

# White House confronts climate change only during hurricane season?

## OPEN FORUM

By Larissa Gordon

It has been weeks since Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria have left a path of destruction through Texas, Florida and the Caribbean.

President Donald Trump blames the continuing power outages on Puerto Rico's faulty infrastructure and poor leadership. However, Harvey, Irma and Maria were storms of massive proportion and came within weeks of one another, albeit Maria hit Puerto Rico much harder.

Regardless of what the president says of Puerto Rican U.S. citizens, other members in the White House have changed their tone when they speak about the destruction of the 2017 hurricane season.

They are starting to answer the question so many American citizens are asking: What caused such massive and powerful hurricanes?

During a White House press briefing held on Sept. 11, Homeland Security advisor Tom Bossert was asked the question, "Are these storms giving this administration some pause when it comes to the issue of climate change and homeland security?"

Mr. Bossert replied, "I will tell you that we continue to take seriously the climate change—not the cause of it, but the things that we observe. And so there's rising flood waters—I think one



inch every 10 years in Tampa—things that would require prudent mitigation measures."

The tides are beginning to change, in more ways than one.

The White House is now openly acknowledging that our climate is changing. However, when it comes to the "cause of it" the White House still refuses to acknowledge what climate scientists have been agreeing on for years: emission of greenhouse gasses.

Now, in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, I pose this question: what harm would be caused by listening to climate scientists, and shifting away from greenhouse gas emitting fossil fuels?

With almost unanimous agreement, scientists point their finger towards climate change. Now, after such a devastating (and still ongoing) hurricane

season the political sector is forced to listen.

Society tends to be reactive but when it comes to dealing with climate change, it needs to be proactive. The White House does not fall outside of this tendency.

They have admitted to a change in climate, a small but meaningful adjustment. However, the White House's plan to deal with this adjustment is purely reactive. Their plan focuses on mitigation, not prevention.

Scientists have the tools to model how our country will be impacted if we do not make a collective effort to stop emitting greenhouse gasses. What we do not have is the time to debate making a shift or not.

In the wake of Harvey, Irma and Maria, I pose this question: What harm could be done by shifting towards renewable energy?

Why wait until more devastating storms make landfall on the United States? And why not use the destruction of Puerto Rico's infrastructure as an opportunity to rebuild more sustainably?

We cannot afford to be reactive with climate change, we need to be proactive.

Larissa Gordon lives in the Bridlemile neighborhood. The Post welcomes reader response. Please stick to one subject and submit letters up to 300 words and essays up to 500 words. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for brevity, clarity, punctuation and libel concerns.



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