

Sierra Club Moshannon Group

September 2024
Issue 3



Kamala Harris and Tim Walz greet the Democratic National Convention

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Sierra Club and Other Environmental Groups Endorse Kamala Harris for President

From the Sierra Club's Website

On July 22, 2024, four leading environmental, clean energy and climate organizations – the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) Action Fund, the NRDC Action Fund, the Sierra Club, and Clean Energy for American Action (CE4A Action) – endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris for President. The Biden-Harris administration has done far more to address the climate crisis and environmental injustice than any administration in our nation's history.

"Whether holding polluters accountable as San Francisco District Attorney and California Attorney General, leading the charge on electric school buses in the U.S. Senate, or casting the

deciding vote on the biggest investment ever in climate, clean energy and environmental justice and leading on climate on the world stage as Vice President, Kamala Harris has long been a climate champion," said **LCV Action Fund Senior Vice President of Government Affairs Tiernan Sittenfeld**.

"LCV Action Fund is proud to support her historic candidacy and to continue working together to protect our climate, defend our democracy, and much more over the next four years."

"Kamala Harris has been a driving force in delivering the strongest climate action in history. She's ready to build on

those gains from day one as president," said **Manish Bapna, president and CEO of the NRDC Action Fund**. "She championed the policies and investments that are cutting climate pollution, creating jobs, unlocking innovation, strengthening the economy, and protecting vulnerable communities. Harris grasps the urgency and scale of the challenge. She'll advance the climate progress we've made at home and internationally. She'll raise climate ambition to make sure we confront the climate crisis in a way that makes the country more inclusive, more economically competitive and more energy secure."

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Harris Endorsement

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“Kamala Harris is a courageous advocate for the people and the planet. From prosecuting polluters as California’s Attorney General to author bold climate legislation that would become central to the landmark Inflation Reduction Act, she has worked for decades to combat the climate crisis and protect our health and future,” said Ben Jealous, Sierra Club Executive Director. “There is no doubt that she will work to continue the Biden-Harris administration’s legacy of acting ambitiously to advance our progress toward a just, thriving clean energy economy. I have had the distinct personal privilege of calling Kamala Harris a dear friend for more than 20 years, but it will be an even greater honor to call her Madam President.”

“Clean energy is the future of American energy and we cannot afford to backslide on the historic progress made under President Biden.” said CE4A Action Deputy Executive Director Sarah Mason. “Vice President Harris is a proven champion and fierce advocate for climate action and clean energy and we are confident she will carry on the impressive legacy of the Biden-Harris Administration as President.”

The four organizations combined represent millions of members and activists in every state across the country. The organizations each plan to educate and mobilize their

members and supporters around Vice President Harris’s climate and environmental justice record ahead of the election. Polling has repeatedly shown that voters support the clean energy and environmental justice progress made by the Biden-Harris administration, that these issues are especially motivating to younger voters and that the clear contrast with Trump’s record moves key voters away from Trump. In addition, Vice President Harris is featured on GiveGreen.com, the largest progressive issue-based candidate fundraising platform in U.S. politics.



President Joe Biden had been endorsed by the Sierra Club for re-election before he withdrew his candidacy in July.

The last three and a half years of the Biden-Harris administration could not contrast more starkly with Trump and other extreme MAGA Republicans, and the stakes for this election could not be higher. Trump rolled back more than 100 environmental protections, allowing his corporate backers to pollute our air and water and put our communities and environment at

risk. A second term would be far worse for our climate and our democracy: Trump has promised to be a dictator on day one and will continue to sell out our future to his Big Oil and corporate interest campaign donors. The League of Conservation Voters, the NRDC Action Fund, the Sierra Club, and climate voters are all-in to help ensure that Vice President Harris wins big on Election Day.

Sierra Club Statement Supporting Tim Walz for Vice President

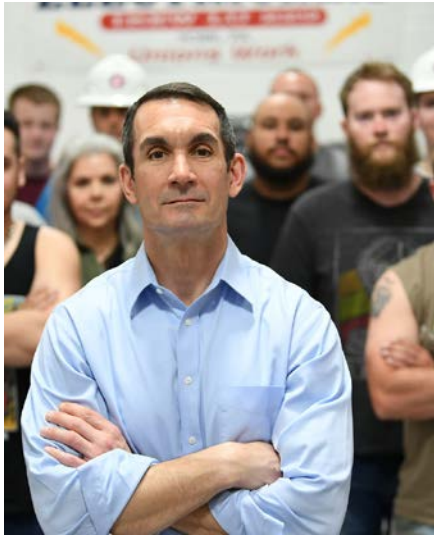
Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous released the following statement:

