Georgia – 36 Articles

Document 1 of 38

ENERGY: State plans solar power projects: Georgia Power, regulator work to get option on grid. Southeast lags in renewable energy.

Swartz, Kristi E . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]31 Aug 2012: A.13.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1037175316?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

[...]the utility, along with state electric cooperatives, successfully lobbied in the state legislature against allowing consumers to lease solar panels from a private company with the help of bank financing.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

When it comes to electricity from the sun, Georgia has largely remained in the dark.

But a proposal is in the works to boost the amount of sun-powered electricity, and it comes from two unlikely sources: Georgia Power and one of the state utility regulators.

The utility has been reluctant to add solar to the grid, saying it is too pricey and would raise customer bills. The Public Service Commission has shied away from making Georgia Power get more electricity from renewable sources for the same reason.

But a behind-the-scenes effort by Georgia Public Service Commissioner Chuck Eaton and Georgia Power has led to a project that will give Georgians more opportunities to buy solar power. Few details were available, but the project will be "significantly" larger than the 50 megawatts of solar electricity Georgia Power must have on the grid by 2015, Eaton said. One megawatt of solar can provide electricity for one large department store, such as a Super Target.

"I've been working with Georgia Power over the last couple of months to get more solar in the marketplace and do it in a manner that does not put upward pressure on rates," Eaton told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "The price of solar has come down dramatically."

Georgia Power said it has been "working with the PSC for the past several months to find new ways to responsibly add more solar to our mix without causing rates to go up for customers.

"We have been and will continue to look at ways to incorporate cost-effective resources into our generation portfolio," the company said.

The efforts are a sea change for the state, which, along with the Southeast, lags in getting electricity from renewable fuels. Georgia Power's parent, Atlanta-based Southern Co., gets 2 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, including hydroelectricity. California, in contrast, gets 47 percent, Florida 4 percent and North Carolina 2 percent, according to the most recent data, for 2011, from the Solar Energy Industries Association.

Georgia Power devised a plan to get 50 megawatts of its power from solar energy last year after state utility regulator Bubba McDonald asked the company to do so.

But the utility, along with state electric cooperatives, successfully lobbied in the state legislature against allowing consumers to lease solar panels from a private company with the help of bank financing.

Unlike traditional power plants that produce several hundred or thousand megawatts of electricity that travels over long power lines, solar systems typically are much smaller and are built on or near a home or business. The proposed project for Georgia Power would likely follow that model, with the utility buying solar electricity from other companies through competitive bidding, Eaton said.

"It would be from all of the solar companies that were out there," Eaton said.

One company, Georgia Solar Utilities, is eager to sell solar energy in the state and has proposed building an 80MW solar farm in Putnam County. Company executives presented the plan to the PSC at its energy committee meeting Thursday morning. By law, the company is forbidden to compete with Georgia Power or any other utility in the state.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Electric utilities; Solar energy |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: Georgia Power Co; NAICS: 221122 |
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Document 2 of 38

ENERGY: Georgia Power to buy more solar: Customer bills will not be affected by renewable energy plan, utility says.

Swartz, Kristi E . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]27 Sep 2012: A.13.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1080587981?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

In Georgia, the company also lobbied against a bill that would let outside companies lease solar panels and then sell the electricity to that homeowner or business at a fixed rate.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Georgia Power plans to substantially boost the amount of solar power it distributes to customers, citing falling costs that have made the source more competitive.

The utility said Wednesday it will buy more than 10 times the amount of solar electricity it currently gets from solar farms and rooftop array by 2017. If added today, the additional electricity would catapult the state to No. 4 in use of solar power, according to the most recent data from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

Other states will also likely be boosting solar power use at the same time, however, and even with the addition solar would comprise only about 2 percent of Georgia Power's output.

"We see this as a good first step toward increasing Georgia's infrastructure," said Jessica Moore, executive director of the Georgia Solar Energy Association.

Georgia Power disclosed the plan in a proposal Wednesday to the state Public Service Commission, which must approve. Customer bills will not be affected, the utility said.

The plan calls for Georgia Power to buy an additional 210 megawatts from solar sources. One megawatt can power about 450 homes or one SuperTarget store. The utility generates 16,000 megawatts in total, with coal, natural gas and nuclear the dominant generation sources.

Georgia Power, the state and the Southeast have been criticized by alternative energy advocates for lackluster use of renewables such as solar and wind power.

The utility's parent, Atlanta-based Southern Co., currently gets 2 percent of its fuel from all renewable sources, including hydroelectricity.

Georgia Power and Southern have vigorously fought policies to mandate levels of renewable electricity use. In Georgia, the company also lobbied against a bill that would let outside companies lease solar panels and then sell the electricity to that homeowner or business at a fixed rate.

Georgia Power will not build or operate the solar farms or rooftop panels to supply the sun-power boost. Instead the company will buy most of the power from large "utility-scale" solar farms. It will buy a smaller amount from homes and businesses with solar systems. The plan calls for lining up suppliers over the next couple years and ramping up purchases from 2015 through 2017.

Dropping solar costs are the main driver, company executives said, while pressure from customers, the solar industry and some utility regulators also figured in.

"Solar now is a lot more economic than it used to be," said Greg Roberts, Georgia Power's vice president of pricing and planning. "And we've really done a lot of talking and listening to our customers and developers and are working with the [PSC].

The average cost of a rooftop solar array has dropped more than 46 percent since 2010, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association. The cost of a solar panel system for a typical home has fallen to $15,000 from $40,000. Decreased technology and manufacturing costs, simpler designs and rising overseas competition are among the reasons.

A bill in the state legislature last winter would have allowed companies to install, own and maintain solar systems on homes and businesses. Customers would sign a long-term contract to pay for the electricity generated by those solar panels.

Georgia Power and the state's municipal and cooperative utilities argued that such companies would be illegally operating as a utility.

Roberts said Georgia Power's proposal is not a move to pre-empt any repeat effort this winter.

Some PSC members have pushed Georgia Power to boost alternative sources. Commissioner Chuck Eaton, running for a second term, said he has changed his stance on solar now that the cost has decreased.

"Solar has now entered the realm of competitive energy," he said. "There have been folks that have been critical that we haven't gotten in earlier, but really what they are saying is, 'You should have paid three times for the solar what you are paying today.' "

Large-scale solar projects mean more business for companies such as Alpharetta-based United Renewable Energy. The company is an engineering, procurement and construction contractor for commercial and industrial solar projects.

"The scale of what they are proposing is high," said Bill Silva, president and chief executive officer. "To have clarity in the market in terms of the value renewable energy brings, then we'll be able to have our customers move forward on larger projects."

Kim Kooles, a policy analyst with the Raleigh-based North Carolina Solar Center and the Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy, noted that Georgia will remain among states without a mandated percentage of power from renewables. The state also should loosen its restrictions on how homeowners and businesses install and use solar panels, she said.

"If it's not doing those ... things, I wouldn't say it's 'cutting edge,' " Kooles said. "I say it's great for Georgia, but it's not a game changer."

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Alternative energy sources; Costs; Fixed rates; Homeowners; Solar energy |
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Document 3 of 38

Novel also clever class on warming: Climate change and rural life intersect in Kingsolver's new book.

Webb, Gina . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]04 Nov 2012: E.4.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1125695832?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Native-American adoption in "The Bean Trees," mining rights in "Animal Dreams," colonialism and U.S. foreign policy in "The Poisonwood Bible," the plight of the urbanized coyote in "Prodigal Summer," and most recently, McCarthyism in 2009's "Lacuna."

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

It's hard to think of any contemporary writer who does a better job than Barbara Kingsolver of marrying fiction to the political: Native-American adoption in "The Bean Trees," mining rights in "Animal Dreams," colonialism and U.S. foreign policy in "The Poisonwood Bible," the plight of the urbanized coyote in "Prodigal Summer," and most recently, McCarthyism in 2009's "Lacuna."

Following in those footsteps, "Flight Behavior," Kingsolver's 14th book, offers a master class in climate change through its impact on the kind of rural community most vulnerable to its effects and the least likely to recognize it.

As in her previous work, the lessons are so tightly woven into the story that every scene, every sentence, relays a part of the message, charting connections between subject and characters to emphasize one of her core themes: Everything is interrelated.

For the many conversations between the natural and the divine, the familiar and the unknown, "God's will" and science that take place in "Flight Behavior's" classroom --- tiny Feathertown, Tenn. --- main character Dellarobia Turnbow is the ideal go-between and a most willing student.

Whip smart and rebellious, fascinated by nature and science, Dellarobia has a hard time swallowing her Bible-belt community's one-size-fits-all answer for everything: "The Lord works in mysterious ways."

Though she once planned for college, a high-school pregnancy locked her into a dull-as-dishwater marriage at 17 with local farm boy, Cub Turnbow, and now, swamped with the care of two small children, she buries what's missing in her life under serial flirtations with local heartthrobs.

As the story opens, Dellarobia is on the verge of taking one of those casual flings much further, headed for a mountain cabin and a potentially home-wrecking rendezvous with her crush du jour, when what looks like a raging forest fire blocks her route.

But this is no ordinary fire: "This consternation swept the mountains in perfect silence ... no smoke, no crackling howl."

Reminding her of Moses' burning bush, the sight of the glowing forest --- which she doesn't realize yet is a biological event --- seems both personal and transcendent.

"Unearthly beauty had appeared to her, a vision of glory to stop her in the road. For her alone these orange boughs lifted, these long shadows became a brightness rising. It looked like the inside of joy, if a person could see that.... It had to mean something."

Whatever it portends, the sight turns her right back around to her husband and kids, as well as the crushing boredom of life on his family farm, under the iron thumb of his tyrannical father, Bear, and overbearing mother, Hester.

Neither Dellarobia nor Cub have any say-so in the farm's affairs, the most recent of which is Bear's plan to clear-cut the timber on the mountain behind their home, even though it could have disastrous environmental effects.

But Dellarobia's fiery vision changes everything. "Something had gotten into her. ... The arguments she'd always swallowed like a daily ration of pebbles had begun coming into her mouth and leaping out like frogs."

Silent no more, she protests the deforestation that might rescue her father-in-law from foreclosure, and finds an unexpected ally in her mother-in-law, who sees the mountaintop "miracle" as "the Lord's business."

When a small cadre of biologists arrive to study the phenomenon, Dellarobia, hired on to help with cataloging data, becomes infatuated with the lead scientist, a strikingly tall, good-looking man with the improbable name of Ovid Byron.

Unlike her other flirtations, this one --- in one of many echoes of the book's title --- will follow a different flight pattern.

Dellarobia is one of Kingsolver's most appealing characters to date, her frustrations, twists and turns a familiar line of defense to anyone who's tried to keep a marriage going past its due date.

Yet despite walls that have long-ago closed in, her outlook is compassionate, combining tolerance and affection for her self-righteous in-laws; her best friend since childhood, Dovey; and the two children that tumble around her like puppies.

Kingsolver extends the same treatment to the residents of Feathertown, portraying them with dignity, humor and insight, even when their most important conversations take place in dollar and second-hand stores, kitchens and sheep-shearing barns.

Indeed, one of the most intriguing questions Kingsolver poses in "Flight Behavior" is whether hard science underpins the farming community's homespun wisdom, hinting at layers of knowledge that link the two.

The college students working under Ovid may be highly skilled research aides, but they're in awe of Dellarobia's sewing skills. Ovid may be a climate-control expert, but what of Hester, a self-taught sheep breeder whose encyclopedic knowledge about wild plants, their healing properties and where to find them eventually intersects with Ovid's field?

In "Flight Behavior," Kingsolver again proves to be our finest poet of the commonplace.

By revealing the sacredness in the everyday and bringing the scientific down to recognizable Earth, she closes the distance between this insular community and the larger world to show that if we don't learn to work together, we could lose both.

FICTION

"Flight Behavior"

Barbara Kingsolver

HarperCollins, $28.99, 448 pages

Credit: For the AJC

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Books -- Flight Behavior |
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| **People:** | Kingsolver, Barbara |
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Document 4 of 38

Climate-change claims in 2012

Stirgus, Eric . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]29 Dec 2012: B.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1264875165?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

[...]our research shows that's not the case.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

President Barack Obama told reporters in his first news conference since being re-elected he will seek ways to address climate change --- another issue that has divided Democrats and Republicans in recent years and should continue to generate some interesting claims to test on the Truth-O-Meter.

Below are some abbreviated versions of past fact checks about the topic. Look for the complete fact checks at the PolitiFact online sites.

Want to comment on our Truth-O-Meter rulings? It's easy. Just go to our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/politifact.georgia?fref=ts. Readers can also follow us on Twitter at: PolitiFactGA.

Rick Perry: Scientists are "questioning the original idea that manmade global warming is what is causing the climate to change. ... (It is) more and more being put into question."

The Republican governor from Texas has made it clear he doesn't believe that human beings are contributing to global warming, and he expounded on the issue in detail at a stop in New Hampshire during his short run for president in the 2012 race.

PolitiFact asked the Perry campaign for comment on this, but we didn't hear back. In response to similar questions from The Washington Post, the Perry campaign pointed to various writings questioning climate change. But the Post's report noted these writings were anecdotal and "not evidence of the groundswell of opposition suggested by Perry."

PolitiFact reviewed several reports on the subject. Each concluded that the emissions of greenhouse gases from human activity were a factor in global warming.

A 2010 study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences --- the official publication of the United States National Academy of Sciences --- found that out of 1,372 climate researchers under review, approximately 97 percent to 98 percent of those actively publishing in the field said they believe human beings are causing climate change.

Perry's remarks give the impression that the science of global warming is in dispute, that some scientists feel one way, and some scientists feel another way. He says that skepticism is growing. In fact, our research shows that's not the case. PolitiFact found that there is solid consensus among the major scientific organizations and that the skeptics seem to be a small minority. PolitiFact rated his statement False.

www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2011/aug/22/rick-perry/rick-perry-says-more-and-more-scientists-are-quest/

Barack Obama says Texas wildfires are linked to climate change.

Obama ridiculed Texas Gov. Rick Perry in a September 2011 speech when the president said, "You've got a governor whose state is on fire denying climate change."

A White House spokesman defended Obama's remarks, saying there is a link between severe weather and climate change.

Historically, scientists have drawn a clear distinction between specific weather events and longer-range changes in climate, and that sentiment persists. The situation in Texas that Obama was referring to could be described as something broader than a specific weather event, and there is peer-reviewed evidence linking broader climate change in the American Southwest with the incidence of wildfires in the region.

The Texas state climatologist wrote around that time he believes climate change has had an effect in encouraging the current wildfires, but only as a modest contributing factor. This caution, combined with the difficulty of determining cause and effect in a system as complex as the Earth's atmosphere, led PolitiFact to rate Obama's claim Half True.

www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2011/sep/28/barack-obama/barack-obama-slams-rick-perry-climate-change-citin/

Tim Pawlenty: "The weight of the evidence (on global warming) is that most of it, maybe all of it, is because of natural causes ... it's fair to say the science is in dispute."

Pawlenty, the former Minnesota governor who was briefly in the race for the 2012 GOP presidential nomination, made these comments to The Miami Herald.

PolitiFact divided his statement into two parts:

1) Evidence points toward climate change being primarily a natural, rather than manmade, phenomenon.

2) The science about the causes of global climate change is in dispute.

Based on our research, there is very little dispute in the scientific community, especially among climate specialists, on whether climate change is primarily caused by natural or manmade forces. The majority of scientists polled feel human activity is the primary driver of climate change. Based on scientific studies, global warming over the past 50 years has been primarily driven by human activity.

Pawlenty's claims are both incorrect and misleading to the public, who may not be familiar with the science behind climate change. It is not "fair to say the science is in dispute," as if there are good arguments on both sides. Rather, there is significant scientific consensus that human beings are contributing to global warming. We rated his statement False.

www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2011/aug/14/tim-pawlenty/do-scientists-disagree-about-global-warming/

Florida Wildlife Federation: Claims Ohio Gov. John Kasich says climate change is a problem.

The federation posted billboards around Tampa shortly before the 2012 Republican National Convention with this claim to boost their argument that climate change is a concern among some Republican leaders as well as Democrats.

PolitiFact checked with Kasich's staff to see whether the quote was accurate. Rob Nichols, the governor's spokesman, confirmed that it was taken from a speech Kasich made in May 2012 at a small energy conference in Columbus, Ohio.

But for context, Nichols said there is a little more to Kasich's thoughts on global warming.

"He has said this several times, but what is usually omitted is what is on the back-end of what he has said," Nichols said. "Each time he says it, he has added, 'How big is this? I don't know. Should we overreact to this? No.'"

PolitiFact Ohio rated the statement True.

www.politifact.com/ohio/statements/2012/aug/29/florida-wildlife-federation/convention-billboard-touts-john-kasichs-view-clima/

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 5 of 38

GUEST COLUMN: Imposing renewable energy won't work

Dodd, Benita M . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]08 Mar 2013: A.18.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1315064478?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

[...]current recoverable gas provides enough for at least the next 100 years.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Watching environmental groups eroding sound energy policy through death by a thousand cuts is a strong reminder.

For years, alternative energy was promoted as preparation for "peak" oil. Domestic energy exploration was hindered to "protect the land." Air and water pollution were cited to demonize coal. Then global warming/climate change was the reason to reduce coal and petroleum use.

