



Looking Outward

Dan Glode, Columnist

Climate change is not an unsettled question

...you don't need to be a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.
— Bob Dylan, *Subterranean Homesick Blues* 1965

I am deeply concerned about our planet as I watch our steady environmental regression. So many hide their heads in the sand about the issue. I read with interest one of Craig Rullman's recent columns entitled "Red-teaming the climate question" and I realized it may be a long time, if ever, before sufficient consensus is reached and, more importantly, we begin taking action before we arrive at the tipping point from which there is no return.

I enjoy Craig's columns and have agreed with many things he says — but I have to differ on this one.

Rullman says: "But not every scientist believes in climate change, and even among those who do, arguments rage endlessly about the cause. Is it human caused?"

He makes it sound as if it's pretty much an unsettled issue. He is right in the fact that there is no absolute, complete consensus on the issue, but the proof seems to be way beyond a reasonable doubt.

NASA, in their global climate change publication, *Vital Signs of the Planet*, states: "Multiple studies published in peer-review scientific journals show that 97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists

agree:

Climate-warming trends over the past century are extremely likely due to human activities. In addition, most of the leading scientific organizations worldwide have issued statements endorsing this position."

These are not lightweights, but formidable organizations. The U.S. National Academy of Sciences, the Geological Society of America, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, etc. The list goes on, but you get the point: Climate change is real and human activity is a big factor.

Is there a debate? Rullman makes it sound like a raging tug-of-war between equal, competing factions. As one commentator graphically put it, it is like having 100 climate scientists in a large room. There are 97 on one side and three on the other. The media, too, encourages this as they want to have equal time for each side when each side is hardly equal. So when we hear a climate scientist discussing serious concerns about our planet, for some reason the media thinks they have to present equal rebuttal when the sides are not equal.

In all fairness, for every 97 climate scientists who present their views there should only be three deniers given an opportunity to counter the majority. That would be balanced.

In Oregon it is considered sufficient proof beyond a reasonable doubt if 10 of 12 jurors concur in a criminal case. The standard of proof is high, and yet a 100 percent consensus is not required. In the area of climate change, as in life, we rarely get complete agreement before we make decisions and take action.

Sometimes it is imperative to act — and act decisively — and this is one of those times. *The New York Times* recently published a three-part series on the collapsing Antarctica ice sheet and mentioned the cataclysmic consequences including a sea-level increase of six feet, which would destroy some major coastal cities and compress habitable land. We are losing shoreland at an increasingly accelerated rate. Storms are getting bigger overall. The last 13 years have each set records for rising temperatures. Glaciers are disappearing. Seasons are changing. The jet stream

is becoming more unstable. The list goes on.

It is one of those large-scale, worldwide events where you just have to ask anyone if climate is changing. They will tell you. You don't have to be a weatherman. There is no issue more compelling on this planet than saving it.

The current administration likes to tout the fact that there is not complete agreement. They are correct, it is not complete, only 97 percent complete. The new EPA director, Scott Pruitt, is someone who had to be hard to recruit as he is aligned with the three percent minority of deniers. Environmental regulations, many of which ensure clean air and water, are being gutted and not enforced. And, with Trump's recent decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Accord the administration's ignorant march to the climate dark ages is complete.

Amazing, we now join Syria and Nicaragua as the only nations on the planet not willing to work together to curb climate change. That accord was meaningful not only as an attempt to collectively reverse the ravages of climate change but it served

as a realization by all nations that we needed to begin working now. Was it perfect? No. Was it comprehensive enough? No. But it was a beginning.

Finally, there was the elusive consensus so necessary to planetary change. We are the largest carbon producer, and now we no longer provide world leadership. We are now a sea anchor on the sea of change needed to deal with the world's climate. In a few short months Trump has taken us from the status of world leader to the position of the world's most ignorant nation. He has given me many angry moments over the past few months. He is beyond incompetent.

As George Will put it so well: "...the problem isn't that he does not know this or that, or that he does not know that he does not know this or that. Rather, the dangerous thing is that he does not know what it is to know something."

He is beyond ignorant on climate change and he has no idea of the consequences. I guess destroying our democratic institutions was not enough for him; he will destroy the world. Bravo, Donald!

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