“Like Vice President Harris, Governor Walz knows that climate change is the existential threat of our time. In his time serving in Congress and as Governor, he has worked to protect clean air and water, grow our clean energy economy, and see to it that we do all we can to avoid the very worst of the climate crisis. The Harris-Walz ticket is one that understands the fight before us, isn’t afraid to tackle climate change head-on, and will continue to build upon the legacy of the Biden-Harris administration moving forward. We welcome Governor Walz to the ticket and look forward to doing all we can to support the Harris-Walz campaign through November.”

Other Sierra Club Endorsements for Moshannon Group

Voters:

*Eugene DePasquale
Pennsylvania Attorney
General*



Eugene DePasquale formerly served as Pennsylvania's Auditor General. He promises to hold polluters accountable, fight against environmental degradation, and promote sustainable practices to combat climate change.

*Paul Takac
State Representative
PA 82nd District*



Paul Takac is seeking re-election. Paul demonstrated his environmental commitment throughout

his first term in office. He consistently voted for legislation to protect the resources and health of area residents. His efforts helped to secure funding for environmental restoration, parks, and trails as well as EV infrastructure.

Both as a parent and as someone who has worked with schools and educators, Paul is concerned about the realities of climate change and the need to protect our planet for future generations. He strongly supports transitioning to a renewable energy economy and investment in work force development to create family-sustaining careers.

He states, "I will be there to serve the best interests of all people and communities that I represent, including protecting each Pennsylvanian's right to clean air and water as stated in the Pennsylvania Constitution."

Speaking of Elections. . .

Nominations sought for candidates to serve on the Moshannon Group's Executive Committee

Here's a great way to show your environmental commitment: Run for the Moshannon Group Excom. Contact Steve Lachman (stevelachman@gmail.com). Include a 200 word biography and photo. The election will take place this December. The Excom meets monthly. Like vampires – we're always looking for fresh blood.

Support the Centre County Solar Power Purchase Agreement

In a big win for the climate, Centre County governments are cooperating to bring a big solar project online. The State College Area School District, Centre County, State College Borough, and eight other local governments have been pursuing a solar power purchase agreement. Upon completion, it will provide cheap, carbon-free, Pennsylvania electricity for the next 15 years. Votes on final participation and entrance into the agreement are coming up in September and October. **Your support will make a difference!** Send emails to elected officials or speak during public comment at any of the following:

- Centre County Board of Commissioners
- Centre Hall-Potter Joint Authority
- Centre Region Council of Governments
- College Township
- College Township Water Authority
- Ferguson Township
- Harris Township
- Patton Township
- State College Area School District
- State College Borough
- State College Borough Water Authority

You can also write letters to the editor of the *Centre Daily Times*, *Centre County Gazette*, or StateCollege.com. For more info, contact Peter Buck – thesearehemlocks@gmail.com



The Chair Speaks. . .

By Doug Mason

years left to change course and rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions to have a chance of avoiding the worst of the climate crisis. A 13-month streak of global temperature records just ended in August should remind us of the urgency of climate change.

Pollution is crippling air and water quality, exacerbating the inequality between wealthy and low- and middle-income countries. Biodiversity loss has the potential to collapse our food and water supply chains, putting further pressure on some of the most vulnerable countries in the world to manage the ever-growing risk of poverty, hunger, and harm to human health. There is also scientific evidence that six of the nine core Planetary Boundaries have been crossed, posing a catastrophic danger to the Earth's overarching ecosystem.

Climate change has happened before, even more dramatically than is the case nowadays, but never at an acceleration or on the global scale currently being witnessed. Think of the time scales. It took 10,000 years for the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (a phase 50 to 60 million years ago when the planetary temperature was at

. . . on the Four Horsemen of the Environmental Apocalypse

least 10 degrees Centigrade warmer than today) to reach its peak with warming at rates of 0.8 degrees Centigrade per thousand years. With present additions of carbon dioxide and methane, the same thermal maximum (all things being equal) could be reached in 200 years.

We are endangering ourselves on a colossal scale, arguably within the lifetime of our children!

We have already seen regional, national and local climate emergency declarations issued across 2,359 jurisdictions (as of August 2024). Such declarations by themselves have limited impact due to the global nature of this emergency. However, they demonstrate a keen interest in responding to the triple planetary crisis within an emergency framework, providing a core foundation for multilateral cooperation.