Policymakers concerned about national security were urged to achieve energy independence, with no regard for how global markets operate. In this, biofuel profiteers have been complicit and protectionist. States were pressed to mandate energy portfolios with a percentage of renewable energy including wind, solar and biomass. The pot was sweetened with tax credits, subsidies, grants and rebates, all at taxpayer expense.

Georgia has wisely resisted such mandates. But more recently, a new strategy has become clear: the call for legislators to embrace alternative energy sources because "it's good for the economy and the right thing to do."

In an economy where job creation is important, legislators may fall for this "moral" argument. But it's as unpredictable as the future of renewable energy. Why? First, peak oil arguments were soundly defeated by recent discoveries of vast resources of domestic shale gas. In fact, current recoverable gas provides enough for at least the next 100 years. Technological advances are certain to improve upon that estimate.

Air quality has improved even as energy use increased. Between 1980 and 2011, GDP increased 128 percent, vehicle miles traveled increased 94 percent, energy consumption increased 26 percent and the U.S. population grew 37 percent. During that period, total emissions of the six principal air pollutants dropped by 63 percent. While carbon dioxide emissions increased 21 percent between 1980 and 2010, CO2 energy-related emissions are expected to decline to 5 percent below 2005 levels by 2040, according to the Energy Information Administration. That's largely thanks to better cars and more (cleaner, shale) natural gas energy.

The moral "justification" includes job creation. That hasn't worked in Spain, where a 2010 study found that for each green job financed by Spanish taxpayers, 2.2 real jobs were lost as an opportunity cost, and that 9 out of 10 green jobs created over the previous 10 years no longer existed. It hasn't worked in Germany, whose 80 percent renewable goal is proving so unaffordable that manufacturing industries --- and their jobs --- are leaving the country. Meanwhile, other countries are expanding their economies, using or extracting fossil fuels with far less regard for the environment. Europe is using the demonized coal exported from the U.S.

Imposing renewable energy upon Georgia's taxpayers raises the cost of living. The right thing to do is for government to allow the ingenuity of Americans to continue to create an affordable, reliable energy mix, not legislate on the basis of "morality" agendas of a vocal minority.

Benita M. Dodd is vice president of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, an independent think tank.

CAPTION: Benita M. Dodd is vice president of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, an independent think tank.

Credit: For the AJC

**DETAILS**

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Document 6 of 38

A UGA professor referees the fight over climate change

Galloway, Jim . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]23 Jan 2014: B.1.

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**ABSTRACT**

"A growing body of evidence suggests that the kind of extreme cold being experienced by much of the United States, as we speak, is a pattern we can see with increasing frequency as global warming continues," Holdren said --- after throwing in a few caveats. A great deal of on-the-ground data is being generated as well, which will need to be absorbed by your city, county and state governments. Because global warming is coming to your neighborhood.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

If you lose a couple of toes to frostbite this morning, all Marshall Shepherd asks is this: Don't blame the polar vortex.

The previous deep freeze could be attributed to that mystical force spiraling over the North Pole. The current one is just a traditional, run-of-the-mill cold snap.

If Shepherd seems a little touchy about it, you can't blame him. The University of Georgia professor has spent a good part of this month trying to rescue the phrase from a tug of war between Rush Limbaugh and the White House.

Putting out such fires --- protecting his science, in other words --- has been his job for the past year as president of the American Meteorological Society.

The latest incident began with the dry, cold blast that shattered pipes, killed plants and closed schools across metro Atlanta --- and much of the Eastern United States. Limbaugh pronounced the explanation for the weather to be part of the leftist, global-warming conspiracy.

"Do you know what the polar vortex is? Have you ever heard of it? Well, they just created it for this week," the conservative radio provocateur said that cold Monday. "Wackos are saying it's a great example of climate change."

Believe it or not, the White House listens to Limbaugh.

Two days later, John Holdren, President Barack Obama's science adviser, was featured in a YouTube video. "A growing body of evidence suggests that the kind of extreme cold being experienced by much of the United States, as we speak, is a pattern we can see with increasing frequency as global warming continues," Holdren said --- after throwing in a few caveats.

Enter Shepherd as referee. Limbaugh was dead wrong, the AMS president said. But the White House "was a bit heavy-handed as well," he said in an interview this week.

A bit of background: The polar vortex has had an official presence in the meteorological lexicon since 1959. Limbaugh's lack of exposure notwithstanding, references date further, to the 1940s, Shepherd said.

Think of a jet stream of cold air that circles above the North Pole (and the South Pole, too) like water around a drain. Every now and then, a piece of the vortex runs off track --- freezing the bejeezus out of everyone in its wake.

The question is why. The White House cited research that points to Earth's increasing temperature as a counterintuitive reason for that particular dose of arctic air.

Like most scientists, Shepherd believes the data overwhelmingly supports global warming --- which has now been rechristened as climate change. But in politics, 80 percent certainty is called a landslide. In science, it's a call for more data.

So Shepherd, unlike the Obama administration, wasn't quite ready to tie the hot topic of global warming to a rampaging polar vortex.

"I think it's actually quite plausible, but from my lens, it's a bit too early to completely anchor that as a conclusive reason," Shepherd said in a White House-sponsored conversation of experts on the Internet.

Shepherd's term as president of the American Meteorological Society ends next month with a five-day conference at the Georgia World Congress Center. He will leave his post as he entered it --- concerned about the gap between what science has proved and what the general public is prepared to believe.

"In this state, it's still a bit tricky," Shepherd said. Georgia doesn't compare to North Carolina, where state lawmakers forbade discussions of climate change. "But I still think there are some challenges," he added.

There is the general frustration when it comes to the acceptance of global warming. Shepherd's message for those who point to the continued existence of cold weather: Just because it's night, you can't argue that the sun has disappeared.

But there's more to his worry. A great deal of on-the-ground data is being generated as well, which will need to be absorbed by your city, county and state governments. Because global warming is coming to your neighborhood.

Shepherd said one of his doctoral students is about to publish a paper showing a substantial increase in extreme weather events around Atlanta that can be tied to climate change. The same study picks out counties that will be particularly vulnerable to drought in South Georgia.

Then there's the Georgia coast. I asked Shepherd whether residents there had accepted the fact that sea levels are rising --- another consequence of climate change. He referred me to Charles Hopkinson, another UGA professor and director of the Georgia Sea Grant College Program.

"We've spent the last five years working with communities to get them to rethink their vulnerability to flood and rising waters," Hopkinson said.

It is possible that the closer you live to big water, the more likely it is you believe in global warming. Hopkinson said his group is finishing up a study for Tybee Island, near Savannah, on the impact that rising sea levels will have on that community.

The community of St. Marys, farther south, is interested, too. All have felt the impact of skyrocketing costs for federally subsidized flood insurance. Make the right preparations and file the right paperwork, and everybody in the community gets a 5 percent break on flood insurance, Hopkinson said.

This is how ideological barriers are breached in America. We don't have to believe in science. We have insurance companies to do that for us.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 8 of 38

CLIMATE CHANGE: Ga. Tech study looks at heat risk: Dire predictions issued for Atlanta. Research shows greener footprint can ease deadly impact.

Torres, Kristina . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]07 July 2014: B.1.

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**ABSTRACT**

Using Atlanta, Philadelphia and Phoenix as his models, Stone found the projected increase in heat-related deaths would be cut by nearly 60 percent if cities adopted sustainability measures including planting more trees and adding green space, decreasing impervious surface areas such as parking lots, and using more reflective materials on roads and rooftops.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Heat-related deaths are likely to soar over the next 40 years due to climate warming, but new research has found that increase could be cut by more than half --- and virtually eliminated in Atlanta --- if major cities across the nation embraced a greener footprint.

The four-year study out of Georgia Tech is the first major national assessment of city residents' health, the impact of rising temperatures and what local officials could do to alleviate a growing crisis.

Heat already kills more people in the United States than hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes combined, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And science shows most major cities, including Atlanta, are already warming at two times the rate of the planet.

With the mercury likely to head higher in coming decades, the number of heat-related deaths in U.S. cities is projected to more than double by 2050, as the Tech report notes. A rise, too, is expected in heat-related illnesses including exhaustion and stroke, which can be fatal especially among vulnerable populations and can also add costs to the public health system.

Enter Tech planning professor Brian Stone Jr., whose research over the past few years has concentrated on climate warming and the concept of "urban heat islands" --- where a predominance of concrete and minimal amounts of vegetation exacerbate rising temperatures in cities.

The next obvious step, Stone said, was to look at what cities could do to counteract those conditions, especially the effects related to health and heat. "We're moving into an era of climate adaption," said Stone, the director of Tech's Urban Climate Lab. "But very few cities are studying how to manage rising temperatures."

It is an issue of interest for the CDC, which funded Stone's new study. "Climate change is very concerning from a public health standpoint," said Gino Marinucci, a strategy and policy adviser to the CDC's climate and health program at the National Center for Environmental Health.

The CDC has begun working directly with local communities about how to combat the effects of climate change, an effort helped by Stone's work. "Awareness is increasing, but we still have a long way to go," Marinucci said.

Using Atlanta, Philadelphia and Phoenix as his models, Stone found the projected increase in heat-related deaths would be cut by nearly 60 percent if cities adopted sustainability measures including planting more trees and adding green space, decreasing impervious surface areas such as parking lots, and using more reflective materials on roads and rooftops.

Better yet, in his backyard of Atlanta, he found these measures could effectively prevent any increase, not least because they have greater effect if done in increasing numbers. Atlanta, Stone said, includes such a large, sprawling metro region that suburbs taking similar action to modify heat's impact would have a bigger effect on the core city.

The findings, published online last month by the academic journal PLOS ONE, are likely to encourage local efforts. Suzanne Burnes, the executive director of the nonprofit Sustainable Atlanta, said her group's work, including Look Up Atlanta, can build on Stone's work, which she said could be applied to related sustainability issues such as water and air quality.

"It's a positive step in seeing how these solutions are interrelated," Burnes said.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 8 of 38

Peach Buzz: Sam Champion to emcee event on climate change

Brett, Jennifer . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]13 Sep 2014: D.2.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1561603362?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

In addition to lunch and a silent auction, the event will feature a discussion with a panel of experts, including Marshall Shepherd, director of the University of Georgia's Atmospheric Sciences Program and past president of the American Meteorological Society; George Luber, an epidemiologist and an associate director at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Heather McTeer Toney, regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency's southeast region; and Dr. Jennifer Shih, a physician and assistant professor in the Department of Medicine and the Department of Pediatrics at Emory University Hospital and School of Medicine.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Weather Channel anchor Sam Champion will emcee an upcoming luncheon concerning climate change.

The event, presented by Mothers and Others for Clean Air, a program of the American Lung Association in Georgia, is called Our Changing Climate Is Changing Our Weather: How We Can Protect Our Families. It will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 3 at the St. Regis hotel in Buckhead.

"Our changing climate is predicted to increase temperatures, which is likely to increase ozone pollution," the group said. "Ozone is a well-known trigger for asthma attacks and is linked to a greater risk of premature death in adults and diminished lung capacity. And we are likely to see more pollen and mold affecting children with allergies. We know, as mothers, parents and caregivers, that all of our children are especially vulnerable to air pollution and allergens."

In addition to lunch and a silent auction, the event will feature a discussion with a panel of experts, including Marshall Shepherd, director of the University of Georgia's Atmospheric Sciences Program and past president of the American Meteorological Society; George Luber, an epidemiologist and an associate director at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Heather McTeer Toney, regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency's southeast region; and Dr. Jennifer Shih, a physician and assistant professor in the Department of Medicine and the Department of Pediatrics at Emory University Hospital and School of Medicine.

Guests also will hear from 14-year-old Mikayla Wiseman, who will discuss how air pollution impacts her asthma.

The event is being spearheaded by philanthropists Laura Turner Seydel, Stephanie Blank, Lisa Rayner and Andrea Young.

Key sponsors include the Weather Channel and the American Lung Association in Georgia, along with Marianne Clark, Enid Draluck, Steve Eaton, Turia Gumpert, Donna Hyland, Su Longman, Clare and Nigel Richardson, and Nina Schwartz.

Table hosts include Wendy Babchin and Lyn Ross, Ann Cramer and Ann Curry, Maxine and Dottie Hyland, and Anne Mellinger-Birdsong and Dr. Yasmin Tyler-Hill.

Table-host sponsorships, which include 10 seats, start at $750. For more information, see mothersandothersforcleanair.org/event-enlightenment-luncheon or call 770-544-0508.

CAPTION: Sam Champion

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 9 of 38

YOUR HEALTH: Climate change can trigger asthma: Children could suffer more from effects of weather extremes.

Gracie Bonds Staples . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]24 Dec 2014: D.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1639832959?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

"Children should get to be children, and part of being a child is playing outside," Seydel said. Because children like NNaserri, a track and field enthusiast, spend more time outdoors and breathe in more air than adults, they are particularly susceptible to air pollution.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

It didn't take NNaserri Carew-Johnson long to learn how to discern the role the environment played in the length and severity of her asthma attacks or whether she had one at all.

From the day's pollen count to sudden changes in the seasons, she knew to be on high alert and keep her inhaler nearby.

"She learned very early on to police herself," said her mother, Vicki Carew of south Fulton County. "She knows what symptoms to look for and what the triggers are, including climate change."

That alone might put the 16-year-old far ahead of most of us.

While the majority of Americans think of melting snow caps and helpless polar bears sweltering under rising temperatures, climate change experts and a growing number of physicians are trying now to shift the conversation away from an environmental and national security issue to one of public health.

Here's why: Climate change will, absent other changes, amplify some of the existing health threats the nation now faces, said Dr. George Luber, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Climate and Health Program.

Children like NNaserri, the elderly, the sick, the poor, and some communities of color are especially vulnerable, he said.

"Some of these effects on health are already underway in the United States," Luber said. "Children, primarily because of physiological and developmental factors, will disproportionately suffer from the effects of heat waves, air pollution, infectious illness, and trauma resulting from extreme weather events."

According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, nearly 1 in 10 children in Georgia has asthma, and African- American children are twice as likely as white children to have asthma.

Asthma, which affects the lungs' airways, is considered the most chronic condition among children and the No. 1 cause of school absenteeism.

Dr. LeRoy Graham Jr., a pediatric pulmonologist and associate clinical professor at Morehouse School of Medicine, said the prevalence of asthma among Georgia children is now 12 percent, one of the highest in the nation.

"When I came in 1993, it was 6-7 percent," Graham said. "It's undeniable that people living in the urban core, concentrated around central transportation corridor are at even greater risk of being diagnosed with asthma and dying from the disease."

Not only is asthma more common in African-Americans, it is more common for all children living in congested urban environments, Graham said. And African-Americans as a group are two to four times more likely to be admitted to the hospital or emergency room for asthma and two times as likely to die of asthma, nationally.

Laura Seydel, who co-founded Mothers &Others for Clean Air with Stephanie Blank, has been working to improve the state's air quality since 2004.

"In the early 2000s, you couldn't turn on the news in the summer without hearing a forecast for a code red or a code purple day for air quality in Atlanta," Seydel said. "In 2014, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America ranked Atlanta 13th among the largest 100 U.S. metro areas as the most challenging place to live with asthma."

Seydel said medical studies confirmed what they already knew --- that air pollution increases the risk of underdeveloped lungs, diminished lung function and other respiratory symptoms in healthy children.

The women founded Mothers &Others for Clean Air, a program of the American Lung Association, to help raise awareness about the negative health impacts of air pollution and to create change.

"Children should get to be children, and part of being a child is playing outside," Seydel said.

Because children like NNaserri, a track and field enthusiast, spend more time outdoors and breathe in more air than adults, they are particularly susceptible to air pollution.

Seydel said that while overall air quality has improved, more needs to be done to ensure everyone can breathe cleaner air every day.

"We have learned that even lower levels of air pollution are harmful," she said. "The other threat comes from unregulated carbon emissions, which hurts us all because it contributes to global climate disruption, leading to rising temperatures, more air pollution, more frequent extreme weather events like we've seen here at home in the Southeast, and contributing to the spread of certain diseases. We are also likely to see more pollen and mold affecting children with allergies."

As she's gotten older, NNaserri has fewer asthma attacks, her mother said, but only because she has remained diligent in sniffing out her triggers, including milk protein and sudden changes in the weather.

"It's times like these, when we go from winter to summer in one week that always seems to impact her," said Vicki Carew.

Even though 97 percent of climate scientists have concluded that human-caused climate change is happening, she and others fear the issue isn't being taken seriously enough.

"Climate change or global climate disruption is a threat to public health --- it's not just about polar bears anymore," Seydel said.

MORE ABOUT ASTHMA

Symptoms of an attack

\* Coughing

\* Shortness of breath or trouble breathing

\* Wheezing

\* Tightness or pain in the chest

Triggers

\* Allergens (like pollen, mold, animal dander, and dust mites)

\* Exercise

\* Occupational hazards

\* Tobacco smoke

\* Air pollution

\* Airway infections

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 10 of 38

CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE: Views on climate prompt inquiry: Ariz. lawmaker seeks details on funding for Tech professor's work.

Malloy, Daniel . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]01 Mar 2015: B.1.

