

**C.M.:** Very much so. I certainly won't take credit for any of the achievements that have occurred even in the last administration, but if you look historically since EPA's founding, if you look at things like basic regulation around our environment, like the Clean Water Act, The Clean Air Act – these were things that dramatically changed people's lives, and not just in terms of the kind of water or the kind of air that you're exposed to on a daily basis.

If you look at water, for example. My husband is from Portland, Maine, and he grew up in a working-class neighborhood that was on the water, because that's where working-class people lived from the turn of the century through the mid century, because water was polluted. That's what poor or working-class people could afford. As of the Clean Water Act, that changed dramatically, and that property became valuable because the water was clean and people wanted to be near the water. So there's all sorts of ways that improvements and interventions have made improvements to our public health and safety, and to our economic bottom line.

So in the last administration we saw movement toward clean power plants, toward regulating green house gas emissions from coal burning plants, and the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement. These are significant advancements. And it's a challenge to see how the science would not support those actions.

One of the things on the subcommittee itself, we had no regulatory power. But that office does all the research that supports those other offices. And one of the things they've done, is make sure they're aligned with the Office of Air, the Office of Water, so when those program offices have a long-term issue or a chronic incident – for instance a toxic spill – the in-house Office of Research and Development was there to support that. We heard from not just our office of R and D, we would hear from those offices directly how supportive the R and D has been. So when you're eliminating the Office of Research and Development, eliminating any kind of potential guidance, you're actually affecting other parts of the EPA as well.

**J.Z.:** In this election year we didn't hear anything about housing, affordable housing, homelessness at the federal level. We heard of it at the local level. What does that tell us? It's a massive issue in local communities, but it's not even getting a breath of air at the federal level.

**C.M.:** It's gotten some air, but I would say a deflated air. If you look at the proposed HUD budget for Fiscal Year 2018, for example, we see similar things that are happening at the EPA. Major massive cuts to vouchers, to all program offices, to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and the virtual elimination of HOME funds. So big sources of funding,

both to support low-income people and also to provide housing for homeless populations.

It's the same kind of language: A policy context around budget cuts and programs that are proposed to be shutdown versus the rhetoric around what the ultimate goal is. So at the EPA, the goal was to have industry more at the table and reduce regulations that prohibit economic growth. And at HUD we're seeing a greater burden and reliance on "bostrappism," of making sure that the people who get housing assistance aren't "too comfortable" the phrase that we heard from (HUD Secretary) Ben Carson.

Certainly the people that are appointed are also a sign of the political context which we're dealing with. Both in having Scott Pruitt, who as a state attorney actively fought against many of the EPA actions. And Ben Carson is somebody who hasn't had that much familiarity with how housing programs work.

**J.Z.:** Portland is in a housing crisis. In this housing crisis, we have housing projects that seem to trying to address a lot of issues. There's always been the question of how many problems should affordable housing solve?

**C.M.:** It's difficult to think about how every housing development, every potential housing program has a clear nuance, but I feel like in some ways, some of the things that add costs to developing housing should clearly be noted, but some things that add cost, maybe they add cost for a reason. because there's just as much of a public good to gain from it. With some of the energy efficiency and green building techniques that are required of affordable housing, some of those will actually decrease the long-term maintenance of the building, so it actually saves money in the long term.

So, even though the up-front costs may be more, but the long term maintenance of the assisted housing development is going to be a lot better for the developer, which allows them then to build more housing down the road. So we always have to think through the nuances for each cases.

I won't touch on the union prevailing wages rule too much. I'm sure as Oregonians you've been keeping track of what's happening in California but it's a very heated argument right now in California.

**J.Z.:** You're talking about the issue of not requiring low-income housing developers to pay prevailing union wages for affordable housing. (Editor's note: Numerous bills are before the California State Legislature around requiring - or eliminating - prevailing wages

in the private sector, including residential housing construction.)

**C.M.:** California is one of the few states that actually requires that their low-income tax credit properties pay prevailing wages, so there are a lot of bills proposing the elimination of that. And I think these strategies tend to pit people against each other who would otherwise be very much in favor of each other's position. We're fighting for crumbs. And when we're fighting for crumbs, we focus on who has the crumb, instead of focusing on that fact that there is a whole loaf of bread that somebody is holding back.

**J.Z.:** How do we get at that loaf of bread?

**C.M.:** Oh gosh. That may be beyond my ability to answer. But certainly we as citizens of all backgrounds, of all income levels, have to be aware of what's going on in our governments. We have to be paying attention. We have to realize that, even among those of us

who are lucky enough to be middle income or upper income, should know that they benefit from low-income people living in their neighborhoods, on multiple counts. Culturally, socially, but economically they're also providing services in their local neighborhoods. We all benefit from everybody doing well.

Those are the decisions that we have to make. So when things appear as if they're nuisances for some communities, like the NIMBYism that so pervades, or for the housing development community, the additional costs for doing business – I can't imagine anybody telling me at least to my face that giving a homeless person or family or house is a bad idea.

**J.Z.:** It's understanding that having an extremely poor population in your community is a burden upon everybody in that community.

**C.M.:** Everybody. It's a burden on the nation, because we're not thinking about how everybody can be productive. I don't like to resort to bottom lines, but if everybody is productive economically, the nation benefits.

**J.Z.:** What are some examples – that local leaders aren't even thinking about – to correct our imbalance in our housing market?

**C.M.:** Portland certainly has been on the vanguard of trying to think innovatively. You may disagree with that – I say that because I think most people in the communities facing extreme housing affordability crises

are still feeling it. The crises hasn't gone away, so they don't think their city or communities have been that innovative. And that's the sad part; we're still in this crisis moment. Some of the experiments we've seen, like inclusionary zoning, the creation of accessory dwelling units, and the opening up of people to be able to formalize what may have already been existing under the desk, like ADUs. Los Angeles' experiment to expedite the permitting process. That's a regulatory cost that doesn't benefit anybody, just making the process so slow and bureaucratic that affordable housing developers and even market rate developers can't develop. That doesn't help anybody.

And all the major cities all have mayors who are promising or trying to figure out ways to experiment. So right now we're just tracking which of these have success.

**J.Z.:** What is the next great civil engineering breakthrough that is going to alter our housing market.

**C.M.:** I would like to think that the next big civil engineering breakthrough is not technological at all, and it's social. It's a better alignment of engineering activity, everything from research to actual building and construction to maintenance that is aligned to the social purpose – if it's a public good, if it's housing a specific population. I've always been of the mindset that science and technology are neither positive or negative nor are they neutral. They always play a role. And if we as a society determine that a certain activity has to occur, engineering can be a tool for this. It shouldn't be driving it. That's the weird thing about the Flint water crisis or the affordable housing crisis that many cities are facing, is that it makes the practitioners aware of the real implications of our work. And I've always thought that as a professional, my whole life, and I put it in practice because I've worked in federal government, I've worked in advocacy around housing and research and around housing quality, and I'd like to think that maybe something like the EPA resignation reminded me that the whole purpose why I do what I do is for my communities.

Engineers and scientists – just like medical doctors – there's a certain amount of authority we should view with them because of their amount of experience and exposure. But we're all citizen engineers and citizen scientists and citizen medical people, right? We should all know where our water comes from. We should all know where the waste that we produce, where that ends up going. Engineers certainly have created the systems by which we are able to forget and not have to pay attention to it, but that doesn't mean that as regular citizens we shouldn't be paying attention.

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