A Planetary Emergency Declaration at the UN General Assembly could serve as a crucial next step toward remedying the - to date - dysfunctional and inadequate nature of our response to the triple planetary crisis and convene a Planetary Emergency Platform as a key governance mechanism to facilitate the cooperation required between national and subnational entities to ensure effective and equitable planetary action.

In addition to the existential threat of nuclear war, the world is facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

In order to ensure better governance to protect the environment for current and future generations, a number of organizations established Mobilizing an Earth Governance Alliance (MEGA) earlier this year.

One of the proposals being advanced by MEGA calls for the United Nations General Assembly to declare a planetary emergency and that a Planetary Emergency Platform be convened.

Adopting a Planetary Emergency Declaration would ensure that policy actions to protect the environment - especially the climate - would be elevated to top priority in global, national and local-decision making, requiring concerted action by all sectors of government, similar to the way that other critical emergencies are addressed.

Recent science estimates that we possibly have less than six

Worse than we thought:

A list of current and anticipated climate change impacts

Compiled by Rick McCorkle

Editor's Note: *Excom Member Rick McCorkle is a retired fish and wildlife biologist who holds a master's degree in applied ocean science. He has been compiling a list of climate change impacts – which is shared here. Think he missed something? Please email him at rmacsp5@gmail.com.*



Rick McCorkle

- Extreme climate events comprising conditions beyond which many species are adapted are occurring on all continents, with severe impacts.
- Rising air, water, ocean and ground temperatures have restructured ecosystems and contributed to the redistribution and mortality of fish, bird and mammal species. Climate-driven changes are particularly pronounced within Arctic ecosystems.
- Escalating climate change impacts on marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems will alter ecological processes and amplify other anthropogenic threats to protected and iconic species and habitats.
- Extreme heat and precipitation trends on land have increased vegetation stress and mortality, reduced soil quality and altered ecosystem processes including carbon and freshwater cycling.
- Annual precipitation has increased in recent decades in the northeast United States.
- Ranges and abundances of species are shifting in response to warming throughout North America.
- Climate change is projected to adversely affect the range, migration and habitat of caribou, an important food and cultural resource in the Arctic.
- Facilitated by warm, dry conditions, 'mega-disturbances' [e.g., in the western U.S.] and synergies between disturbances that include wildfires, insect and disease outbreaks, and drought-induced tree mortality continue to affect large areas of North America, overwhelming adaptive capacities of species and degrading ecosystem services; this era of mega-
- Anthropogenic climate change has led to warmer and drier conditions in parts of North America, facilitating wildland fires resulting in an increase in burned area and longer fire seasons in recent decades.
- Projected climate change will cause habitat loss, alter physical and biological processes, and decrease water quality in freshwater ecosystems.
- Projected river warming of 1-3 degrees Celsius is expected to reduce thermal habitat for important salmon and trout species in the northwest USA and in Mexico, and for multiple species in Canada.
- Projected reduction in wetland habitats in western North America is expected to negatively impact migratory bird populations.
- Harmful freshwater algal blooms are expected to increase.
- Higher ocean temperatures have directly affected food-web structure and altered physiological rates, distribution, phenology and behavior of marine species with cascading effects on food-web dynamics.
- Pacific coastal waters from Mexico to Canada and US mid-Atlantic coastal waters have a high proportion of species

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Climate Impacts

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- (>5% of all marine species) near their upper thermal limit, representing hotspots of risk from marine heat waves.
- Kelp, a macroalgae, forms important habitat for other marine species, and its biomass has decreased 85-99% in the past 40-60 years off Nova Scotia, Canada, replaced by invasive and turf algae; this is associated directly with warming waters.
- Sea level rise driven by human-caused climate change may have wiped out an entire species in the U.S. for the first time; the loss of the only known U.S. stand of Key Largo tree cactus in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Florida, shows how rising seas can alter the coastal environment
- Climate change has induced phenological and spatial shifts in primary productivity with cascading impacts on food webs; this includes widespread starvation events of fish, birds (e.g., puffins, auklets) and marine mammals (e.g., grey whales).
- Climate change has altered foraging behavior and distribution of North Atlantic right whales and their target copepod prey, increasing entanglement rates in lobster and snow crab fishing gear on the east coast of the USA and Canada as lobster and crab distributions also shift due to changing water temperatures.
- Projected shifts in the North Pacific Transition Zone by up to 1000 km northward combined

with changes in coastal upwelling could alter up to 35% of elephant seal and bluefin tuna foraging habitat.