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**ABSTRACT**

Grijalva, the top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee, cited a New York Times story about a Harvard-Smithsonian researcher who did not disclose grants from utilities such as Atlanta's Southern Co. "They've all testified before Congress, and they've all been against the consensus about the warming of the planet," Grijalva told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution of the seven researchers he is investigating.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

WASHINGTON --- Georgia Tech climate researcher Judith Curry does not deny that humans contribute to global warming.

But the professor in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences has won praise from Republicans on Capitol Hill by questioning the prevailing verdict that humans are the primary cause of rising temperatures and doubting the need for drastic, economy-shifting action by policy-makers.

Now one key Democrat is investigating whether Curry's voice is being funded by interests that profit from the energy status quo, a notion Curry flatly rejects and suggests "intimidation and harassment" as a motivation for the inquiry.

U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., sent letters to the employers of Curry and six other climate researchers who have testified on Capitol Hill, asking for their funding sources and other information.

Grijalva, the top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee, cited a New York Times story about a Harvard-Smithsonian researcher who did not disclose grants from utilities such as Atlanta's Southern Co.

"They've all testified before Congress, and they've all been against the consensus about the warming of the planet," Grijalva told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution of the seven researchers he is investigating.

"Especially on Natural Resources, issues like climate change, you have to value the integrity of the science," he said.

Curry told the AJC that all her funding comes from government sources.

In a lengthy response on her blog, Curry pointed out that every time she testifies before Congress she includes information about her funding sources in written testimony, and she has never been asked about it before.

"I think that biases in testimony related to climate change are more likely to be ideological and political than related to funding," Curry wrote.

"So what is the point of asking for detailed financial information (including travel) from these academic researchers?" she asked. "Intimidation and harassment is certainly one reason that comes to mind."

U.S. Rep. Jody Hice, a Monroe Republican who also serves on the House Natural Resources Committee, questioned whether the inquiry was a valuable use of the committee's time and energy.

"It is a shame that because a scientist has reached a different conclusion on climate science than the liberal elite that the integrity of her research would be called into question," Hice said in a prepared statement.

Curry has never testified before the Natural Resources Committee, but she has appeared multiple times on Capitol Hill.

Last year, she told the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee: "Anthropogenic greenhouse warming (originating with human activity) is a theory whose basic mechanism is well understood, but whose magnitude is highly uncertain. Multiple lines of evidence presented in the recent (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) fifth assessment report suggest that the case for anthropogenic warming is now weaker than in 2007, when the fourth assessment report was published."

Also on the panel that day before the Democratic-controlled committee was Andrew Dessler of Texas A&M University.

"We know the climate is warming," Dessler testified. "We know that humans are now in the driver's seat of the climate system. We know that, over the next century, if nothing is done to rein in emissions, temperatures will likely increase enough to profoundly change the planet. I wish this weren't true, but it is what the science tells us."

The story of Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics researcher Wei-Hock Soon prompted Grijalva's inquiry. The New York Times found that Soon accepted $1.2 million from the fossil fuel industry in the past 10 years and often did not disclose the funding.

Soon has said that global warming can be explained by variations in the sun's energy. The Times, via documents unearthed by the environmental group Greenpeace, found that $409,000 of Soon's funding came from Southern Company Services, a subsidiary of the Atlanta-based utility giant. Southern has been one of the most aggressive and active forces in Washington opposing the Obama administration's regulations on carbon emissions.

In his letter to Georgia Tech President G.P. Peterson, Grijalva wrote: "My colleagues and I cannot perform our duties if research and testimony provided to us is influenced by undisclosed financial relationships."

Among other requests, Grijalva asked for Georgia Tech's policy on financial disclosure, Curry's disclosure forms, Curry's government testimony, any correspondence related to preparing her testimony, a detailed description of Curry's external funding and her pay since 2007.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 11 of 38

Climate change has good, bad sides

Kulers, Gil . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]11 June 2015: F.1.

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**ABSTRACT**

In the very same article, JoAnna Wendel, reporting on the 2015 Joint Assembly of U.S. and Canadian geoscientist organizations in Montreal, Quebec, writes: "Bottom line: 'In terms of climate conditions, we can expect increased wine-making potential' in the southern regions of Quebec, Roy said at the press conference.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

A winemaker walks into a barbershop and sits in the barber's chair. The barber notices the winemaker looks sad and asks, "Andre, why are you looking so glum?"

Andre replies, "Due to climate change, the temperatures are rising in Burgundy, France. That's created an unprecedented streak of great vintages, about a decade's worth, in fact."

"That's good," says the barber.

"No, that's bad. The popularity of Burgundy has swelled worldwide demand to such an extent that prices for many these wines have skyrocketed beyond what most wine lovers can afford."

"That's bad."

"No, that's good. Burgundy does make very special wines from chardonnay and pinot noir grapes, but there are dozens of other regions around the world that also make great wines from chardonnay and pinot noir. I've recently explored the Willamette Valley in Oregon and discovered a burgeoning trend of high-quality chardonnay wines to go along with their thriving pinot noir industry. Places like Patagonia in Argentina and South Island in New Zealand are great place for folks priced out of Burgundy wines to look for delicious chardonnays and pinot noirs."

"Oh, that's good."

"No, that's bad. Climate change is creating these opportunities for some wine regions at the expense of others. Here, let me read you a little bit from an article that my friend, Joel Kostka, sent me from the May 7 edition of EOS, the earth and space science journal of the American Geophysical Union. Dr. Kostka is a climate researcher and microbiologist down at Georgia Tech. I just happen to have the article right here.

"It says: Past research has shown that under a business-as-usual greenhouse gas emissions scenario, places like Australia, Italy, Spain, France and South Africa would see a sharp decrease in grape-growing productivity --- anywhere from 25 percent to 73 percent, depending on the region. Some wineries are already moving their production toward the poles, where the heat can be less unrelenting. Warmer weather may also affect the taste and alcohol content of wine because temperature-induced chemical processes that occur within growing grapes could make them less desirable to consumers."

"Oh my, that's bad."

"No, that's good. In the very same article, JoAnna Wendel, reporting on the 2015 Joint Assembly of U.S. and Canadian geoscientist organizations in Montreal, Quebec, writes:

"Bottom line: 'In terms of climate conditions, we can expect increased wine-making potential' in the southern regions of Quebec, Roy said at the press conference. These regions may be able to grow more varieties of grapes, such as merlot, pinot noir and chardonnay, which could make these future wineries' products more desirable to consumers." Wendel quoted Philippe Roy, lead researcher and climate scenarios specialist at the Ouranos Consortium on Regional Climatology and Adaptation to Climate Change."

"Hey, that's good."

"No, that's bad. It's just another straw on the camel's back of evidence that climate change is real with very real consequences. In his study, that Roy fellow pointed out the unpredictable nature of climate change could include more vine-destroying hail storms and increased humidity levels that can cause disease to flourish in the vineyards. Only a few outcomes, like more and better wines from Canada, are good."

"That's bad."

"Yes. That's bad."

(With apologies to the late Archie Campbell)

Gil Kulers is a sommelier and maitre d' for an Atlanta country club. You can reach him at gil.kulers@winekulers.com.

CAPTION: Vineyards, like this one in Sainte-Petronille, Quebec, may grow riper, higher quality grapes, but may also see more devastating hail storms and disease because of climate change. CONTRIBUTED BY JAMES BAILEY

Credit: For the AJC

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Document 13 of 38

Ga. needs to slash emissions by 25%: 15-year plan part of Obama climate change strategy.

Malloy, Daniel; Chapman, Dan . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]04 Aug 2015: A.1.

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**ABSTRACT**

[...]Georgia Power's massive investment in nuclear energy at Plant Vogtle near Augusta will help the state meet the requirements. Critics argue that restricting power generation harms the economy, that renewable energy is not reliable enough and that Obama's efforts will have little practical effect on climate change --- particularly with China surpassing the U.S. as the world's top emitter.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

CORRECTION: A chart that appeared in Tuesday's paper on Page A4 with a story about carbon emissions rules contained erroneous information. Here is the chart with updated data: LEADING GENERATING PLANTS Generating capacity is expressed in kilowatts. Bowen 3.16 million Coal Wansley 925,500 Coal Scherer 751,000 Coal Hammond 840,000 Coal McDonough 2.52 million Natural gas McIntosh 1.32. million Natural gas Yates 700,000 Natural gas Vogtle 1.10 million Nuclear Hatch 900,000 Nuclear SOURCE: GEORGIA POWER

Georgia must cut carbon emissions from its power plants by one-quarter over the next 15 years under new Obama administration rules announced Monday in the president's most forceful push yet to combat a warming Earth.

The regulations were met with immediate criticism, the threat of lawsuits and talk of higher electric rates.

While some states could refuse to implement the rule, Gov. Nathan Deal said he had directed the state Environmental Protection Division "to develop the best approach to this rule for Georgia."

After Georgia officials beseeched the Environmental Protection Agency, the state got more breathing room under the standards that were first proposed more than a year ago. As a result, Georgia Power's massive investment in nuclear energy at Plant Vogtle near Augusta will help the state meet the requirements.

Georgia Public Service Commissioner Chuck Eaton said he "appreciated" the EPA's shifts, but he still thinks the agency is overstepping its bounds and electric rates will go up.

"Some of these folks in Washington are trying to put the word out there that somehow this is going to decrease electric rates, which is really just a bunch of phooey," said Eaton, a Republican.

Jennette Gayer, the director of Environment Georgia, said the plan is feasible and state leaders should embrace it.

"If you look at our wind resources, our solar resources and the potential for energy efficiency, we could knock this thing out of the park," Gayer said.

At the White House, President Barack Obama dismissed "scaremongering" by the fossil fuel industry, business groups and Republicans. He said the plan is the best chance for the U.S. to show leadership, ahead of a possible United Nations climate agreement to be negotiated by mid-December.

He called the Clean Power Plan "the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against global climate change."

Overall, EPA estimates the plan will result in a 32 percent reduction in carbon emissions from 2005 levels. The mandates phase in from 2022 to 2030, and states are to come up with their own strategy for meeting the targets. Georgia's target --- a reduction of 16 million tons of carbon from 2012 levels --- is in the middle range of states, as the state already uses a fairly diverse mix of electricity.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., whose state is almost completely dependent on coal-generated power, has urged states to ignore the rule. Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, said the federal government would impose its own plan on states that fail to produce one, but "we're quite a long time away from that event."

More than a dozen states sued the EPA based on the proposed rule, but Georgia was not among them. Now that the plan is final, Georgia is expected to challenge it in court.

For a president who said during his first campaign that future generations will look back and say "this was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal," Obama's climate policy has had its ups and downs.

Congress, even under Democratic control, stymied Obama's first-term plans for a cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions. So Obama has pushed the limits of EPA's powers under the Clean Air Act to regulate power plants and the heat-trapping gases scientists say threaten the planet's future. He has been met with resistance at every turn.

Critics argue that restricting power generation harms the economy, that renewable energy is not reliable enough and that Obama's efforts will have little practical effect on climate change --- particularly with China surpassing the U.S. as the world's top emitter.

The White House and environmental groups paint a dirty picture of Georgia's carbon-damaged environment. Asthma, for example, harms 8 percent of adult Georgians and 11 percent of its children, according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nearly 60 million metric tons of carbon pollution were emitted into the atmosphere by Georgia power plants in 2013. That's equivalent to the amount of pollution caused annually by 12 million cars.

Georgia politicians have done little to mitigate climate change. Deal, unlike his predecessor, has no energy strategy. A 2006 carbon registry proposal, intended to inventory the state's greenhouse gases, is dead.

Atlanta corporate bigwigs Coca-Cola and UPS joined Fortune 500 companies across the country last week in support of Obama's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest in clean energy. The dozen or so companies pledged to spend $140 billion to reduce carbon emissions and create 1.6 gigawatts of new clean energy projects.

But Southern Company, the parent company of Georgia Power, has repeatedly battled with the Obama administration on its power plant regulations.

"The implications of the overreaching rules directly impact national energy policy and impede states' authority to act in the best interests of customers," Georgia Power spokesman Jacob Hawkins said.

Hawkins pointed to moves Georgia Power has taken to reduce emissions.

Coal accounts for 41 percent of Georgia Power's energy portfolio, down from 62 percent in 2011. The state's largest electricity supplier has shuttered coal-burning plants and modernized others to increase efficiency. Natural gas --- plentiful, cheap and cleaner than coal --- is increasingly added to Georgia's energy mix.

And more reductions are on the way. Georgia Power plans to eliminate 15 coal- and oil-fired units and is spending $6 billion to retrofit coal plants to reduce CO2, sulfur dioxide and mercury.

The environmental construction program comes as the company has also begun increasing, albeit slowly, its renewable energy portfolio, including solar power. The White House credits Georgia with a 55 percent increase in renewable energy since 2008.

Georgia Power's power sources

Coal 41% Oil and gas 35%

Nuclear 22% Hydro 2%

Coming Sunday

Georgia officials acknowledge the reality of climate change yet have done little to combat the threat. Coastal communities, however, are preparing for a future of warmer temperatures, higher sea levels and the possibility of large-scale damage.

Decline of coal

Alpha Natural Resources Inc., one of the country's biggest coal producers and a major Southeastern U.S. operator, became the latest in a string of coal companies to seek bankruptcy protection amid a shift brought on by cheap natural gas prices and pollution regulations. Full story, A7

Leading generating plants

Generating capacity is expressed in kilowatts.

Bowen 3.16 million Coal

Branch 1.22 million Coal

McDonough 2.52 million Oil, gas

McIntosh 1.32 million Oil gas

Yates 1.25 million Coal

Vogtle 1.10 million Nuclear

Wansley 925,500 Coal

Hatch 900,000 Nuclear

Scherer 751,000 Coal

Bowen, in Cartersville, is the biggest generator in Georgia Power's system and the ninth-largest in the nation. In part because of its size, it's also among the worst carbon polluters in America. Georgia Power's website says Plant Bowen employs 400 people, so closing the plant would have a sizable economic impact on Bartow County.

Source: Georgia Power data from 2014. Compiled by Richard Halicks.

Credit: STAFF

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AJC SPECIAL REPORT: Alarm, skepticism greet climate change warning: Rising seas, dying marshes pose threat to Georgia's coastal areas.

Chapman, Dan; Bluestein, Greg . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]09 Aug 2015: A.1.

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**ABSTRACT**

Some steps underway President Barack Obama last week unveiled a major climate-change plan that would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by one-third by 2030. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts that a 3-foot rise in sea level would inundate St. Marys' historic district with its majestic oaks, white picket fences and 1808 Presbyterian church with an iron bell cast by Paul Revere.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

ST. MARYS --- Georgia's wildlife agency minced no words recently in declaring climate change "a threat inherent with uncertainty," perhaps the state's starkest warning ever on a politically sensitive subject dismissed by many elected officials.

Here, though, on Georgia's 100-mile-long coast, most everybody takes seriously rising seas and dying marshes caused by drastic changes in the Earth's climate. They live already with the proof: greater tidal surges; flooded roads; and ages-old trees killed by salt water creeping further inland.

If the dire predictions of state, federal and university scientists prove true, then billions of dollars of property in Brunswick, Darien, St. Marys and Savannah and on the islands of St. Simons, Sea and Tybee will be under water within a century.

Much of the coast's ecologically critical salt marsh will die off. Upland streams will turn brackish. Sparrows and shrimp will disappear if, as predicted, the Atlantic Ocean rises an additional 3 feet by 2110.

"No matter if you believe climate change is natural or man-made, sea levels are rising and it behooves us to know how to plan and respond," said Clark Alexander, the director of the Applied Coastal Research Laboratory on Skidaway Island. "If we don't start preparing now, it will become a bigger problem later."

Georgia has no grand plan to combat climate change or its effects. State leaders ignore, sidestep or downplay climate-change warnings. Most remain unconvinced of man's role in Earth's warming.

Brian Robinson, a spokesman for Gov. Nathan Deal, wouldn't answer questions about the governor's views on climate change. U.S. Sen. David Perdue, a Republican who lives on Sea Island, a barrier island threatened by rising seas, said "the scientific community is not in total agreement about whether mankind has been a contributing factor."

"That's why we must find an appropriate balance between responsibly protecting the environment and continuing to develop our abundance of natural resources in order to grow the economy and improve people's quality of life," he added in a statement.

David Stooksbury, the former state climatologist, said the unwillingness of leaders to address climate change is dangerous.

"I don't think that most of our elected officials understand the long-term seriousness of what climate change will do to the agricultural economy, public health and the environment," he said. "It will be much cheaper and better for the state if we follow a well-developed plan starting now rather than waiting until we must respond."

Some steps underway

President Barack Obama last week unveiled a major climate-change plan that would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by one-third by 2030. His edict, which met with widespread scorn from many conservatives and others who discount climate change, follows repeated scientific warnings that the Earth is getting hotter. Some states are suing to block the White House ruling; Georgia has yet to take action.

Last year was the warmest since 1880, according to NASA, and the 10 hottest years recorded (with one exception, 1998) have all occurred since 2000. James Hansen, NASA's former lead climate scientist, and 16 co-authors reported last month that glaciers in Greenland and Antarctica will melt 10 times faster than previously estimated. If true, sea levels are projected to rise at least 10 feet within 50 years.

