

Challenge, from page 3

the region.

R.E.: We're sending a lot of money to Wyoming and Montana for their power. If we were focused on renewables and making things efficient here, that money could stay in Oregon. Essentially, this money is going to a dirty power-generation source that controls Washington (D.C.). Our money is going to help the coal industry in Washington keep their stranglehold on the administration. We've got to stop that if we're going to ever solve global warming.

M.G.: One of the arguments against shutting down coal plants is that these are people's jobs; this is what they know how to do. Especially in Oregon, where we have very high unemployment, especially now, how do you answer that?

C.K.: We're not naïve about the fact that there is going to be job loss. It really does matter to people's lives, and we're certainly sensitive to that. But we look at the bigger economic picture, and we're thinking about how much far-reaching change has to happen to our energy system for us to have a sustainable economy and a sustainable environment and sustainable communities. Coal is not necessarily part of that picture.

Look at the possibility for job creation that happens through a green economy. The jobs that are at a coal-fired power plant could be provided from wind farms that are going to be in operation longer and require more human attention. Coal is becoming much more automated; they're using more dynamite than they are using miners. Instead of trying to hold on to an industry that is dying out, let's create more opportunity for people to receive training that's going to last much longer.

We've always seen transition in our industries and our economies. People lost their jobs because of the technology revolution — people that weren't up with computer programming. If you don't learn the new stuff, you lose your job. You have to keep with the times, so to speak. Instead of just forgetting about these (mining) communities, let's say, "These are the people that have been keeping our lights on, so let's look at how we can provide (them) a more sustainable future."

R.E.: I was at this event the other day, and (solar energy company) SolarWorld was

there. Someone was telling me that they started out with seven people four years ago, and now they're a multi-million dollar corporation.

People that work in coal mines have a lot of health repercussions for that. This is a great opportunity to get people into jobs that are healthier for themselves and for the residents in the community.

M.G.: Has the recession stalled the environmental movement at all? "Going green" was trendy for a while there — people were dropping plastic water bottles, buying organic produce and hybrid cars and whatever else. Has that scaled back a bit now that people are struggling?

R.E.: It may not be the environmental mindset, but people aren't buying the water bottles still, because they don't want to spend \$1.50 when they can just get water out of the faucet. They're turning off the lights because they want to lower their electricity bill. There may be less organic food-buying going on, (but) I think people's behaviors are changing.

People have been doing polls on this now, and for what it's worth, people are saying that they're going to continue with this even beyond the recession — less buying of throwaway stuff and less consumerism. I think there's some positive things coming out of a really bad time.

C.K.: People may not be motivated because of the environment, but they're definitely motivated by their pocketbooks, and that's helped. We're saying, look, you can save money by using more efficient appliances. You're going to save money by doing an energy audit on your house. That's resonating a lot more now.

I know someone who works in the solar installation industry. I was asking him, "You know, it's kind of expensive, have you seen a downturn in these economic times?" He said, "No, it's doubled." People are recognizing that they want to save money long-term, and this is one way to do that.

M.G.: The EPA has proposed adding greenhouse gas emissions to a list of pollutants that endanger public health. They're holding a hearing in Seattle next week, and you're collecting people to go up there and participate. What's the significance of the EPA's proposal, and what do you want to accomplish at the hearing?

C.K.: This is a chance for us to bring our pom-poms and be cheerleaders and say, this is an important decision that the EPA is putting forward; this is the right thing to do. Finally, science and the rule of law have been restored in our country, and we need to back up that move. Finally, the U.S. is coming back to the table with other industrialized nations that have made changes in their policy and their economies to address global warming.

This is a turning point. It's not going to be the negative cloud that the WTO "battle in Seattle" was, but this is definitely another big Seattle showdown.

M.G.: Environmental activism has been sort of marginalized in the past — it certainly wasn't taken very seriously by the previous administration. Has that changed? Does the political shift shape how you do things now?

R.E.: Things have been a lot more positive. We get to take a much more positive approach now, which is exciting. For instance, this EPA hearing that we're getting people to come to, it's a chance to praise the EPA for what they're doing and the Obama administration for actually taking the first steps toward regulating carbon emissions.

It's so exciting to get to be a part of something that's positive for a change. For eight years we've been saying, "No, don't do that; no, don't do that." It's actually weird. It's a real adjustment to not be against everything.

C.K.: (There's a) stereotype that environmentalists always say "No," and there are a lot of things we do say "No" to, but I think that there's —

R.E.: A lot of things you can say "Yes" to.

C.K.: Yeah, and that always gets overshadowed. We focus on what we say "No" to without looking at what environmentalists are saying "Yes" to all the time: Yes, we want sustainable, healthy communities; yes, we want a healthy future for our children; yes, we want good economic growth; no, we're not against companies making money, but let's see if we can do it in a way that's going to help our communities. It's a much more positive opportunity with the Obama administration.

The important part is not to forget that we have to still do stuff. Magical President

Obama is not going to solve everything, and it's our responsibility to back up the administration and say, yes, the public wants this. This is not just the administration going out on a limb.

Whatever side of the political coin you fall on, this is a historic time for us, and we have to take advantage of rebuilding our nation in a way that's going to benefit people more — looking 20 years down the road instead of one year or six months with a short-term bailout. The Obama administration is trying to focus on that.

Environmentalism is finally part of that picture. It's not just sort of a fringe issue; it's integral to our economic future.

R.E.: People are actually starting to see what we're talking about. We've been talking about global warming for 30 years, but now we're having record forest fires and droughts and flooding, and people are going, "Whoa, okay, we actually need to do something about this." So many people think, "Oh, it's going to be my grandchildren (affected by climate change)." More and more people are starting to realize, "No, it's going to be me." That self-interest is very powerful.

M.G.: On the national level, they're talking about instituting a cap-and-trade system for carbon emissions, setting strict targets to reduce pollution, and other pretty big changes to our energy system. Do you have a sense of how any of that would play out locally, if it does go through?

C.K.: We've seen some of the federal decision-making impact this area in that we've got this huge hotbed of solar manufacturing, and policies that open the door for renewables are going to benefit Oregon's economy.

(We're) seen more funding coming in (for) low-income weatherization, because it's helping to save energy. That's something that is being pushed by the Obama administration too. We'll start seeing more of that impact locally no matter what.

The bottom line is that we need leadership at all levels. We need far-reaching smart decisions being made in Washington, we need them being made in Salem, we need them being made with regional entities like the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. No entity should be waiting for the other to do something. Everybody needs to be moving forward right now to solve this problem.

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