- Significant rapid warming is occurring in North American Arctic marine systems, with cascading impacts beyond polar regions.
- Both direct hazards and indirect food-web alterations from sea ice loss have imperiled seabirds and marine mammals.
- Increasingly favorable environmental conditions due to warming combined with shipping and other activities has raised the rate of invasive species movement into the Arctic.
- Coral reefs in the Gulf of Mexico and along the coasts of Florida and the Yucatan Peninsula are facing increasing risk of bleaching and mortality from warming ocean waters interacting with non-climate stressors.
- Without mitigation to keep surface temperatures below a 2 degrees Celsius increase by the end of the century, up to 99% of coral reefs will be lost; however, 95% of reefs will still be lost even if warming is kept below 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Future seawater CO₂ levels have been shown in laboratory studies to negatively impact Pacific and Atlantic squid, bivalve, crab and fish species (Pacific cod), and indirectly alter food-web dynamics.
- The Gulf of Maine (GOM) has been heating up faster than 99% of the world's oceans; since the early 1980s, the rate of warming in the GOM (0.86 degrees F per decade) has been more than



Coral Reef die-off in the Great Barrier Reef (Sierra Club photo).



Key Largo Tree Cactus: now extinct in the United States due to sea level rise (photo from Palm Beach Post)



Wildfire in New Mexico

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Climate Impacts

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triple that of the world's oceans (0.27 degrees F per decade) this has possible implications for the future sustainability of lobsters and other GOM fisheries, and other species that depend on them; resulting changes in GOM fish populations are having a direct impact on seabirds (e.g., terns); lobsters and other shellfish may also be increasingly affected by ocean acidification from increasing CO2 absorption.

- Along Atlantic shorelines of the American South, some of the planet's fastest-rising seas are driving water tables higher, causing septic system failures and associated pollution of aquifers and aquatic habitats; one form of resulting pollution is eutrophication which can lead to algae blooms and fish kills.
- Coastal, estuarine and riverine water temperatures have been increasing, and warming is generally occurring earlier and more rapidly during spring; this is resulting in shorter windows for successful spawning runs of anadromous species such as salmon, herring and shad. An example of this has been observed in the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, where the duration of water temperatures supportive of American shad spawning runs has decreased by approximately one month compared to 50 years ago.
- Warmer and/or more prolonged warm spells during winter increase the impact on

reptiles, amphibians and other wildlife that hibernate. For example, reptiles caught out in the open when the temperature drops again are vulnerable to predation and other threats.

- Earlier onset of warm temperatures in spring result in early emergence of insects; some birds may follow these insect emergences north and become stranded if temperatures plummet; increasingly there are asynchronies between important insect emergences and the arrivals of migrating birds that depend on them.
- In Pennsylvania, rare freshwater tidal wetlands at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (only location in PA where a good example of this type of habitat remains) will be inundated by sea level rise. Here are some of the bird species documented in these wetlands: Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Common Gallinule, Spotted Sandpiper, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Northern Harrier, and Swamp Sparrow.
- The blackpoll warbler (*Setophaga striata*) is endangered in Pennsylvania where its only known nesting location is an extralimital extension of its breeding range; the species nests in boreal forest habitat that mostly occurs to the north of Pennsylvania; there is a remote boreal conifer wetland site that persists in Pennsylvania, but will likely be eliminated as warming continues, resulting in the extirpation of the blackpoll warbler from Pennsylvania.

NEWS ITEMS:

Penn State Sues PFAS Manufacturers

On June 11, Penn State University filed a lawsuit against manufacturers and sellers of per and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that have been detected in drinking water supplies at multiple Penn State campuses, including University Park. More than 30 state attorneys general and numerous private entities have also filed suit against PFAS manufacturers.

Ironically, Penn State's press release announcing the lawsuit omits any mention of the fact that Penn State's discharge of PFAS from University Park Airport is a likely source of contamination to Spring Creek and groundwater in Benner Township.

In April 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency announced regulation to sharply limit the allowable amount of PFAS in drinking water. Those regulations are currently being challenged in federal court.

PA Game Commission Plans to Build New HQ Near Spring Creek

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has announced plans to construct a new North-central Regional Office in Benner Township, Centre County, while closing its Jersey Shore office. The Game Commission acquired the site in 2010 by statute as part of a bipartisan management plan for Spring Creek Canyon.



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