A hotter planet melts icebergs and causes ocean water to warm and expand, fueling the rise of the world's seas and making coastal communities nervous. St. Marys, in Georgia's southeastern corner and surrounded by rivers, creeks and marsh, is precariously perched 10 feet above sea level.

"No one really knows the projected impact of sea rise," said John Holman, the city's manager. "Everyone is trying to understand it. It needs more study. For us, it's an important issue."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts that a 3-foot rise in sea level would inundate St. Marys' historic district with its majestic oaks, white picket fences and 1808 Presbyterian church with an iron bell cast by Paul Revere.

Two years ago, the feds put up most of the cost of a $160,000 study intended to alert St. Marys to the potential dangers of climate change. A report, which will detail the costs associated with protecting the city from surging seas, is expected any day.

St. Marys isn't waiting. The City Council voted three years ago to raise the height of first floors in buildings constructed in flood plains. It's considering raising walkways at new municipal buildings to allow water to seep into the ground and not pool or flood. Officials are also weighing an enterprise fund just for stormwater projects. And the city's 2030 strategic plan will likely emphasize rising seas.

"Sea-level rise will be costly, if the projections are accurate, for the city to prepare for," Holman said. "But, by working in advance, we'll get a head start. We'll take precautionary measures."

He added, "I believe we're in better shape than Tybee Island."

As much as two-thirds of the popular beach town near Savannah would disappear by 2110 if NOAA's sea-level predictions hold true.

"It's good to see the state agency charged with protecting Georgia's environment catching up with the military in factoring climate change into long-range plans," said Paul Wolff, a Tybee councilman. "As a resident of a community on the front lines of sea-level rise, I believe every level of government needs to be proactive in reducing, planning for and adapting to the effects of a changing climate."

Last month the wildlife resources division of the Department of Natural Resources issued its State Wildlife Action Plan, or SWAP, which states unequivocally that "climate change presents unprecedented challenges." The federal government requires states to submit a SWAP every 10 years or risk losing conservation money for at-risk fish and wildlife. Georgia received $1.2 million the past fiscal year.

"Climate change is impacting species and habitats, and these effects are projected to increase substantially over time," the SWAP says. "These climate-driven changes will profoundly affect our ability to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats."

The first SWAP, issued in 2005, mentioned climate change and global warming, but it said "local effects are often difficult to quantify." Then-Gov. Sonny Perdue followed up a year later with a State Energy Strategy, which stated that "strong scientific evidence exists that increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHG) are affecting Earth's climate." The 138-page report, with three pages devoted to climate change, listed potential dangers and recommended that the state inventory carbon dioxide emissions.

South viewed at risk

A tidal gauge off Fort Pulaski near Tybee has tracked the slow but steady rise --- 11 inches over the past 80 years --- of the Atlantic Ocean. The sea began rising dramatically in the 1990s. Climate scientists now predict an additional 40-inch surge by 2110.

"Every storm that comes ashore will intrude further inland and will become more dangerous, and we will have more days of nuisance flooding," said Alexander of the University of Georgia's Skidaway Institute below Savannah, where scientists study marine and environmental sciences.

Georgia Tech researchers estimate that 30 percent, or 419 square miles, of Chatham, Liberty and McIntosh counties will be under water by 2110 if the sea keeps rising at its current rate. Georgia's barrier islands will be swamped, and some coastal towns will experience billions of dollars of damage to municipal infrastructure --- road, water and sewer --- and private property.

Man, though, can adapt. The natural world may take it on the chin as salt water pushes further inland into fresh water. Two-thirds of Georgia's saltwater marsh system --- an ecologically critical habitat for fish and wildlife --- could disappear.

"You have a whole host of species dependent on that salt marsh environment," said Jason Lee, a DNR coastal expert who helped write the SWAP's 11-page section on climate change. "The food web would collapse. Marsh birds would have to seek habitat elsewhere. Shrimp and crabs would be affected. Sea turtles would also be a primary concern, (as) would several shorebirds that nest and forage along the coast. You could see significant ecosystem impacts."

Hotter weather, droughts and more frequent and intense downpours will make an impact on the natural environment statewide, the SWAP reports, and harm North Georgia habitats for mountain brook trout and patch-nosed salamanders. Rising temperatures --- some estimates predict an 8- to 20-degree increase in future Julys --- would allow invasive species such as kudzu, gypsy moths and feral hogs to spread further north.

"It's a really good sign that the state of Georgia is recognizing and planning for the impact of climate change," said Jennette Gayer, the director of Environment Georgia. "This is a great first step, and I hope to see more forward-thinking reports like this to really plan for the future."

Other state agencies and universities have also sounded the climate-change alarm. The website for the DNR's coastal resources division says that "the Earth's changing climate is one of coastal Georgia's greatest environmental challenges." A 2012 Georgia Ports Authority presentation listed the impact of rising seas on the docks and terminals.

UGA's agriculture extension agency educates farmers about the risks of climate change. The university's Sea Grant program steers federal and state money to coastal communities, including Tybee and St. Marys, preparing for rising seas, climate change and other threats.

The Georgia Initiative for Climate and Society, a network of UGA scientists, including Marshall Shepherd, seeks to better understand the threats posed by a warming climate. Shepherd, who runs the university's Atmospheric Sciences Program, says the South is particularly vulnerable to climate change.

All the warnings, though, have failed to translate into concerted and meaningful action by Georgia leaders.

Many skeptics among leadership

The governor hasn't crafted an energy strategy as his predecessor did. The 2006 carbon registry proposal is dead. State senators passed a resolution in 2012 urging Congress to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from further regulating greenhouse gases without more research on carbon dioxide's impact on climate change.

States, though, must take climate change seriously or risk losing hundreds of millions of federal dollars.

Georgia is one of nine states that doesn't mention climate change in federally required disaster mitigation plans. It has until 2019 to comply. But, starting next year, the Federal Emergency Management Agency will only give money to states with plans that address climate change. Through 2012, according to the Center for Climate Change Law, Georgia had received about $180 million in FEMA grants to help buy land vulnerable to flooding as well as other prevention measures.

The SWAP recommends a slew of research and conservation measures to combat climate change over the next decade. Sea turtles, saltmarsh sparrows, Nelson's sparrows and right whales should be further monitored and protected.

Butterfly and migratory bird habitats within utility corridors should be upgraded. The northern march of kudzu and gypsy moths should be halted. Large swaths of the Altamaha River corridor, and other vulnerable waterways, should be joined and protected to allow unfettered migration of animals. Streams and wetlands should be further buffered.

It's questionable, though, whether state and federal officials will put up the money to help a warming planet.

"By not having a comprehensive climate-change plan and following it, Georgians, in the long run, will be spending more to adapt," said Stooksbury, the state's former climatologist who was fired by Deal in 2011. "I am not very hopeful that these changes will be made until is it painfully obvious."

Deal, like many Georgia politicians, takes a half-pregnant position on climate change. Most don't deny that the climate is changing, yet they question whether the problem is man-made. Deal says it's a federal, not state, issue. Yet, he passed on an opportunity in September to slam the EPA over efforts to curb power plant emissions.

The chairmen of the state House and Senate committees that craft environmental and energy policies blame nature, not man, for the projected surge in temperatures and sea levels.

"We should understand that Mother Nature is the lead power in climate change," said state Sen. Ross Tolleson, the chairman of the Natural Resources and Environment Committee.

State Rep. Don Parsons, the chairman of the House Energy Committee and a Marietta Republican, said "there's always a point when you have to ask about what doing more will cost the state of Georgia."

Some coastal lawmakers also question the urgency to do something about climate change.

"I, for one, don't see it as being a serious problem," said Barry Brown, a Tybee city councilman. "Sometimes these things just get brought up to get people in a panic to buy something. Whether or not they have the facts to back it up, I haven't seen any."

Georgia hasn't gone as far as neighboring states in dismissing climate change. Florida Gov. Rick Scott reportedly ordered government officials in March not to use the term in reports or press releases. In 2012, the North Carolina Legislature imposed a four-year moratorium on state rules, plans or policies based on expected changes in sea level.

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson, like Perdue, cites "mixed scientific evidence" about the origins of Earth's warming. While both senators acknowledged in January that "climate change is not a hoax," they also opposed legislation linking changing temperatures to human activity. Each takes a conservative, pro-business position that carbon dioxide regulations will hamper business.

"We all care about the environment," Isakson said on the floor of the Senate in March. "We just don't all subscribe to the same theory about what happens."

Wolff, the Tybee councilman and environmentalist, says politicians in Washington and Atlanta need to embrace the dangers of climate change, regardless of who's at fault, before it's too late.

"It's unfortunate that they don't seem to understand the urgency we're facing on the coast," he said. "They should be doing a lot more to (fight) climate change. The science is irrefutable. It isn't hypothetical to us. It's real life."

Credit: STAFF

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Document 14 of 38

TYBEE ISLAND: Hoping to avoid 'a world of hurt': Tybee takes steps to cope with impact of climate change.

Chapman, Dan . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]09 Aug 2015: A.15.

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**ABSTRACT**

A tidal gauge just off Tybee's western edge shows that the Atlantic Ocean here has risen, on average, an inch every decade since 1935. Since the 1990s, though, the degree of sea-level rise has tripled, says Clark Alexander, the director of the nearby Skidaway Institute of Oceanography.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

TYBEE ISLAND --- There wasn't supposed to be any water, let alone waves lapping U.S. 80 as Paul Wolff tooled back from Savannah on a spring evening five years ago. The Chevy Metro rolled down the eastern side of the Bull River bridge and smack-dab into an unnaturally high tide pushed leeward by strong southeasterly winds.

"The water was coming right over the marsh. It was scary," said Wolff, a Tybee Island councilman. "I just plowed right through it."

He learned two costly lessons that night. One, the car's undercarriage had to be replaced. Two, high tides are dangerous, occur with greater frequency and will cost coastal Tybee Island tens of millions of dollars to prepare for.

U.S. 80 is the only road on and off Tybee Island and it floods, in spots, about a half-dozen times a year, usually during spring high, or "king," tides. By 2060, according to Georgia scientists, the road is expected to flood 50 times a year due to climate change and its impact on sea levels.

Tybee, largely at the urging of Wolff, takes climate change more seriously than any other Georgia community. With good reason. Two-thirds of the island could be under water within a century if current predictions of sea-level rise prove true, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

A tidal gauge just off Tybee's western edge shows that the Atlantic Ocean here has risen, on average, an inch every decade since 1935. Since the 1990s, though, the degree of sea-level rise has tripled, says Clark Alexander, the director of the nearby Skidaway Institute of Oceanography.

An additional 3 feet of water, as projected, would submerge Tybee's southwestern corner and hundreds of homes built there upon river bottom reclaimed in the 1930s for real estate development.

"Tybee," Alexander said, "would be in a world of hurt."

In 2012, the feds put up $100,000 for a Community Climate Adaptation Initiative to study the impact of sea-level rise on Tybee over the next 50 years. The report details the most endangered parts of the island and which infrastructure --- roads, wells, storm water drains --- should be climate-proofed.

A flooded U.S. 80 isn't the only precursor of what's in store for the island's 3,000 year-round residents. High tides and heavy rains create ponds of water that too slowly disappear. Flooding is exacerbated by tidewater clogging the storm drains.

"We are facing imminent challenges from rising sea levels due to climate change," said Wolff, 64, who runs a bed-and-breakfast, draws energy from rooftop solar panels and bikes everywhere on the island. "The good news is it's coming slowly enough. We hope we'll have time to adapt."

The city is planning for a 14- to 20-inch sea-level rise by 2060. It has already mandated that new driveways be permeable to allow rainwater to seep into the ground. It is identifying properties at risk of flooding. It will study the financial feasibility of elevating houses out of the flood plain, which, eventually, could result in lower flood insurance premiums.

The city spent $60,000 on two tide gates to prevent seawater from clogging storm drains during heavy rains. A "living shoreline," created with mud and oyster shells, will be built around the island's southwestern edge. The electronics controlling Tybee's three water wells will be flood-proofed at a cost of $200,000 each.

Federal and state treasuries covered most of a recent $11 million beach renourishment plan. State transportation officials are considering a $100 million upgrade to flood-proof U.S. 80.

"If we don't want to be treading water or having our grandchildren growing gills, we definitely need to spend this money now instead of putting it off," Wolff said as distant thunder presaged a storm. "The longer we procrastinate, the more expensive it will be."

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 15 of 38

Georgia's climate of change

Bookman, StaffJay . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]09 Aug 2015: A.18.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1702249363?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Back in the early to mid-'90s, for example, the federal government classified metro Atlanta as a serious non-attainment area for air pollution, requiring the region to set a strict schedule for air-quality improvement.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Under the new climate-change plan released by the Obama administration, Georgia will be required to reduce carbon emissions from its power plants by 25 percent over the next 15 years, a considerably more modest target than state leaders had feared.

Nonetheless, the reaction has been predictable: Such a reduction can't be accomplished, or if it can be done, it will come at enormous cost to electricity customers and the economy. As U.S. Sen. David Perdue put it, "The damaging effects of this hostile executive action will drive up energy prices for Georgia families and businesses, while the ripple effect throughout our economy will increase costs of basic necessities for those already struggling to make ends meet."

Relax. We've been through this before. Back in the early to mid-'90s, for example, the federal government classified metro Atlanta as a serious non-attainment area for air pollution, requiring the region to set a strict schedule for air-quality improvement. The reaction was much as you see today.

Georgia Power complained that it would send electricity rates soaring. The new standards were supposed to be the "death knell" of economic development in the region, and the degree of air-quality improvement required was claimed by some to be all but impossible.

Then-Gov. Zell Miller wrote an angry letter of protest to the EPA, warning of "enormous economic and jobs consequences." For a short period, highway projects were canceled and the region was stripped of federal transportation money until it complied and committed to an improvement plan. (The state's auto emissions-inspection program is the most visible outcome of that plan.)

Today, despite the naysayers, the air in metro Atlanta is demonstrably clearer than it was two decades ago. The eye-stinging, throat-burning ozone that routinely accumulated on hot summer days is now a rare occurrence. It's safer for human beings to play outside, work outside. It is safer to simply breathe. What supposedly couldn't be done --- or couldn't be done without turning metro Atlanta into a economic wasteland --- has in fact been largely accomplished at relatively low cost, although continued improvement is still necessary.

In many ways, complying with the Clean Power Plan should be even easier, because many of the required changes are already underway. Georgia is already getting credit for taking coal-fired generation out of service and replacing it with nuclear power. And just a few years ago, Georgia Power steadfastly dismissed solar power as a possible option in Georgia, saying it was too expensive and the state didn't get enough sunshine; today it says that "the future of solar is bright in Georgia."

Judging from his own measured response, Gov. Nathan Deal seems to accept that reality. Rather than grandstand, Deal has instructed state officials to find the best possible way to meet the new standards. As a report last month by researchers at Georgia Tech concluded, a strategy of renewable energy and energy efficiency here in the South would not only bring us into compliance but produce "substantial collateral benefits including lower electricity bills across all customer classes, greater GDP growth, and significant reductions" in air pollution.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Electric rates; Electric utilities; Outdoor air quality; Industrial plant emissions; Nuclear power plants |
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Document 16 of 38

RENEWABLE ENERGY: Southern Co. inks second solar deal in a week: Atlanta-based utility buys 300-megawatt California solar farm.

Chapman, Dan . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]03 Sep 2015: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1709128257?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Earlier this week, Southern Power, a subsidiary of what will become the nation's second largest utility based on customers served, announced the purchase of a controlling interest in Recurrent Energy's 200-megawatt Tranquillity Solar Facility in Fresno County, California.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Atlanta-based Southern Company, for the second time this week, said Wednesday it is buying a controlling interest in a California solar farm.

The acquisition of the 300-megawatt Desert Stateline Facility, from First Solar Inc., marks the utility's largest push into solar. It's also another step in Southern Co.'s expanding renewable energy portfolio.

The company has 20 solar, wind or biomass projects across the country. More than 3,300 megawatts of renewable energy projects have been added or announced since 2012, though solar remains a small part of the overall mix.

The utility giant is moving away from coal-generated electricity. Last week Southern said it would buy AGL Resources, an Atlanta gas pipeline company, for $12 billion in cash and debt.

Southern Co.'s energy mix breaks down like this: 45 percent generated by natural gas; 35 percent by coal; 16 percent by nuclear; and 4 percent by hydro and renewables.

Earlier this week, Southern Power, a subsidiary of what will become the nation's second largest utility based on customers served, announced the purchase of a controlling interest in Recurrent Energy's 200-megawatt Tranquillity Solar Facility in Fresno County, California.

"We are accelerating the development of solar as an important component of a diverse fuel mix now and in the future," Southern Co. CEO Thomas Fanning said in a statement about the deal announced Wednesday.

