

HEY DEMS!

Just days after the election, the corporate Democrats begin placating, posturing and insisting on business as usual. “Business as Usual” is killing the climate system.

Oregon’s Rep. Peter DeFazio said, “The idea that in five years or 10 years we’re not going to consume any more fossil fuels is technologically impossible.”

His declaration was in response to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez pushing a “Green New Deal.” The Costa Rican diplomat to the Paris Accord, Christina Figueres said, “Impossible is not a fact. Impossible is an attitude.”

“Leader” of the House Nancy Pelosi talks of “bi-partisan cooperation” after two years of legislation that has been slash, pillage and plunder of the people. Why would they do this? Guess the corporate Dems don’t want to disturb their “bribes as usual” donor support system.

When governments fail, the people

must lead! Join whatever activist effort you are willing to lay your body down for and stick your courage to the sustained struggle. For those not yet ready to join us? When you do, the world will be as one. Get involved! Extinction rebellion everyone?

Deb McGee

350Eugene volunteer

GET WITH IT, PETE

Within a week of the election, Oregon Congressman Peter DeFazio is subverting Democratic Representative-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other representatives. They are proposing to reduce fossil fuel use 100 percent by 2035 and getting to a 100 percent renewable energy system, an ambitious agenda but necessary to reduce carbon emissions and prevent global warming.

DeFazio said: “The idea that in five years or 10 years we’re not going to consume any more fossil fuels is technologically impossible.”

Considering the congressman received \$74,420 in contributions from the fossil fuel industry, it is not difficult to understand his pessimistic comments.

The congressman needs to look no further than his home district for leadership in the worldwide campaign to rid ourselves of fossil fuels: Our Children’s Trust, UO Environmental Law professor Mary Wood, the city of Eugene Climate Recovery Ordinance and many more climate heroes.

Rep. DeFazio and the “old guard” need to understand the urgency of now when it comes to the world climate and the future of fossil fuels. Changes must be made to the political and financial system to promote renewables, reduce consumption habits, administer carbon sequestration and provide a safe environment for the future seven generations.

I do not regret my support for DeFazio, as he has done much for our region and our nation. However, he needs to support

his colleagues in Congress aggressively pushing for clean energy and an immediate transition off fossil fuels.

Jim Neu

Eugene

TRAFFIC JAMMED

Too many streets are now jammed with traffic! Thank you, Congressman Peter DeFazio, for protesting the lousy planning of our bridge reconstruction that cuts the number of lanes in half.

Maybe if we could help with carpooling and increased bus use we could reduce the problem and also cut climate emissions? Is this possible in Eugene? I plan to — will you?

Ruth Duemler

Eugene

TRUMP ON FIRE

Trump’s comments, during the most deadly fire in California history and while firefighters are risking their lives, that the

VIEWPOINT BY LISA ARKIN

Fighting Racism

OREGON ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE A TWO-YEAR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GRANT

A marked upsurge of emboldened racist and biased attacks in Oregon has many of us worried, even despairing about the state of our social ethics. Into what moral abyss did some members of our community fall when hate-filled graffiti was splashed across civic buildings named in honor of Professor Ed Coleman, a local leader of our black community? How did it become “the new normal” to need armed security officers guarding the local synagogue during the recent Jewish High Holy Days? Why in Oregon was it so easy to collect more than enough signatures to place Measure 105, an anti-immigrant measure, on the November 2018 ballot?

Having lived in Oregon for thirty years, I have never seen this level of hatred expressed in our community. Not even close.

As an antidote to this appalling trend, the organization I lead, Beyond Toxics, along with the Eugene-Springfield NAACP and Medford-based Unete Farm Worker Advocacy Center, were awarded a two-year \$90,000 grant. We are three diverse, now united, Oregon nonprofits dedicated to solving racial injustice.

The Collins Foundation, an Oregon-based philanthropic organization, is supporting our project “Intersectional Collaboration for Environmental Justice,” serving Latino, African-American and other vulnerable communities as well as low-income, rural residents in Lane, Jackson and Josephine counties. The purpose of the grant is to build a deeper understanding and greater support for racial and environmental justice values in Oregon.

We recognize that, in these extraordinary times, we are called upon to be intentional about the way we connect issues of racial, immigrant and environmental justice. To combat the distressing drift towards intolerance and hatred, we must emphasize the commonality and interconnectedness of these struggles. We can do this through the specialized and unique skills and expertise each organization brings to the table.

As Oregon’s lead environmental justice organization with offices in Lane and Jackson counties, Beyond Toxics is dedicated to ending persistent environmental risks that daily weigh upon vulnerable communities. This approach connects us with our partner organizations. For more than six years, Beyond Toxics and Unete have collaborated on environmental justice and farm worker issues. The NAACP and Beyond Toxics successfully co-proposed a “Resolution on Human Rights and Climate Change” to the Eugene City Council, and we supported NAACP’s Climate Justice Rally and Lobby Day at Oregon’s State Capitol.

Our organizations may serve diverse communities, yet Beyond Toxics, NAACP and Unete find we have the potential for incredible cross-organizational reciprocity. Ultimately, our goal is to build infrastructure in our communities to stand up to policies of injustice, discrimination and economic disparities.

The wise words of our co-organizer Eric Richardson, president of the Eugene-Springfield NAACP, speak to this reciprocity and power. “True movement building

calls for diverse groups to work together despite differing perspectives,” Richardson said. “This innovative project seeks to open up new lines of communication and collaboration between the Latino and Black communities understanding our shared struggle for a safe, welcoming, accountable society.”

According to the City of Eugene’s 6th annual *Hate and Bias Crime Report*, our community experienced a 70 percent hike in reports of hate and bias attacks in 2017, compared to 2016: 139 incidents versus the previous high of 82 reported hate and bias crimes. Race is the leading motivating factor reported to the police in these crimes. Shocking statistics like these serve to remind us that racism is all around us, degrading the quality of our lives every day. I believe racism survives and thrives when the dominant culture keeps us separated and suspicious of one another.

Insidiously, the powerful elite stoke fear within communities of color over access to jobs, education, housing and more. Struggling to overcome this system keeps us distracted from grappling with who gains from tearing communities apart. Racism and bias can also show up in ways as subtle as environmental injustice, a pattern of devastating pollution and disease falling upon the neighborhoods also suffering from social inequality.

Racism thrives in soil that nourishes it. The collaborative project funded by the Collins grant will help our three organizations deepen our relationships and combine our diverse strategies to strengthen communities of color to build an environmental justice movement. Focusing on cross-cultural, cross-racial, and cross-geographic movement building, we gain the strength needed to better fight oppression. Together, we envision creating a cultural shift that grows directly out of the experiences of those most impacted.

Traditionally, the burden of changing this system has been placed on the very communities who are targeted by racist policies, yet they have the least resources and political clout to deal with imposed injustices. Removing these burdens begins by building community leadership to advance justice.

This takes intentional and collaborative work. Between our three organizations, we organize youth, low-income residents, immigrants, rural communities, workers of color and people of color who are the most marginalized and affected by environmental racism and inequity. By combining our experiences and strengths and by utilizing our networks and alliances, we’ll have a better vantage point to see the next steps we must take to overcome systemic discrimination.

The funding from the Collins Foundation grant is essential to our small non-profits collaborating for the needed brave and tenacious work that lies ahead: advancing the cause of environmental justice in Oregon. ■

Lisa Arkin is executive director of Beyond Toxics, which promotes environmental justice engagement and community-based environmental grassroots organizing to ensure environmental protection and health for all communities.