

Hi My name is Bryan Beckman. I lead the Ready for 100 campaign for Suncoast Sierra Group. When I was asked to write about the issue of climate of change, I thought to myself ... try to stay away from opinion, and stick with the facts as much as possible. I try to do that when I present to various groups on Ready for 100, and it seems to work for many people. So I will give it a try here too.

First, it is really easy to get educated on the **climate change basics**. A good source for that information is from our U.S. government - NASA. Go to the following website to learn a lot, and I mean a lot on climate change. <https://climate.nasa.gov/>

The NASA site has lots of facts, articles, and solutions. Facts include information on carbon dioxide levels over the last million years and how they have risen to levels never seen before 1950, and they continue rising. It describes how **humans** have caused the increase in emissions, and how those CO2 levels impact our climate, including **rising temperatures and sea levels**. These are widely accepted facts on the cause and effects of global warming and climate change, based on many years of observation and research.

Now that you have that knowledge, I will contrast that with how US policies have changed on how we should deal with the facts found on the NASA site. One of the first first changes came June 1, 2017, President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. would **cease all participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement** on climate change mitigation.

A little more than a year after that, the **United Nations issued a report in October 2018**, saying that limiting global warming will require "far-reaching and unprecedented changes" to human behavior, according to the panel. "We are already seeing the consequences of 1°C of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes," said Panmao Zhai, Co-Chair of one of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Working Groups.

The UN chief António Guterres said this was an "ear-splitting wake-up call." He said the long-awaited findings show that "climate change is running faster than we are - and we are running out of time." Read the following story for more information on the report. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/10/1022492>

Now contrast that new analysis from the UN with the actions taken and in process by the current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Remember, this agency is responsible for protecting our environment and ensuring clear air and water.

A recent New York Times analysis documents **83 environmental rules that have been and in the processing of being rolled back under the current EPA, led by President Trump appointed EPA Director Andrew Wheeler**. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks.html>

The New York Times analysis, based on research from Harvard Law School, Columbia Law School and other sources, counts more than 80 environmental rules and regulations on the way out under Mr. Trump. The majority are related to air, water, and drilling pollution. A most recent example is an emissions roll back for coal power generating plants. Researchers found that as many as 28 percent of the plants affected could produce higher emissions in 2030 than if there was no new federal policy in place. So more in this article on this latest rollback. <https://>

www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/trump-epa-finalizes-rollback-of-key-obama-climate-rule-that-targeted-coal-plants/2019/06/19/b8ff1702-8eeb-11e9-8f69-a2795fca3343_story.html?utm_term=.8c26f4668a5a

And finally, the **Trump administration rolled out a plan to weaken** the Obama administration's **fuel economy and global warming standards for cars** and strip California of its ability to determine its own vehicle regulations for greenhouse gas emissions. The Obama administration set the standards in 2012 as part of a set of rules meant to intensify from 2017 through 2026. Instead, the current EPA is proposing freezing the standards at their planned 2020 level, canceling any future strengthening. New cars and light trucks built in 2020 through 2026 would average 37 miles per gallon under the proposed freeze. Obama's rule would have resulted in 54.5 miles per gallon by 2026. Read more about it in this article. <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/400036-trump-submits-rule-to-weaken-iconic-obama-car-efficiency-standards>

So now that we know what climate change is, what is causing it, and the current administration's policies, **what can we do about it?**

First, it reinforces the fact that **elections matter**. Elected officials at **all levels of government** matter - local, state, and U.S. Elected officials write policy and they also appoint key government positions that write and enforce policy.

Second, **every one of us can take personal action**, and help others to take action. **Most homes, businesses, municipalities can save 25% of their energy usage** via energy efficiencies, like LED lighting, more insulation, more efficient AC and water heaters. A simple example is where an electric heat pump water heater can save 75% in energy and pay for itself in 3-5 years. Energy efficiencies may seem insignificant, but if we took action to reduce our electricity consumption by just 15-20%, that would eliminate the need for coal generated power in Florida. <https://www.eia.gov/beta/states/states/fl/overview>

Buy a hybrid or electric vehicle. These reduce overall emissions substantially, and save on fuel and operating costs. Electric vehicles are rapidly increasing battery capacity and more and more models are now available in 2019, and many more coming in 2020. **Your operating costs and fuel costs will be substantially lowered**, and there are still tax incentives available.

Support initiatives like Ready for 100, which works with cities to set renewable energy goals, lower electricity bills, and aggressively lower emissions. <https://www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100> There are now 1 in 5 people in America now that live in a city or state that have renewable energy goals. Four cities are in Pinellas - St. Pete, Largo, Dunedin, Safety Harbor.

Finally, **advocate for State level policy change**. Two examples are:

- Florida is one of only a few states that does not have renewable energy goals/standards.
- Allow Power Purchase agreements. They will allow Floridians to purchase power from solar companies that install rooftop solar. Many states allow this, but not Florida.

Please make a difference. Take action. Advocate for people that will take action. We can't wait.