Construction of the 1,685-acre Stateline solar farm in San Bernardino County began last October. It is Southern Power's seventh California acquisition. Once on-line, Stateline could generate enough electricity for nearly 100,000 homes. It should be fully operational in late 2016. The energy will be sold to Southern California Edison.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Solar energy; Renewable resources; Alternative energy |
| --- | --- |

| **Location:** | California |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: Southern Co; NAICS: 221112, 221122 |
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| **Publication title:** | The Atlanta Journal - Constitution; Atlanta, Ga. |
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Document 17 of 38

FROM THE RIGHT: A GOP candidate's primer of climate change answers

Merrill Matthews He is a resident scholar with the right-leaning Institute for Policy Innovation in Dallas; writes weekly at Rare.us. . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]08 Sep 2015: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1716196423?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

[...]some climate scientists are predicting a multiyear cool-down, a mini-ice age, within the next decade or so that could raise further questions about the temperature trend.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

President Barack Obama used his recent trip to Alaska -- and about every other opportunity he's gotten -- to proclaim that climate change is the most important issue of our time. "We're here today to discuss the challenge that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other -- that's the urgent and growing threat of a changing climate," he said.

While not all environmental scientists agree with the president, most of the mainstream media emphatically do. And they are the ones who will be grilling Republican candidates -- and not just the presidential candidates.

That means GOP office-seekers need to be informed about climate change matters and ready with clear, evidence-backed answers. What are some of the key issues?

Is the earth warming? Well, it certainly has warmed since what was known as the Little Ice Age -- a cold period that lasted from about 1550 to 1850. There has been a gradual increase since about 1910, with a strong uptick between the mid-1970s and about 1997. Since then, global temperatures have been relatively flat.

But the flattening came after a significant warming trend. That means even a slight temperature increase in a given year allows the media to claim it is the warmest year on record, even if the change is within the margin of error.

While we don't know whether the warming trend will resume in the near future, we do know that almost all the global warming proponents never saw the flattening coming. They incorrectly predicted much warmer temperatures that have not occurred.

And now some climate scientists are predicting a multiyear cool-down, a mini-ice age, within the next decade or so that could raise further questions about the temperature trend.

Is Arctic ice melting? While in Alaska, the president visited Exit Glacier, which has been shrinking for decades. Yes, Arctic ice has been gradually declining -- but Antarctic ice has been growing.

We know the rise-and-fall process has been going on naturally for millennia, without any help from mankind. What we don't know -- though many will say we do -- is whether the recent temperature increase is part of the natural variation that occurs about every 100,000 years or is caused by human activity.

Are humans to blame? Carbon dioxide has been increasing, and most climate scientists believe man is playing a role in that increase. But is carbon dioxide causing the warming?

As the Environmental Protection Agency shows, for the past 400,000 years, temperature levels and carbon dioxide levels have followed virtually identical tracks.

Can the U.S. solve the problem? Journalists will ask what Republican candidates intend to do about climate change.

The U.S. is responsible for about 14.5 percent of world carbon emissions, with China at 23.5 percent. When you're only 14.5 percent of the total, you have to make huge carbon reductions just to decrease total emissions by a fraction of a percent.

The good news, at least for conservative candidates, is that the public ranks cutting carbon emissions very low among their priorities for the upcoming election.

Even so, the environment, and specifically climate change, is one of the media's biggest issues, and they are likely to make it very hot for Republican candidates who don't know the facts or give them politically incorrect answers.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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| **Database:** | US Newsstream |
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Document 18 of 38

Ga. farmers harvest rays as solar grows: Renewable energy catches on in state. Industry includes 3,000 workers and 200 companies.

Chapman, Dan . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]04 Oct 2015: D.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1718751554?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Oglethorpe --- Construction of Stagecoach Road lopped off two smallish tracts from Donald Chase's corn and peanut farm, rendering the land all but useless. [...]one day, Chase had a bright idea. [...]the tax credit and Georgia Power project did exactly what they were supposed to do: kick start a market and generate economies of scale," said Jennette Gayer, director of the nonprofit Environment Georgia.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Oglethorpe --- Construction of Stagecoach Road lopped off two smallish tracts from Donald Chase's corn and peanut farm, rendering the land all but useless. Until, one day, Chase had a bright idea.

Why not lay in 10 acres of solar panels, he thought, and connect the power to a nearby substation?

"A farmer's got to look out 20 years and say, 'Do I want to rent my land for $250 to $300 an acre or do I want to lock into $1,400 an acre each year?' " Chase said recently. "Farmers, in the future, are not going to be able to continue to farm here or provide for their folks. Solar can help them."

Georgia, finally, is farming the sun. Solar only accounts for about 1 percent of the state's electric power. Yet Georgia has one of the highest per capita growth rates for solar power in the country. The amount of electricity produced by the sun over Georgia has quintupled since 2010.

Farmers across the state are leasing plots where solar "developers," many of them metro Atlanta-based companies, can erect fields of glistening panels to collect rays. The power then goes into the grid for distribution by Georgia Power or another utility.

Nearly 200 companies and 3,000 people now work in the solar industry in Georgia.

About 90 percent of the Georgia-generated power comes from huge solar arrays built mostly atop former cotton, peanut and hay fields, the rest from rooftop arrays on homes or businesses. Federal tax credits, along with Georgia Power, created the state's solar industry almost overnight. Plentiful sun, cheap land and rural counties desperate for any community-sustaining work provided the local ingredients.

"Georgia, obviously, has made huge progress in solar farms and almost all are in rural counties," said Shan Arora, a project manager at Southface, an Atlanta nonprofit that promotes environmentally sustainable living. "And counties going solar have shown their neighbors that solar is possible --- it's not something that's a theory."

The surge may prove fleeting. The tax credit and Georgia Power's solar-inducement program, both to encourage installation, are set to soon expire or be scaled back. And Georgia, unlike other states, doesn't mandate that a certain amount of energy be derived from the sun, wind or other renewable sources.

"But the tax credit and Georgia Power project did exactly what they were supposed to do: kick start a market and generate economies of scale," said Jennette Gayer, director of the nonprofit Environment Georgia. "They made solar easier and cheaper to install in the future."

Down on the farm

After a life spent milking cows, first on his daddy's farm and then on his own, B.L. Kent says it's time to retire. At 68, the farmer near Millen, about 50 miles south of Augusta, won't miss the 4:30 a.m. wakeup calls nor the below-freezing trudges to the barn to milk 58 cows. His children left the farm long ago too.

He rents 262 acres of non-irrigated land to a peanut and cotton farmer for $48 an acre, not enough to retire on. So Kent was all ears when Atlanta-based Beltline Energy contacted him last year with a "way better" offer to lease his land for 20 years.

Beltline put the deal together and, along with Hecate Energy, won a piece of Georgia Power's solar portfolio. Jenkins County Commissioners approved the industrial rezoning. Hecate, out of Tennessee, will erect about 65,000 solar panels on 200 acres of Kent's property. Georgia Power will buy the electricity from Hecate which will maintain the array and pay county taxes on the infrastructure.

The key to the deal, Kent says, is a 5-acre plot of land that his father sold to the utility 50 years ago. On it sits an electric power substation in very close proximity to the future solar array.

"We already got a lot of wires going this way and that over the property," Kent said. "That's what the solar company was wanting."

The criteria for a successful solar farm are pretty basic: strong sun; relatively inexpensive, flat land; proximity to a substation; low taxes; and eager local officials. Beltline and other solar developers look particularly for power lines criss-crossing the state's Fall Line which stretches from Augusta to Macon to Columbus. Much of the sandy soil is worn out, ruined by decades of cotton production and, therefore, inexpensive.

Farmers like Chase in Oglethorpe offer up smaller, unused parcels of land. The two, five-acre solar fields on Stagecoach Road are now covered in panels. A substation sits alongside one of the fields.

"It's something you should at least look into if you have marginal land that's not earning any money," said Chase, 50.

Taylor County, up the road from Oglethorpe, is fast becoming Solar Central. Commissioners and farmers have eagerly approved four large-scale solar arrays, ranging in size from 150 to 911 acres --- the largest east of the Mississippi --- controlled by a subsidiary of Atlanta's Southern Company.

Other utilities own Taylor County arrays. In all, 3500 acres in the county southwest of Macon will soon be covered in photovoltaic cells, generating enough juice to power about 63,000 homes. The county leased hundreds of acres in its industrial park to the sun seekers.

Taylor offers some ad valorem tax breaks, but nonetheless expects property taxes and permit fees to add as much as $40 million to county coffers over the next two decades. About 2,000 temporary construction jobs are being created, backers say. It took half an hour the other day to order lunch at the Subway in Butler.

"Our school system is already trying to figure out what to do with all these resources," said Clinton Perry Jr., a commissioner. "We're an agricultural community that's been waiting a long time for projects like these. We hope this will be the seed to bring about more growth for our county. We're very excited. We feel blessed."

Tax credits give push

Congress in 2006 kick started the nation's solar industry with a 30 percent construction tax credit for businesses and homeowners. Georgia Power furthered the state's renewable energy push with its Advanced Solar Initiative (ASI) approved by the Public Service Commission in 2012.

The state's largest utility committed to buy 745 megawatts of power generated by the sun. In all, 500 residential, commercial and industrial-sized projects should be on line by the end of 2016, a Georgia Power spokesman says.

The state ranked No. 20 in the total amount of solar energy created last year, Environment Georgia reports.

North Carolina generates more solar energy than all Southeastern states combined. A 35 percent state tax credit, and mandated solar energy production targets, makes the industry much more viable in the Old North State. Georgia has neither. And Georgia Power will end its solar program in 2016, about the same time Washington all but ends its tax credit program.

"We still subsidize fossil fuels, so it's unreasonable to (limit) solar subsidies after only a couple of years," said Environment Georgia's Gayer.

President Obama's Clean Power Plan, which requires states to dramatically reduce carbon pollution by 2030, could re-energize the solar industry. If so, large-scale arrays will continue to grow across South Georgia further transforming the rural economy and the landscape.

"It'll be all right," said Kent whose farmhouse will be surrounded on three sides by row upon row of solar panels, "but it won't be like the cows walking out there."

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 19 of 38

Coast can see toll of climate change

Galloway, Jim . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]01 Nov 2015: B.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1728503285?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Last Sunday, Buelterman had returned from a trip to New Hampshire, where he participated in Rising Tides 2015, a conference on the coastal impact of rising sea levels in the United States, aimed at local government officials. What happened on the Georgia coast last week was predicted last year by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report, which said that "clear evidence" of rising sea levels would increase flooding throughout the coastal United States.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

At the 35,000-foot level, climate change remains a matter of loud dispute among Republicans.

In the undercard portion of last Wednesday's CNBC presidential debate, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham pushed the GOP envelope and acknowledged that "we're heating up the planet." Likewise, former New York Gov. George Pataki declared it "not appropriate" to think that human activity isn't at least partially to blame.

But those are outlying opinions, offset by hardcore skepticism expressed by Republicans closer to the front of the pack.

Donald Trump, for instance, has called climate change a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese, who are out to sabotage the U.S. industrial base. In an interview with conservative firebrand Glenn Beck, recorded just before last week's debate, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz said that climate change wasn't science, but a Sierra Club-generated religion.

Such is the high-altitude situation among Republicans. At sea level, however, the view is much different. Take, for instance, Jason Buelterman, mayor of Tybee Island on the Georgia coast.

Last Sunday, Buelterman had returned from a trip to New Hampshire, where he participated in Rising Tides 2015, a conference on the coastal impact of rising sea levels in the United States, aimed at local government officials. It was a nonpartisan event, but Republican attendees --- count Buelterman among them --- outnumbered Democratic ones.

Forty-eight hours after the mayor returned, Tybee Island made a little history. On Tuesday morning, a 10.47-foot high tide swamped much of the island and U.S. 80, the only road that links 3,000 residents to Savannah and the mainland.

It was the third-highest tide on record. But that doesn't really tell the story. Those higher tides in 1940 and 1947 were produced by surges from hurricanes.

No such storms struck the Georgia coast last week. We would have noticed.

The king tides on Tuesday and Wednesday were the product of the moon making a closer-than-usual pass, a stiff wind and rising sea levels.

That last condition is the result of climate change. Heated water expands and ice caps melt. Volume increases.

"It's unfortunate that we had this incident with the tide, but I think what it has done is gotten people's attention all over this state," Buelterman said. "I can't think of another island anywhere that is completely cut off from the mainland for hours at a time."

What happened on the Georgia coast last week was predicted last year by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report, which said that "clear evidence" of rising sea levels would increase flooding throughout the coastal United States.

A U.S. 80 that is covered with water three or five times a year now might see that happen 35 to 40 times a year by 2050. Much of it would be "nuisance" flooding, the report said. Which might have applied to Tybee Island last week, except that it didn't.

"We had to have a helicopter on standby, we had the Coast Guard on alert in case we had a heart attack. The school's shut down," Mayor Buelterman said in a phone interview on Thursday. That's slightly more than a nuisance.

During his 10 years as mayor, Buelterman said he's been pushing for a rebuilt and raised U.S. 80 --- "doing everything short of a hunger strike." But his argument has been based largely on the vulnerability of the mostly two-lane road, and thus his tourist-heavy island, to traffic accidents. A rising sea is now another argument in his favor. Maybe a strong one.

"All this money gets spent to get people to work 10 minutes faster. We have an island that's inaccessible. This is a safety issue. That should be the priority," Buelterman said.

Tybee Island is addressing other issues as well. "I got a fairly dysfunctional city council to vote unanimously to plan and budget for 14 to 20 inches of sea level rise by 2060," said Councilman Paul Wolff. "That was in 2010."

An inventory of at-risk infrastructure followed. The road to the mainland was named a top priority. Another: three freshwater wells. The wells themselves are sealed, which protects them from saltwater swamping. But the electronic controls need to be raised.

This kind of work is occurring up and down the Georgia coast, often courtesy of federal grants, often with the help of University of Georgia researchers and the state Department of Natural Resources.

"The state of Georgia has scientific data that demonstrates the need to plan for an increase in sea level rise at a rate of one meter for the next 100 years. This data comes from NOAA's tide gauge at Fort Pulaski, Ga.," said DNR spokeswoman Mary Kathryn Yearta, in an email.

This is the same state Department of Natural Resources that, earlier this year, reported that climate change --- and the study did use that term --- could put Georgia wildlife on the move over the next three or four decades. In some cases, the destination will be extinction. Think songbirds.

The point is that, yes, you may have GOP presidential candidates who prefer to dispute volumes of data about climate change. Possibly, they are obliged to constituencies on higher ground.

You may even have governors and state lawmakers, in Georgia and elsewhere, who prefer to duck cause-and-effect by declaring themselves non-scientists. When you acknowledge a problem exists, you tacitly admit an obligation to fix it. And that could be expensive.

But you do have a class of people on the Georgia coast who see things with their own eyes and their own gauges. They are mayors, council members, county commissioners, scientists and even government bureaucrats. Republicans as well as Democrats.

Moreover, an official arm of state government says now it possesses evidence that climate change is real.

The sea is rising, and not everyone can wait for Donald Trump and Ted Cruz to change their minds.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Sea level; Climate change; Global warming; Coasts; Debates |
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climate change: Reed makes his case in Paris: Cities can play big role in addressing climate change, mayor says.

Leslie, Katie . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]05 Dec 2015: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1739284356?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Atlanta already has enacted significant sustainability measures, he notes, including requiring large-scale commercial property owners to track energy and water usage; pledging to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020; adding electric vehicles to its city fleet; and pursuing a solar energy program for municipal buildings.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

PARIS --- Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, in Paris this week with thousands of other leaders concerned about climate change, says cities can play a significant role in addressing global warming.

Atlanta already has enacted significant sustainability measures, he notes, including requiring large-scale commercial property owners to track energy and water usage; pledging to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020; adding electric vehicles to its city fleet; and pursuing a solar energy program for municipal buildings.

While Reed isn't part of negotiations held at the official United Nations summit, he traveled to France to participate in gatherings of mayors and regional leaders being held in tandem with the international talks.

Friday's Climate Summit for Local Leaders, led by Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and U.N. Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change Michael Bloomberg, highlighted what city leaders can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption.

The message is especially meaningful in states like Georgia, which still lacks agreement by top officials on the nature and threat of global warming.

"We're taking on the issue of climate action right now, and we're trying to act in a decisive manner," said Reed, in between sessions at Paris City Hall.

But asked what state leaders should do on climate issues, Reed --- known for his positive relationship with Republican Gov. Nathan Deal and members of the Legislature --- was circumspect.

"I think we have the leadership in place if they want to act, but I'm not really focused on what other people are doing," Reed said. "As long as the state structure isn't an impediment to municipal action, I think we can accomplish quite a lot."

Friday's local leaders summit, one of several events that Reed is attending while here, attracted nearly 400 mayors from across the world, according to its organizers. Many, like Reed, have signed the "Compact of Mayors," an agreement to enact policy changes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and track the results.

French President Francois Hollande spoke at the event, thanking local officials for coming despite the Nov. 13 terror attacks in his country. Several Democratic U.S. senators came to rally behind President Barack Obama's climate agenda, which is facing opposition from Senate Republicans.

Also speaking were technology bigwigs, political heavyweights and Hollywood celebrities, including Tesla Motors CEO Elon Musk, Al Gore, Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert Redford. That's to say nothing of the countless climate change scientists and environmental leaders in the crowd.

"This is the Disney World for climate geeks," said Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, a former state legislator who now serves as Reed's sustainability director.

