivery will cause the digital bookshelf to fill up fast. That is just fine. A digital reader can carry whole libraries in a thin package. Members will have access to an archive that will add books as fast as we can make them.

And if you don't have an e-reader, don't worry. You'll be able to download each of these books directly to your computer, should you choose to read that way.

We'll sell these e-books through the Laissez Faire Bookstore for anywhere between \$5–20 each. But as a member, these will all come your way at no charge.

But a bigger benefit than just being free is the fact that these books will provide you with an education unrivaled by any Ivy League university.

FREE VIDEO SUMMARY NOTES: I'm often told that my own video reviews of books are wonderfully informative because I boil down hundreds of pages into small bites and explain the themes and ideas in the context of the current political and economic culture. As a Laissez Faire Club member, you'll be able to download and enjoy as many of these video analyses for free, for as long as you'd like.

I will involve others in these video reviews as time goes on. I'll interview authors, ask experts in various fields to weigh in and broaden the discussion to include older works.

LIVE ONLINE SEMINARS: Imagine if you could have studied under F.A. Hayek or Ludwig von Mises in the 1930s. Their modern equivalent will be made available to club members in real-time. Here's how...

Technology today allows for live online seminars in which people can gather to hear lectures. This has been possible for only a few years, and in my view, this is an underused technology today. It has great potential to allow you to meet up in real-time with some of the best thinkers and experts.

But the vision of the club goes far beyond distributing literature...

Have you been reading about the government's attacks on the Internet and how this has alarmed advocates of free speech?

Well, the chilling effect has already arrived, and public spaces are becoming ever less useful and informative. That brings me to what I believe could be the most-exciting part of this club...

PRIVATE COMMUNITIES TO SHARE IDEAS: The Laissez Faire Club provides exactly what is needed right now: a free city within the digital world. This private city stays off the search engines, protects your privacy, keeps your browsing habits and discussions out of reach from prying eyes and allows you to form real friendships with safety and confidence.

A members-only forum provides an opportunity to read along with others and discuss the books, chapter by chapter, giving your reactions and considering them alongside other members.

This is a wonderful way to stay constantly in touch with people who share your values and contribute to your learning and knowledge. It will become your essential community, the basis of professional networks and great friendships.

Forums can form charming internal cultures and be thoroughly humane and friendly for everyone — provided they are set up properly. The big problem with most public forums, however: They are too public. Public forums invite drive-by commentators, trolls, lurkers, jerks, flame wars and worse. A very common complaint concerns profanity. Administrators work hard to keep the culture clean, and as a moderator of many forums for years, I can tell stories you wouldn't believe. It is a full-time job that is never done.

But you know what solves it all? A wall, privatization, the formation of a “club,” the creation of a “gated community.” This is what lets a vibrant and healthy community develop, one based on civility, intelligence, mutual respect and genuine excitement about ideas. This is part of what the Laissez Faire Club offers.

Having built many Web properties from 1995 onward, I can assure you that there’s never been a better time to join this effort. And when you claim your charter membership today, you’ll be in fine company.

The initial “brain trust” we’ve assembled to lead this effort includes...

- **Bill Bonner**, founder of Agora, who has been called the Bastiat of our time
- **Joel Bowman**, the erudite essayist for *The Daily Reckoning*
- **Gary Gibson**, the radical voice of *Whiskey & Gunpowder*
- **N. Stephan Kinsella**, the attorney who revolutionized the theory of intellectual property
- **Chris Mayer**, world-traveling capital markets analyst who predicted the housing crisis
- **Wendy McElroy**, the respected historian and essayist whose knowledge of libertarian is legion
- **John Papola**, the genius filmmaker who immortalized the battle between Keynes and Hayek in brilliant videos
- **Addison Wiggin**, the entrepreneur who built Agora Financial into a commercial powerhouse.

I’m thoroughly convinced this club will change your life — putting you in place to take control of your health, happiness and finances — as nothing else ever has.

It’s the unity of actionable ideas, technology and private enterprise, all in one package. I know of no other “club” like this in the world.

That’s why I couldn’t be more excited to invite you to become a charter member. Give membership a try...

Take advantage of the ideas in your free report, *Hack Your Showerhead: Plus, Nine Other Ways to Get Big Government out of Your Home*. Read and digest the timeless theory in your free Economics in One Library box set. Download all your new e-books and video analyses... participate in the private idea-sharing forums... it’s all yours.

And through this offer, you can become a charter member for the monthly price you might pay for a fast-food value meal... just \$10 per month.

I’m sure you’d agree that ideas are the most valuable commodity in the world — more valuable than riches and more powerful than governments. Ideas are real. They built civilizations and drive history. It’s time that we take them seriously and mix the right ideas with the right market forces. This can be a new beginning for all the things we believe in.

[Simply click here](#) to claim your charter membership to the Laissez Faire Club.

I hope to see your name on the membership list...

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffery Tucker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffery Tucker
Executive editor, Laissez Faire Books

P.S. As soon as I hear from you today, I'll email you your ***FULL*** free *Hack Your Showerhead* report with all the tips, tricks and workarounds I've learned. In that email, I'll include your club username and password. And finally, I'll drop your Economics in One Library set in the mail for you to enjoy.

[Become A Member Today](#)

(You can review what your membership includes before your order is final)