

Published September 4th, 2019

DeSaulnier discusses climate change and environment at Town Hall

By Vera Kochan



Rep. Mark DeSaulnier Photo Vera Kochan

Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, D-Concord, spoke to a standing-room-only crowd Aug. 26 during a Town Hall about climate change and the environment at Campolindo High School.

The congressman from California's 11th District began the evening discussing the government's role in protecting the environment through congressional legislation by citing recent examples such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act.

He showed obvious disappointment with President Donald Trump's attempts to roll back 83 environmental regulations since taking office in 2017. Of the 83 rollbacks, 49 have already been completed, while the remaining 34 are in progress. Trump's rollbacks affect every aspect of the environment and any progress made toward solutions. From air pollution and emissions, drilling and extraction, infrastructure and planning to wildlife, toxic substances and safety, and finally water pollution.

DeSaulnier takes pride in California's strides to achieve a cleaner environment despite Trump's interference with the nation's status quo. "California's major climate policies and programs have resulted in a net gain of more than \$13 billion and more than 37,000 jobs. California had more than 519,000 jobs in clean energy in 2017, with Contra Costa in the state's top 10 counties for those jobs," DeSaulnier said. "In 2017,

Greenhouse Gas emissions decreased by 5 million metric tons from 2016 as the state's economy grew ahead of the national average."

The United States has recently experienced the hottest July on record, and DeSaulnier attributes the rise in global temperatures to carbon dioxide concentrations as a result of humankind's dependence on fossil fuels and deforestation. California has made and continues to make great strides in the use of renewable energy, which is collected from renewable sources such as sunlight, wind and rain. In 2015, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a law requiring retail sellers and publicly owned utilities to acquire 50% of California's electricity through renewable means by 2030.

The latter portion of the Town Hall Meeting was devoted to questions and comments from the audience. DeSaulnier was asked, "What can private citizens do to help?" He responded, "Become knowledgeable about politics. California's environmental groups are great resources. Please, just stay engaged! Follow the science and believe in what the scientists are saying."

DeSaulnier stressed that climate change is becoming expensive. "The costs of not responding to climate change must be approached from an economic standpoint. We must not weaken our goals to slow down climate change, but aspire to save the planet for future generations."

Responding to a question about what Congress is doing to enforce environmental regulations, DeSaulnier replied, "We have to stay on it. Project management is essential to carry out the laws and provide for oversight measures. It's a challenge to make people accountable. You can always boycott the products."

DeSaulnier is a "firm believer that strong and forward-looking energy and environmental policy is not the enemy of economic growth, but a key driver of growth, innovation and competitiveness." Most importantly, enforcement of environmental policies is vital to the health and well-being of Californians.

For more information visit: www.desaulnier.house.gov or call (925) 933-2660.

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