Benfield was in her element as she swapped business cards with politicians and environmental movers and shakers from around the globe, a networking of grand order against the backdrop of Paris City Hall's Versailles-like architecture.

She said she hoped to score 30 seconds with Bloomberg --- former New York mayor --- while here to ask him to fund a project manager position for Atlanta's new solar energy program. As of Friday, she had been unsuccessful in cornering the magnate. She came close earlier, only to have Bloomberg whisked away.

"I had my pitch ready and a mayor from Jordan totally intercepted," she lamented.

Benfield said she hopes the summit will lead to even greater discussions with like minds about ways cities can work together on environmental issues.

She also noted that Georgia, despite its lack of accord on the source of global warming, has taken some significant steps. Earlier this year, the state Legislature passed House Bill 57, the Solar Power Free Market Financing Act, which makes it more affordable for Georgia homeowners and small businesses to put solar panels on their rooftops.

"You don't have to embrace climate change to make progress," she said.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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CLIMATE CHANGE: Power plant ruling hailed: Ga. officials say carbon reductions would hurt businesses, ratepayers.

Chapman, Dan . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]11 Feb 2016: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1764279728?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

The decision was roundly applauded by politicians and industry officials in Georgia who complained that the mandated carbon reductions from coal-fired power plants --- 25 percent statewide by 2030 --- would hurt businesses and ratepayers.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Georgia halted work Wednesday on plans to meet new federal rules to fight global warming, after the Supreme Court temporarily blocked the Obama administration from imposing them.

The decision was roundly applauded by politicians and industry officials in Georgia who complained that the mandated carbon reductions from coal-fired power plants --- 25 percent statewide by 2030 --- would hurt businesses and ratepayers.

Georgia joined 28 other states last year in a lawsuit against the president's Clean Power Plan. Gov. Nathan Deal nonetheless directed the state's environmental agency to start on a compliance plan.

Wednesday, a day after the high court stopped the rules pending further legal review, the state Environmental Protection Division said it has postponed research and stakeholder meetings devoted to the Clean Power Plan.

"We are pleased that Georgia will not need to begin plan development at this time given the uncertainties surrounding its ultimate legal status," said Mary Walker, an assistant EPD director.

Last summer the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency mandated that states reduce carbon emissions by one-third, with compliance plans due later this year. Coal-fired electric power plants were targeted.

A district court will hear arguments in the states' case June 2, and the Supreme Court could take it up by mid-2017.

"We will continue to fight this executive overreach which will put Americans out of work and drive up the cost of electricity for consumers," Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens said in a statement.

Environmentalists lamented the decision. It "hits pause on the country's strongest action to lower harmful carbon pollution," said Frank Rambo, an attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center.

Georgia was expected to rather easily meet the EPA guidelines. Its carbon-emission targets were relaxed from earlier goals and the state also received credit for the under-construction nuclear power Plant Vogtle.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Environmental protection; Electric utilities; Carbon; Nuclear power plants; Electricity distribution |
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| **Location:** | Georgia |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: Environmental Protection Agency--EPA; NAICS: 924110 |
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Document 22 of 38

Work together on climate change

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[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1781722180?accountid=13360)



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**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Credit goes to South Carolina Republican Bob Inglis who is taking a bipartisan approach to climate change through his recent Three American Questions campaign ( "It's Bipartisan or Bust for Ex-lawmaker," News, April 11).

This all-too scarce approach by some of our public leadership is a welcome attitude shift that is sorely needed. The Pentagon considers climate change a threat multiplier, exacerbating challenges such as national security and draining domestic resources. Considering the gravity and range of problems created by degrading "our common home," stopping the squabbling and starting a serious adult discussion is long overdue.

EMILY HIRN, ATLANTA

Credit: STAFF

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Solving climate change won't wreck economy

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[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1795735500?accountid=13360)



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**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

"Letter obfuscates climate change issues" on June 7 attacked liberals for attacking people who "refuse to blindly accept climate change," but then went on to disprove liberals' beliefs with no evidence. Please do your own research.

This person also believes solving climate change means wrecking the economy. This isn't true. People need to know

Credit: STAFF

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Document 25 of 38

Oceans battered by climate change

King, Llewellyn . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]12 June 2016: A.23.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1795735757?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

The oceans are a great carbon sink, he explains, but they are reaching a carbon saturation point, and as so-called "deep carbon" resurfaces, it limits the oxygen in the water and destroys fish and marine life. The shallow seas, like the Baltic and the Adriatic, are subject to "red tides" -- harmful algal booms, due to nutrient overenrichment, that kill fish and make shellfish dangerous to consume.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Memo to environmental activists: It's the oceans, stupids.

This summer, people will flock to beaches to swim, surf, wade, boat, fish, sunbathe, or even fall in love. To these revelers, the oceans are eternal -- a permanent bounty in an impermanent world.

But there is a rub: The oceans are living entities and they are in trouble.

Mark Spalding, president of The Ocean Foundation, says, "We are putting too much into the oceans and taking too much out."

Whether deliberately or not, we are dumping stuff into the oceans at a horrifying rate and, in places, we are overfishing them.

But the No. 1 enemy of oceans is invisible: carbon.

Carbon is a huge threat, according to ocean champion U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I. The oceans are a great carbon sink, he explains, but they are reaching a carbon saturation point, and as so-called "deep carbon" resurfaces, it limits the oxygen in the water and destroys fish and marine life.

There is a 6,474-squaremile "dead zone" -- an area about the size of Connecticut with low to no oxygen -- in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Dead zones are appearing in oceans around the world due to excessive nutrient pollution (especially nitrogen and phosphorous) from agribusiness and sewage. Two great U.S. estuaries are in trouble: the Chesapeake Bay and the Long Island Sound.

Warming in the North Atlantic is disturbing fish populations: Maine lobsters are migrating to Canada's cooler waters.

The shallow seas, like the Baltic and the Adriatic, are subject to "red tides" -- harmful algal booms, due to nutrient overenrichment, that kill fish and make shellfish dangerous to consume.

Polluted waterways are a concern for Rio de Janiero Olympic rowers and other athletes. Apparently, the word is: Don't follow the girl from Ipanema into the water. The culprit is raw sewage, and the swelling Olympic crowds will only worsen the situation.

My appeal to the environmental community is this: If you are worried about the air, concentrate on the oceans. It is hard to explain greenhouse gases to a public that is distrustful, or fears the economic effect of reducing fossil fuel consumption. If I lived in a West Virginia hollow, and the only work was coal mining, you bet I would be a climate denier.

The oceans are easier to understand. You can explain that the sea levels are rising; that it is possible for life-sustaining currents, like the Gulf Stream, to stop or reverse course; and you can point to the ways seemingly innocent actions, or those thought of as virtuous (like hefting around spring water in plastic bottles) have harmful effects.

Plastic is a big problem. Great gyres of plastic, hundreds of miles long, are floating in the Pacific. Flip-flops washed into the ocean in Asia are piling up on beaches in Africa. Fish are ingesting microplastic particles -- and you will ingest this plastic when you tuck into your fish and chips. Sea birds and dolphins get tangled in the plastic harnesses we put on six-packs of beer and soft drinks. They die horrible deaths. Sunscreen is lethal to coral.

It is hard to explain the way carbon, methane and ozone in the atmosphere cause the Earth to heat up. It is easier, I am telling my environmentalist friends, to understand that we will not be able to swim in the oceans.

I have met climate deniers, but I have never run into an ocean denier.

Llewellyn King is executive

producer and host of "White House Chronicle"on PBS. He wrote this for InsideSources.com. Jay Bookman's column will return.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

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Document 25 of 38

RENEWABLE ENERGY: State pushes utility toward solar, wind power: Georgia Power's move could keep rates down.

Grantham, Russell . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]28 July 2016: A.1.

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**ABSTRACT**

Georgia Power wants to do a 10 megawatt demonstration solar power project on one of its closed coal ash ponds near a traditional power plant, allowing it to reclaim land and take advantage of its existing power lines.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Note: Farmer Donald Chase (right) leases land on his Oglethorpe farm for solar farms. Hundreds of acres of solar farms are under construction across South Georgia. BOB ANDRES / AJC 2015 GEORGIA POWER LONG-TERM PLAN Under a compromise agreement being considered by state regulators Thursday, Georgia Power will shut down some traditional plants, add some "green"energy plants, and make other changes in coming years.Here are some highlights: Renewable energy: The utility plans to add up to 1,600 megawatts of renewable energy. It would contract with outside firms to supply up to 1,050 megawatts from large-scale solar power and other renewable energy plants by 2021.The balance would come from smaller projects built by Georgia Power or by factories, offices, churches, small businesses and homes.Most is likely to be solar, though the compromise allows up to 300 megawatts from wind power, likely imported from the Great Plains states. New nuke study: There was no agreement on Georgia Power's request for a study costing at least$175 million of a potential nuclear power plant south of Columbus.That decision was left to the state regulator's board. Closing plants: The utility will close one coal unit and two oil-fired units at Plant Mitchell near Albany, and an oil-fired unit at Plant Kraft near Savannah.Combined, they account for 375 megawatts. Limit spending on old plants: The utility agreed to limit annual investments to$1 million at Plant McIntosh, near Savannah, and $5 million at Plant Hammond, near Rome.Critics wanted Georgia Power to close the old power plants, which are used only part of the year during peak demand times. Coal ash pond project: Georgia Power wants to do a 10 megawatt demonstration solar power project on one of its closed coal ash ponds near a traditional power plant, allowing it to reclaim land and take advantage of its existing power lines. High wind study: The utility would be allowed to conduct a study into whether wind power turbines on towers up to

Georgia Power is making a big move into solar power and other renewable energy -- about three times bigger than it originally planned -- under a deal state regulators are expected to approve today.

If the Public Service Commission's five-member board approves a recent compromise on Georgia Power's long-term plan, the utility will add as much as 1,600 megawatts of new renewable energy capacity, or roughly enough "green" capacity to power about 264,000 homes.Most of the increase would be over six years.

"It's going to be a sizable increase in renewable energy," said former PSC commissioner Bobby Baker, who now represents the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, an environmental group.

Baker said Georgia Power currently has about 1,000 megawatts of solar, wind or other renewable power projects online or under development, representing roughly 5 percent of the utility's overall capacity.

The proposed additions could boost that share to roughly 12 percent. That comes on top of more than 1,000 megawatts of power expected to come from an expansion of the Vogtle nuclear plant near Augusta by 2020.

The Atlanta utility had originally proposed 525 megawatts of solar, wind and other alternative energy to be added over three years in its so-called Integrated Resources Plan. The plan is a 20-year blueprint for the utility's power generation projects, conservation programs, power plant retirements and other goals that is reviewed every three years by state regulators.

The PSC's board is voting today on a recent "stipulation" agreement resolving most of the disputes between the utility, regulators, environmental groups and others over the long-term plan. The PSC's board could amend some pieces before approving it, but it probably won't toss the agreement aside.

Whatever the PSC board approves could eventually affect Georgians in many ways.The longterm plan will indirectly affect

electricity bills, pollution levels, and whether Georgia Power eventually begins building a second nuclear plant in the state.

Nuclear study

One issue still up in the air is whether the utility commission will approve Georgia Power's request to approve a study -- at a cost at least $175 million -- to evaluate a site south of Columbus to potentially build a new nuclear plant.

The state regulator's staff and environmental groups pressed for the higher green energy target. The state regulator wants more renewable energy partly because solar and wind power projects can now produce cheaper energy than traditional sources such as coal and natural gas-fired plants.

"We're adding it because it's cheaper than running existing capacity," said Tom Bond, the PSC's director of utilities. "It's like if you have two cars and one gets 20 miles to the gallon and the other gets 50. It's cheaper to drive your car that gets 50 miles per gallon."

Although the long-term plan doesn't directly affect customers' rates, Bond said the lower-cost renewable energy will help keep rates down.

Calls for more

During hearings over several months, the regulators' experts, environmental groups and others had questioned the utility's planned pace of new solar-and wind-power additions as a slowdown from previous years.

"We're adding more (renewable) energy but it's added over a longer period," Georgia Power spokesman Jacob Hawkins said. "We definitely think it's a good stipulated agreement," he said, that will broaden the utility's sources of power and save money for customers.

There are big differences between the power-generating capacity of traditional and renewable energy power plants. Most nuclear and gas-fired plants run full-time, so 1 megawatt from those plants supplies about 1,000 homes. Most renewable energy plants only produce when the wind blows or the sun shines, so 1 megawatt from those plants supplies homes only part of the day, or in effect significantly fewer homes.

But solar and wind-powered installations also are much cheaper and quicker to build and run. Georgia Power expects contracts to supply 1,050 megawatts of green energy to cost about $2 billion.

The Vogtle nuclear expansion, on the other hand, is over three years behind schedule and $3 billion over budget.

(Box)

Farmer Donald Chase (right) leases land on his Oglethorpe farm for solar farms. Hundreds of acres of solar farms are under

construction across South Georgia. BOB ANDRES / AJC 2015

GEORGIA POWER LONG-TERM PLAN

Under a compromise agreement being considered by state regulators Thursday, Georgia Power will shut down some traditional plants, add some "green"energy plants, and make other changes in coming years.Here are some highlights:

Renewable energy: The utility plans to add up to 1,600 megawatts of renewable energy. It would contract with outside firms to supply up to 1,050 megawatts from large-scale solar power and other renewable energy plants by 2021.The balance would come from smaller projects built by Georgia Power or by factories, offices, churches, small businesses and homes.Most is likely to be solar, though the compromise allows up to 300 megawatts from wind power, likely imported from the Great Plains states. New nuke study: There was no agreement on Georgia Power's request for a study costing at least$175 million of a potential nuclear power plant south of Columbus.That decision was left to the state regulator's board.

Closing plants: The utility will close one coal unit and two oil-fired units at Plant Mitchell near Albany, and an oil-fired unit at Plant Kraft near Savannah.Combined, they account for 375 megawatts. Limit spending on old plants: The utility agreed to limit annual investments to$1 million at Plant McIntosh, near Savannah, and $5 million at Plant Hammond, near Rome.Critics wanted Georgia Power to close the old power plants, which are used only part of the year during peak demand times.

Coal ash pond project: Georgia Power wants to do a 10 megawatt demonstration solar power project on one of its closed coal ash ponds near a traditional power plant, allowing it to reclaim land and take advantage of its existing power lines.

High wind study: The utility would be allowed to conduct a study into whether wind power turbines on towers up to

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Foreign investment; Electric utilities; Renewable resources; Fly ash; Agreements; Alternative energy sources; Nuclear power plants; Coal; Farms; Solar energy; Wind power |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: Georgia Power Co; NAICS: 221122 |
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ENVIRONMENT: UGA study shows climate change killing salt marsh: Amount of cordgrass has diminished by 35% over the past 3 decades.

Chapman, Dan . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]08 Aug 2016: B.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1809564606?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Rising seas, another byproduct of climate change, pushes salt water further inland, harming the delicate salt-fresh water balance critical for coastal critters and vegetation.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Georgia's salt marsh is disappearing, according to UGA scientists, and climate change is the main culprit.

Researchers at the University of Georgia's Marine Institute on Sapelo Island used satellite imagery over three decades to show that the amount of Spartina alternifolora, or cordgrass, has diminished by 35 percent.

The recently released study largely blames climate change with its higher temperatures, on land and in the oceans, and prolonged droughts. The loss of vegetation will ripple through the salt marsh ecosystem.

"A decrease in the growth of marsh plants likely affects all of the animals that depend on the marsh, such as juvenile shrimp and crabs, which use the marsh as a nursery," said Merryl Alber, director of the Marine Institute. "These decreases in vegetation may also affect other marsh services, such as stabilizing the shoreline, filtering pollutants and protecting against storm damage."

Rising seas, another byproduct of climate change, pushes salt water further inland, harming the delicate salt-fresh water balance critical for coastal critters and vegetation. Numerous studies predict a minimum 3-foot rise of the Atlantic Ocean off Georgia by 2100.

To read the UGA study, go online to www.mdpi.com/2072-4292/8/6/477/htm.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Climate change; Studies; Vegetation; Storm damage |
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| **Publication title:** | The Atlanta Journal - Constitution; Atlanta, Ga. |
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Document 27 of 38

CLIMATE CHANGE: Atlanta endures its second-hottest summer ever: In the future, city may see three months of above 95-degree heat.

Chapman, Dan . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]03 Sep 2016: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1816291620?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Marshall Shepherd, who runs the University of Georgia's Atmospheric Sciences Program, recently co-authored a National Academy of Sciences study that "overwhelmingly found that extreme heat events have the strongest attribution signal to climate change." The journal Nature Climate Change also reported last year that the high temperatures three out of every four days can be tied to global warming.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Note: HOT STREAKS Six of the 10 hottest stretches of summer ever recorded in Atlanta, when the low temperature never dipped below 70 degrees, have occurred since 2005. The data goes back to 1876. 2016:73 days 2010:55 days 2005:48 days 1991:46 days 2012:44 days 2007:43 days 2015:40 days 1993:32 days 1979:31 days 1993:30 days Source: Southeast Regional Climate Center

The summer of 2016 goes down as Atlanta's second-hottest ever with its seemingly ceaseless parade of 90-plus degree days.

The nights, though, have been relatively worse.

