

Frank Schiedler:

In your article you state "Unless Oregon joins jurisdictions addressing this problem, we have no credibility in urging others to reduce emissions."

I agree completely. But what are our leaders doing on a personal level?

A couple months ago I ran into Peter Courtney, and I asked him if he was driving an EV.

Answer -- NO!

I asked him if he had solar panels on his roof.

Answer -- NO!

I asked him if he was a vegan. (You know that animal agriculture contributes about 50% of the greenhouse gases.)

Answer -- NO!

So my question is: What is our leader doing, on a personal level, to reduce greenhouse gases?

Nothing!

How can he expect everyone in Oregon to do what he is not doing? And where is Peter's credibility on this issue? I would say non-existent!

Respectfully yours,

Frank Schiedler

PS: I am a republican, and I have solar panels on my roof. I have an electric lawnmower, which I love. And I am a vegan; actually, I try to eat a plant-based, whole food diet. So on a personal level, I am doing more than the leader of the Democrats in the OR Legislature. That's sad.

Frank:

Thanks for your comments. You pose an interesting conundrum.

Let me start by indicating how encouraging it is to hear from a Republican who clearly understands the issues and has made personal decisions consistent with recognition of the climate crisis.

I think it certainly would be a much better indication of commitment to the issue if all leaders and proponents of action in the Democratic Party were doing all that they could on a personal level to reduce their emissions. However, the reality is that as a proponent of strong action to reduce emissions, I cannot dictate to others what they should do. All I can personally do is the best I can do. To that extent, like you, my wife and I are doing what we can: we live in Energy Advantage Platinum certified energy efficient home that has a passive and active solar design. We are now close to net zero energy meaning over the course of a year we generate from our solar panels as much as we use. While we do not yet have an all-electric vehicle powered by our panels, we are on the edge of replacing our plug-in hybrid with an electric vehicle. Additionally, we incorporate the evaluation energy usage and GHG emissions as a primary issue in everything we do in our daily lives.

I would also note that I do not consider climate science and the plight in which we currently find ourselves to be a partisan issue. We are all responsible for where we now find ourselves, and all are equally responsible for addressing the crisis. Thus, I don't think it is any more relevant to question

leaders of the Democratic Party about their behavior than it would be to question Republican leaders about theirs.

As you may know, in 2007 the legislature passed House Bill 3543, which was duly signed into law by Governor Kulongoski. That bill established a target for greenhouse gas emission in the state of 75% below 1990 levels by 2050. The program was purely voluntary. Yet, we are far from a trajectory that would achieve those targets. Since voluntary goals have proven ineffective, if we are serious about having our state make its contribution to reducing emissions, we have to establish something more effective than a purely voluntary program. What we clearly need is a program that has clear goals and a mechanism that assures we achieve them. Thus, for several years the statewide coalition of climate concerned Oregonians has been urging the legislature to establish a program that assures meaningful reductions. Bills have been proposed for several years that would achieve these reductions. Yet, transforming a non-partisan issue into partisan conflict, Republicans in the legislature have consistently argued against and thwarted passage of bills without ever proposing an alternative that would place our state on the trajectory of reduced emission we need to establish. While frequently arguing that they accept the science, Republicans in the legislature have behaved as though they do not. Regrettably, they have stood as roadblocks to action while endorsing or engaging in campaigns against proposals. These campaigns have been based on lies and misinformation about the proposals.

We have reached the stage where each of us has to decide how important this is to us, how important it is to protect the livability of our planet for future generations. This means not only doing what we each can do individually, but also urging our legislators to take legislative action that would put the state on a reasonable emissions reduction pathway. It would assuredly be easier if all legislative leaders had the same commitment in their personal lives that we have, but achieving the statewide goal is surely more important than holding up action until all legislative leaders behave individually as we wish they would.

On a separate note, would you mind if I posted your query and my response on the Southern Oregon Climate Action Now website to demonstrate that it is possible to have a calm and rational discussion about these issues?