Saturday is expected to be the first day this summer that Atlanta's low temperature drops below 70 degrees. If so, it has been 73 days -- a record -- since the city felt so cool. The once-typical late-in-the-day cooling-off periods have disappeared, and if future summers mimic this year's, then Atlantans can expect worsening weather, health and ecological problems for decades to come.

One recent study predicts that by the year 2100, Atlanta will succumb to 94 days when the high temperature is at or above 95 degrees. Current average: seven days.

Future weather, of course, is hard to predict. The summer of 2017, for example, may be cooler than 2016 due to the La Nina weather pattern newly ensconced in the Northern Hemisphere. Most climatologists, though, expect temperatures to warm over the next century, and they point to man-made carbon dioxide stifling the atmosphere as the main culprit.

"One of the hallmarks of global warming is the rise of extreme heat," said Alyson Kenward, a senior scientist with Climate Central, an environmental research nonprofit in New Jersey. "All of a sudden the types of temperatures we think of as being pretty unusual and only happening a handful of times a year will be happening a lot more in the future.

"So the question is," she continued, "how ready are people to face three months of 95-degree weather?"

For climatologists, summer runs from June 1 through Aug. 31. Only Atlanta's summer of 1980 was hotter than 2016, according to National Weather Service records that date to 1887.

2016 is also shaping up as North Georgia's second-hot-test year ever, behind only 2012. Atlanta's eight warmest years have all come since 1980, proof that Georgia is steadily -- and rapidly -- warming, climatologists say.

Extreme heat, like intense downpours and rising seas, is increasingly linked to global warming. Marshall Shepherd, who runs the University of Georgia's Atmospheric Sciences Program, recently co-authored a National Academy of Sciences study that "overwhelmingly found that extreme heat events have the strongest attribution signal to climate change."

The journal Nature Climate Change also reported last year that the high temperatures three out of every four days can be tied to global warming.

Most Atlantans can easily relate to the number of days (75 this year) when the temperature hit 90 degrees or higher at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and DeKalb-Peachtree Airport. Less known, but potentially of greater significance, is the number of days in a row when the low temperature hasn't fallen below 70 degrees.

This year far surpasses 2010, the previous record-breaking year, when Atlanta registered 55 straight days without the mercury ever dipping below 70. The city's heat is fueled by more than the Earth's overall warming.

"In general, cities hold heat more at night because of all the concrete. It's an urban effect,"said Pam Knox, UGA's climatologist. "And more widespread humidity seems to be going up, and humidity tends to keep things warmer at night. You really get the coolest nights in summer when it's dry."

Bill Murphey is Knox's counterpart with the state of Georgia. He's also the state's chief meteorologist. Murphey says the lack of wind, due to high pressure systems, also keeps Atlanta hot at night.

"We had very few, if any, air mass changes or frontal systems to help us out," he said. "Hopefully, we'll get some (wind) changes here in the fall and maybe get a tropical storm system to help us out as far as the dryness goes."

Tropical Storm Hermine cooled temps and replenished reservoirs and aquifers. Yet parts of metro Atlanta and northwest Georgia still suffer "extreme drought," according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"You're likely to see drought more frequently with higher temperatures and higher evaporation (rates) that suck more moisture out of the soil," Knox said. "That puts more stress on plants. It probably makes more farmers convert to irrigation. So there could be water shortages."

Warmer weather might afford farmers longer growing seasons. But high temperatures also bring more pests and invasive species, prompting farmers to spend more on pesticides and herbicides.Mosquitoes, perhaps carrying Zika or malaria, also thrive on warm weather.

Air quality, too, suffers the longer it's hotter. Metro Atlanta, so far, has violated federal air quality standards about three times as much as last year. And it's likely to worsen in the future.

The World Climate Research Program, a Switzerland-based nonprofit, expects greenhouse gas emissions to continue unabated through 2100.

If so, the climate is expected to keep warming. And Atlanta will face more than three months each year with temperatures climbing to highs of 95 degrees or more.

"What does that mean for public health?" Climate Central's Kenward asked.

"What does that mean for a city's infrastructure? Will people be able to go outside and do any kind of sports activity? Will they even be able to gear up for football season in the summer?"

(Box)

HOT STREAKS Six of the 10 hottest stretches of summer ever recorded in Atlanta, when the low temperature never dipped below 70 degrees, have occurred since 2005. The data goes back to 1876. 2016:73 days 2010:55 days 2005:48 days 1991:46 days 2012:44 days 2007:43 days 2015:40 days 1993:32 days 1979:31 days 1993:30 days

Source: Southeast Regional Climate Center

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Weather forecasting; Weather; Summer; Global warming; Climate change; Heat |
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| **Location:** | Atlanta Georgia |
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| **Publication title:** | The Atlanta Journal - Constitution; Atlanta, Ga. |
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BALANCED VIEWS: We have a whole world of evidence on climate change

Jay Bookman He writes for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]14 Sep 2016: A.15.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1819023979?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

According to Gavin Schmidt, climatologist and director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, there's a 99 percent chance that 2016 will top both of them, producing three consecutive years of record heat globally.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Climate change is a myth invented by the Chinese government to undermine U.S. manufacturing, at least according to Donald Trump.

If so, those Chinese are tricky dudes. Among other things, they've apparently hacked into computers at NASA, which has announced that globally, July of 2016 was the hottest month ever recorded. That followed June of 2016, which was the hottest June ever recorded, just as May was the hottest May and April the hottest April. Every month since last October has been the hottest such month ever recorded, and once the data are final, August may become the 11th consecutive month to join that list.

The evidence doesn't stop there. Last year, 2015, was the hottest year ever recorded globally. The previous champion had been 2014. According to Gavin Schmidt, climatologist and director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, there's a 99 percent chance that 2016 will top both of them, producing three consecutive years of record heat globally.

And a global phenomenon is being felt locally as well.

Down along the Georgia coast, rising sea levels are causing widespread alarm from officials who had previously denied the existence of climate change. Scientists at Climate Central predict that under moderate sea-rise assumptions, record flooding of at least 3 feet above high tide will strike the Georgia coast by 2040, affecting billions of dollars in property and more than 170,000 acres.

"Under high-range projections, floods exceeding 4 feet -- a level not seen in the past 100 years -- become every-year events by 2060" all along the Georgia coast, the study warns. Savannah, Sea Island, Tybee Island -- all would be threatened.

In south Georgia, longtime farmers report weather patterns never before witnessed, and researchers warn that native plants and animals will have to migrate northward, and quickly, to escape the heat. "A lot of them are going to have a hard time," says Jenny McGuire, a research scientist at Georgia Tech and co-author of a new report on climate-change adaptability. "For plants and animals in the East, there is a higher potential for extinction due to an inability to adapt to climate change. We have a high diversity of amphibians and other species that are going to struggle."

And of course, the drought has returned. Climate models have long predicted that global warming would create more intense drought and fewer but more intense rain events here in the Southeast, and that's the pattern that seems to be occurring.

Those models also predict that higher levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere would keep the heat from dissipating at night, producing many more evenings in which the air conditioners keep humming. Through Sept. 13, we have experienced a record 58 consecutive days in which overnight temperatures have remained above 70 degrees, according to the National Weather Service office in Peachtree City. The last time we enjoyed temperatures in the 60s was on June 21. Here in Atlanta, we've so far endured 82 days of temperatures exceeding 90 degrees. The annual average is 37 days.

In short, we have a whole world of evidence -- literally -- that global climate change is real and serious. And yet sheer cussedness still stifles effective action.

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Climate change; Greenhouse effect; Studies; Heat; Drought |
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| **Publication title:** | The Atlanta Journal - Constitution; Atlanta, Ga. |
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Document 29 of 38

READERS WRITE: Solutions needed for climate change

Sutton, Brandon . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]20 Sep 2016: A.13.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1820989009?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

A host of global weather data from centuries in the past to the present shows negligible effects of carbon dioxide changes on global warming.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

In ( "We have a whole world of evidence on climate change," Opinion, Sept. 13), Jay Bookman correctly points to the overwhelming evidence of the very real phenomenon of global climate change. Instead of debating the obvious existence of a warming planet, we need to be working on solutions.

The U.S. Congress has dithered on this issue for far too long. We need a strong, national response to meet urgency of the task. In the absence of meaningful action in Congress, the executive branch has taken steps to curb global warming, but it isn't enough. Both political parties need to come together, put aside their differences, and work to preserve a livable world for everyone.

ATLANTA

Jay Bookman's ( "We have a whole world of evidence on climate change," Opinion, Sept. 13) makes as much sense "The sun always rises in the East." Climate change has taken place throughout the 4.5 billion-year history of the planet. He cites NASA's claims that May, June, July of 2016 are the hottest years in recorded history. This is from unreliable ground-based temperature measurement. Satellite temperature measurements are not subject to errors from urban heat island effects. Satellite data, readily available on the Internet, shows April, May, June, July, and August 2016 were cooler than the same months in 1998. Only January, February, and March 2016 were warmer than corresponding months of 1998. And 1998 and 2010 were warmer years than 2015. A host of global weather data from centuries in the past to the present shows negligible effects of carbon dioxide changes on global warming.

JAMES H. RUST, OF THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Climate change; Greenhouse effect |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120 |
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Document 30 of 38

CLIMATE CHANGE: CDC cancels climate change, health summit: 'Strategic retreat' heads off conflict, co-sponsor says.

**Publication info:** The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]24 Jan 2017: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1860945189?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT**

Public health experts say climate change is a man-made problem that contributes to a range of health issues and illnesses, including heat stroke and diseases spread by tropical insects.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

The government's top public health agency has canceled a February conference on climate change and health but isn't saying why publicly.

But a co-sponsor was told by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that the agency was worried how the conference would be viewed by the Trump administration.

In an email response to a request from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, a CDC spokeswoman wrote that three days before Christmas, the agency began telling registered participants the February 2017 summit would be postponed. :

"We are exploring options to reschedule the meeting while considering budget priorities for fiscal year 2017," the Atlanta-based agency wrote in an official statement. It would also look for "potential overlap with an APHA (American Public Health Association) conference on the same topic also being held later in 2017."

The incoming administration did not ask or order that the meeting be canceled, said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

"They had no idea or not whether the new administration would be supportive," said Benjamin, whose group was a co-sponsor of the event with the CDC.

Rather, the decision was "a strategic retreat," intended to head off a possible last-minute cancellation or other repercussions from Trump officials who may prove hostile to spending money on climate change science, Benjamin said Monday.

"They decided the better part of valor was to stop and regroup" until it could be discussed with Trump's new health leadership, Benjamin said. A new CDC director has not been named.

Benjamin called the decision understandable but worrisome. He was echoed by Kristie Ebi, a professor of global health at the University of Washington in Seattle, who was invited to speak at the conference.

"In the long run, climate change is affecting the health of Americans," she said. "At some point, I hope they will go forward with the conference."

Ian Karra, an organizer for the Sierra Club, said the move to cancel the summit was "deeply disturbing."

"The Trump administration has a responsibility to take climate change seriously," Karra said. "If the CDC is taking this step preemptively, we hope it will show some climate courage going forward."

Public health experts say climate change is a man-made problem that contributes to a range of health issues and illnesses, including heat stroke and diseases spread by tropical insects. The CDC has a $10 million program on climate and health, and published guidelines to help local health officials deal with human vulnerability to climate change.

In 2012, Trump tweeted that the concept of global warming was created by the Chinese to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive. He later said he was joking, but during the presidential campaign referred to global warming as "a hoax."

Before he took office, Trump met with former Vice President Al Gore and Leonardo DiCaprio, both prominent climate activists. Trump picked Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. During his confirmation hearing, Pruitt backed away from his own past statements and said climate change is real.

Credit: Staff and wire reports; AJC staff writer Rosalind Bentley contributed to this article., Staff

**DETAILS**

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Document 31 of 38

CLIMATE CHANGE: In Atlanta, Gore warns of climate change risks: Ex-VP urges unity in efforts to fight effects across globe.

Stevens, Alexis . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]17 Feb 2017: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1868945115?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)**

In the climate and health meeting held at The Carter Center, Gore, a former Democratic presidential candidate, steered clear of mentioning Trump.[...]when that event was cancelled following the presidential election, Gore helped organize a condensed, one-day meeting instead.Gore urged scientists and health care providers to unite in efforts to combat the effects of climate change.

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

A climate change meeting in Atlanta on Thursday had all the ingredients of a political spectacle.

With Donald Trump, a noted skeptic of climate change science winning the White House, a nervous federal agency scrapped plans to host the event. Enter Al Gore. The former vice president helped revive the conference and took to the podium Thursday to talk about his signature issue.

But it was science -- not politics -- that carried the day.

In the climate and health meeting held at The Carter Center, Gore, a former Democratic presidential candidate, steered clear of mentioning Trump. Instead, he stressed that climate changes could render parts of the Middle East -- including some of the holiest cities on the planet -- uninhabitable. It could also cause deadly health problems and reduce life expectancy. Those in poverty will be hardest hit, he said.

The event was supposed to be a three-day conference held at the Centers for Disease Control. But when that event was cancelled following the presidential election, Gore helped organize a condensed, one-day meeting instead.

Gore urged scientists and health care providers to unite in efforts to combat the effects of climate change.

Among the most serious problems presented to conference attendees was the belief that the rising heat index could make parts of the world uninhabitable, Gore said.

"This is a relatively new finding, that in some areas of the Middle East and north Africa, there will be, according to the scientific predictions, areas that will no longer be fit for human habitation -- beyond the limits for human survival," Gore said. "The holy cities of Mecca and Medina are in this zone. Two years in Iran, the heat index -- the combination of temperature and humidity -- reached 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

"No human being can live for more than a few hours outdoors in those conditions," Gore said.

Despite the gloomy outlook, Gore said there are ways to deal with the effects of climate change, but those will take collaboration both in the U.S. and abroad.

"We do have the solutions at hand,"Gore said. "Hope is justified.We are going to win this. We have solutions that are now readily available."

Experts from Columbia University, Harvard University, the University of Wisconsin, the World Health Organization, and the CDC were among the speakers and panelists at the fast-paced conference.

"We're doing three days in one day," Gore joked at the microphone during sessions.

Atlanta resident Cindy Powell, who has worked in critical care, attended the conference because she's returning to school and is interested in public health. She was saddened the initial conference was cancelled, but said Thursday's meeting was a resilient effort.

"It's better than nothing. It's a start," Powell said. "The positive forces of the world intend to move forward regardless."

Leslie Bass, a commercial photography student, didn't know exactly what she'd be attending as part of an internship. But she was shocked at the staggering numbers of health issues and deaths related to climate changes.

"This is way bigger than politics, but politics in our country are going to hinder progress," Bass said. "It's not some myth. These are not alternative facts."

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Presidential elections; Climate change |
| --- | --- |

| **Location:** | Iran Africa Middle East United States--US Atlanta Georgia |
| --- | --- |

| **People:** | Trump, Donald J |
| --- | --- |

| **Company / organization:** | Name: Harvard University; NAICS: 611310; Name: Columbia University; NAICS: 611310; Name: World Health Organization; NAICS: 923120; Name: Carter Center; NAICS: 813311; Name: University of Wisconsin System; NAICS: 611310 |
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Document 32 of 38

6TH DISTRICT ELECTION: Ossoff, Handel clash over Comey, Komen: Health care, climate change also central to 'feisty' exchanges.

Bluestein, Greg . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]09 June 2017: B.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1907225500?accountid=13360)



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**ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)**

'Collapsing in on itself' The two revived the fiercest exchanges from Tuesday's debate, arguing again over the GOP plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act and Handel's role at the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Handel swiped back, saying Ossoff was wrong while invoking the House's Democratic leader, a favorite foil of the GOP: "I guess Jon, you subscribe to the Nancy Pelosi style -- just pass it and then you'll read it." The measure bans health insurers from limiting access to coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, but allows states to let insurers charge people more. When Ossoff was asked whether he supported a "single-payer" health-care system, an idea that conservatives fear will lead to runaway costs, the Democrat didn't give a direct answer: "I think we need a lot less ideology around health care, and a lot more of a focus on how we can make progress on a bipartisan basis." From there, the two scrapped over Handel's time at the breast-cancer charity, where she served as a vice president of public policy during a controversial decision to cut ties with Planned Parenthood. (Planned Parenthood doesn't perform mammograms but conducts hundreds of thousands of breast-cancer screenings each year.) 'Why...

**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

In a second tense debate on Thursday, Democrat Jon Ossoff and Republican Karen Handel clashed over highly politicized issues as they assailed each other over climate change policy, healthcare changes and the specter of Russian interference in the U.S. election.

The two honed their messages to distinct audiences in the 6th District contest: Handel tried to rev up a conservative base with tried-and-true pitches while Ossoff attempted to walk a more delicate line to appeal to liberals and enough moderates and independents to win.

In a race where Donald Trump has played a central role, both wrestled with former FBI director James Comey's testimony that the president tried to interfere with the investigation. And the two candidates had another heated exchange over Handel's controversial role at a breast-cancer charity.

It was another feisty showdown marked by sharp words from Handel -- at one time she tersely told Ossoff "with all due respect, do not interrupt me" -- and biting responses by the Democrat.

Multiple times the two accused each other of misstating facts. "Voters need to know that,"Ossoff said during one disagreement over health care. "And candidates need to know that, too." Later, Handel interrupted him to counter what she said was a falsehood, and in her closing called him "deceptive, fake Jon Ossoff."

The two are at the center of the most expensive U.S. House contest in the nation's history, and both parties are desperate for a victory. Republicans have long held the suburban Atlanta district, but Democrats hope Trump's struggles could give them an opening.

'Not there yet'

Held just minutes before Comey's blockbuster testimony, both candidates faced challenges over how to respond. For Handel, it was a particularly vexing issue: After holding him at arm's length in the early part of the campaign, she embraced the president after she won a spot in the June 20 runoff.

Pressed by moderator Denis O'Hayer, who noted she held a fundraiser with Trump in late April, Handel pleaded for patience with the investigations while also trying to assert her independence from the president.

"Let's let the facts go where they need to go on this. President Trump is the president, and having his support ... I'm happy to have his support. But I'm also happy to have, frankly, the support of the people of the 6th District," she said, adding: "I understand full well that I am not an extension of the White House. I am an extension of the people of the 6th District."

Ossoff tried to navigate his own divide. Even as liberals call for impeachment proceedings, many Democrats are wary that such talk could turn off the independents they will need to flip GOP strongholds such as the 6th District.

He said he was outraged by Russia's attempts to interfere with the election and said it demands a "firm response and a transparent, independent investigation." But he stopped short of calling for Trump's impeachment.

"We're still not there yet," said Ossoff.

'Collapsing in on itself'

The two revived the fiercest exchanges from Tuesday's debate, arguing again over the GOP plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act and Handel's role at the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

Handel said replacing Obamacare is a top priority, saying that the system is "collapsing in on itself." She said her own health insurance premiums under the exchange have quadrupled.

Ossoff pointed to government projections that the plan would leave more than 20 million without insurance, and he pushed back on Handel's claims that the measure has enough funding to help those with pre-existing health conditions.

"I appreciate you sharing your personal story," Ossoff said after Handel talked of her sister's serious medical condition. "But the facts are the facts ... This bill guts protections for Georgians who have pre-existing conditions."

Handel swiped back, saying Ossoff was wrong while invoking the House's Democratic leader, a favorite foil of the GOP: "I guess Jon, you subscribe to the Nancy Pelosi style -- just pass it and then you'll read it."

The measure bans health insurers from limiting access to coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, but allows states to let insurers charge people more. Experts warn that high-risk pools meant to keep premiums lower for sick people might not be effective.

When Ossoff was asked whether he supported a "single-payer" health-care system, an idea that conservatives fear will lead to runaway costs, the Democrat didn't give a direct answer: "I think we need a lot less ideology around health care, and a lot more of a focus on how we can make progress on a bipartisan basis."

From there, the two scrapped over Handel's time at the breast-cancer charity, where she served as a vice president of public policy during a controversial decision to cut ties with Planned Parenthood. The move made her a hero to religious conservatives and propelled her to the national spotlight.

Calling it a self-serving political move, Ossoff said it cost the foundation millions of dollars and made it harder for women to get health screenings and other treatment.

Handel, who asserted in Tuesday's debate that she didn't "engineer" that move, dropped that line of response on Thursday.

"I led the effort to find a way to have those dollars that were going to an organization that did not even provide mammograms, cannot legally provide mammograms, be reinvested," she said.

(Planned Parenthood doesn't perform mammograms but conducts hundreds of thousands of breast-cancer screenings each year.)

'Why we have scientists'

One of the testiest exchanges between the two rivals was over Trump's decision to withdraw from the 2015 Paris Accords, a pollution-cutting international compact aimed at slowing climate change.

Calling it a "very bad deal for America and Americans," Handel said she's confident Trump will renegotiate the agreement. She said there are "clearly" changes in the climate, but did not say whether she believed the temperature changes are caused by human activity.

"I am not a scientist, so I read all of that and take it all in," she said. "What I am set on is making sure we do the right thing in the right way. I don't think a single person in this room, regardless of their political persuasion, disagrees with the fact that we must be responsible stewards of our environment. But let's do it in the right way."

That brought a quick retort by Ossoff:

"Well, neither of us are scientists. That's why we have scientists," he said. "And 97 percent of scientists, as well as the military and the intelligence community, agree that climate change is a threat to our security and prosperity and that it's driven in part by human activity."

Credit: STAFF

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Cancer; Political campaigns; Presidents; Environmental policy; Climate change |
| --- | --- |

| **Location:** | United States--US Atlanta Georgia |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: Republican Party; NAICS: 813940; Name: Federal Bureau of Investigation--FBI; NAICS: 922120 |
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Document 33 of 38

Officials warn of report's local impact: Climate change will likely stress metro area, scientists say.

J.D. Capelouto Joseph.C . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]09 Aug 2017: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1927097851?accountid=13360)



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**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Atlanta isn't home to any icebergs at risk of melting. It's not on the coast, where rising sea levels can flood communities. And while summers in the city are hot, Atlanta is far from becoming a dry desertscape.

But the impacts of climate change are likely to still put long-term stress on metro Atlanta, scientists, officials and activists said, one day after The New York Times published a report that predicts rising temperatures nationwide and reduced rainfall in the southeastern United States.

The study, which had not been made public but was obtained by the Times, was conducted by researchers from 13 federal agencies and concluded that the average U.S. temperature is expected to rise. In the southeast, the report predicts, conditions are getting drier.

"We look at the science; we are aware of the trends that only seem to be worsening when it comes to the impacts of a warming climate," Stephanie Stuckey, the chief resilience officer for the City of Atlanta, said. "We're very aware of the drought and the increasing temperatures."

An overwhelming majority of scientists agree that the climate is changing, and that humans are primarily responsible for global warming.

Even land-locked cities like Atlanta, Stuckey said, will witness the effects of climate change, specifically a water supply that could decrease over the next several years. At the same time, the city is also likely to face population growth as an indirect result of sea level rise, which can force coastal residents to move inward, she said.

The report published Monday night "rings true to what we've seen in previous reports," said Marshall Shepherd, a meteorologist and the director of the Atmospheric Sciences program at the University of Georgia.

Different parts of the state are vulnerable to climate change in different ways, Shepherd said. Urban areas are more likely to see extreme heat and intense bursts of urban flooding, while southern parts of the state are more susceptible to drought, he said.

Within the metro area, Stuckey's team is preparing a climate action strategy, which includes longterm solutions for increasing energy and water efficiency. The city hopes to build a water reservoir, install solar panels on public buildings and partner with the private sector to increase sustainability.

One area already seeing the impacts of climate change is the Chattahoochee River, which creeps across almost the entire state and provides water to about 4 million people.

"Climate change is a real threat to river flow, and to rainfall, and to heat -- all factors that affect the river system," said Juliet Cohen, the executive director for Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. "That changing climate will affect many aspects of the human and environmental experience. We know that they are occurring, scientists have documented them."

Less rainfall, which the recent federal report anticipates, would "aggravate an already contentious relationship between the various users of the river system," Cohen said.

Rising temperatures can impact fish and wildlife, and flooding damages infrastructure, she said.

Georgians have turned a closer eye to climate change in recent years, research suggests. Almost 70 percent of residents believe global warming is happening, and 55 percent said they are worried about global warming, according to a 2016 study by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

This weekend, outspoken climate change activist Al Gore is scheduled speak at the progressive Netroots Nation conference in downtown Atlanta. And next month, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper is hosting their first-ever conference on climate change. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is one of the sponsors of that conference.

The report published by the Times raised eyebrows because the scientists' conclusions contradict statements made by President Trump and members of his administration, the newspaper noted. Trump announced in June that he will pull the U.S. out of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has said he does not believe carbon dioxide emissions are a primary driver of global warming.

Actions by the federal government, however, have little impact on what Atlanta officials do to fight climate change, Stuckey said. "I tend to focus on where I can actually have impact and where we have direct control," she said. "Our energies are directly spent on (asking), where can we as cities be really forward-thinking and innovative?" Mayor Kasim Reed, in conjunction with many mayors across the country, pledged to still uphold the city's commitment to the Paris accords. "All the cities jointly," Stuckey said, "are so much more powerful than a federal entity, because it's a global network."

CREDIT: Staff

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Drought; Water shortages; Floods; Studies; Sea level; Global warming; Greenhouse effect; Climate change; Cities; Rain |
| --- | --- |

| **Location:** | United States--US Chattahoochee River Atlanta Georgia |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: University of Georgia; NAICS: 611310 |
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Document 34 of 38

COBB MEETING: Isakson town hall draws irate crowd: GOP senator jeered for his views on health care, climate change.

Hallerman, Tamar; Bluestein, Greg . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]15 Aug 2017: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1928601529?accountid=13360)



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**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

Georgia U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson was met by a thunderous crowd Monday in Kennesaw that heckled and shouted down many of the Republican's remarks on health care, climate change and police brutality but cheered his swift denunciation of last weekend's attacks in Charlottesville, Va.

Monday's town hall at Kennesaw State University, on Isakson's home turf of Cobb County, careened from the rocky to the uproarious as a largely unfriendly crowd took the rare opportunity to vent about President Donald Trump and the GOP agenda before a Republican member of Congress.

Attendees peppered the third-term senator with questions on everything from individual members of the Trump White House to gay rights and Isakson's recent vote to overhaul Medicaid. Isakson was booed after he said "all lives matter" and as he explained his votes last month in favor of various Republican health care proposals, which he said were designed to set up negotiations with the House.

"You've got to get it to a conference committee or it's not going to happen," he said, as some in the crowd roared their displeasure. "I didn't like it, but I voted for it. I couldn't get to where I wanted to go unless I followed the road that led me there."

The testy moments started even before the third-term Republican made his official entrance onto the stage and continued as Isakson turned to leave, when he was hit with shouts of "shame."

KSU President Sam Olens, who introduced Isakson, was met with laughs and jeers after he mentioned Isakson's position as the chairman on the Senate Ethics Committee.

"We're here to have a civil discussion, ain't we?" said Olens, a former state attorney general.

For his part, Isakson paused and let members of the crowd shout for a few seconds before stepping in with his answers. And even though the at-capacity crowd of 600 was testy, Isakson largely maintained control of the room.

"I'm trying to answer your question, but I don't want to interrupt," he snapped back as several members of the crowd jeered his initial answer to a question about health care, a topic that dominated Monday's discussion.

"What's your insurance policy?" one member of the crowd shouted. "We're scared to death," another said, referring to the GOP's effort to repeal Obamacare.

Isakson is one of three Georgia members of Congress who have held in-per-son town halls during Congress' August recess; U.S. Reps.Buddy Carter and Doug Collins are the others. Both House Republicans also faced fired-up crowds.

Isakson sought to ease some of the tensions at the start of the town hall, unequivocally condemning the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacist groups behind the deadly violence last weekend in Charlottesville. His remarks drew a standing ovation.

Earlier in the day on GPB Radio, Isakson leveled sharp criticism at the president for failing to immediately condemn the racist organizers of this weekend's fatal protest.

"If something that rises to that level of horror takes place, it should be expeditiously and quickly addressed by the leader of that country," he said on "Political Rewind."

At one point during Monday's town hall, facing a biting question about cuts to disability services in the failed GOP health care plan, he showed his cane to the audience and said he recently became disabled. He was invoking the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease that he revealed a few years ago, and some in the crowd groaned.

"I know how lucky I am to live here," he said, saying that Congress hasn't cut funding for disability services yet. "And as far as I'm concerned, we're not going to."

And targeted with a question about whether humans contribute to climate change, Isakson said he was a "full believer" that carbon contributes to the rise in temperatures. But he was roundly booed -- one person in the crowd cried "go back to school" -- when he suggested it was impossible to pin rising temperatures solely on human activity.

Before Monday, neither of Georgia's Republican U.S. senators had held a town hall since Trump's November victory, a strategy that many other of the state's GOP lawmakers have deployed.

Some have opted to meet with invite-only crowds. Others have used the more controlled telephone town hall format. Isakson held three of those this spring and summer, all of which were generally polite affairs. But some have criticized the strategy as a way of shutting out critics.

Ashley Grizzle Soeder, a 37-year-old magazine writer from Senoia, said Isakson needed "to see the people face to face."

"I feel like over the phone they can kind of choose who they answer," she said, "but with this they can't really avoid directly speaking to them."

Justin Kelley, a 31-year-old veteran and KSU student, said he was frustrated by the way the senator was treated.

"This is an elected official here to represent us and our voice,"he said. "The fact that a lot of people just kept interrupting him before he was allowed to make his point, it was utter contempt and disrespect, in my opinion."

Several members of the crowd, even attendees who asked critical questions, thanked Isakson for holding the event.

One said, "It is outside of the city during rush hour, but I do appreciate you being here."

Another added, "I know a lot of your colleagues don't have the guts."

Speaking to reporters after the event, Isakson found no problem with the sometimes-testy crowd.

"I would encourage all 99 of my colleagues to jump in," he said. "The water's fine."

(Box)

COMING SOON

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is getting ready to launch a new premium experience for readers across the state who care about Georgia politics, policy and state news.PoliticallyGeorgia will bring you reporting you can't get anywhere else, thought-provoking opinion writing, and tools to help you navigate the world of government and make your voice heard.

CREDIT: Staff writer Jim Galloway

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Disability; Climate change; Congressional committees |
| --- | --- |

| **Location:** | Cobb County Georgia |
| --- | --- |

| **People:** | Trump, Donald J Collins, Doug |
| --- | --- |

| **Company / organization:** | Name: Senate-Ethics, Select Committee on; NAICS: 921120; Name: Republican Party; NAICS: 813940; Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120 |
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Document 35 of 38

READERS WRITE: Why can't GOP see climate change?

**Publication info:** The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]11 Sep 2017: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1937321067?accountid=13360)



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**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

I have granddaughters -- 6 and 4 years old -- living in Florida. My biggest concern for their future does not involve war and peace, the economy, international or race relations, education, job opportunities, immigration or even North Korea. When pushed, we seem to solve those problems. I am primarily concerned about the future of our environment. Will they have clean air, water, food and residential areas safe from the destructive force of mega storms?

Despite overwhelming evidence that man-made carbon emissions are causing intensified global warming, we continue to elect people who drag their feet on imposing solutions.

A cursory review of the Congressional Record establishes that every GOP senator and representative from Georgia has either denied the existence of global warming, or rejected evidence of a connection with carbon emissions. How and why did treating our environment with such disdain become the "secret handshake" of our Republican Party?

DENNIS C. O'BRIEN,

MARIETTA

CREDIT: Staff

**DETAILS**

| **Subject:** | Race relations; Greenhouse effect; Climate change |
| --- | --- |

| **Location:** | North Korea Florida Georgia |
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| **Company / organization:** | Name: Republican Party; NAICS: 813940 |
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Document 36 of 38

Harvey, Irma put climate change on Ga.'s radar

Galloway, Jim . The Atlanta Journal - Constitution ; Atlanta, Ga. [Atlanta, Ga]14 Sep 2017: B.1.

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**LINKS**

**FULL TEXT**

For 82 years, a tidal gauge has been located at the same spot on the Georgia coast, at the Fort Pulaski National Monument on Cockspur Island.

On Tuesday, it became clear that Hurricane Matthew's record sea surge of last October would not be surpassed. Hurricane Irma's shoreward push fell short by a mere 3 inches and change.

You might think this good news, until you realize that Matthew was corralled in the Atlantic. Irma clawed her way up the west coast of Florida, and still had energy to maul the East Coast -- inundating Jacksonville, covering much of Tybee Island, and flooding the streets of Savannah and Charleston.

In other words, the second-place finisher at Fort Pulaski did all that with one hand tied behind her back. Never mind her ability, at the same time, to cover the entire state of Georgia with a green radar mitten.

You no doubt have heard that Scott Pruitt, the head of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, thinks it "insensitive" to discuss climate change policy in this particular climate, which has given us both Harvey and Irma over a three-week period.

Yes, we need to be respectful of a grim body count that stretches 2,000 miles, from the Caribbean to well beyond Houston. Lost homes and other property will take years to recoup as well.

But I will take my permission from Tomás Regalado, the mayor of suffering Miami. Of course, we should talk about it, he said: "This is a truly, truly poster child for what is to come."

Harvey and Irma were killer storms, no doubt. But they were policy drivers, too. Beyond the death and destruction, the past four weeks have amounted to a nonstop, TV-driven campaign against federal cuts to this country's meteorological operations -- as proposed by President Donald Trump this spring.

Aside from cuts to scientific research elsewhere, Trump proposed to end a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration program to build better prediction models for tornadoes in the South, and $11 million from a tsunami-warning program for the West Coast.

The National Weather Service would receive a 5 percent haircut. But NOAA's weather-satellite budget would be trimmed by 17 percent. Scientists presume the Trump administration has attempted to target climate change research rather than weather forecasting. But the two bleed into each other.

"So yes, they're not cutting the actual weather service, but one of the primary tools that the weather service uses -- that office is going to get cut massively," said Scott Weaver, leader of the climate science team at the D.C.-based Environmental Defense Fund.

Both Harvey and Irma demonstrated that more intense storms require closer watching. "As we're starting to experience more extreme events, the ability to predict the weather in real time becomes even more important than it was just 20 or 30 years ago," Weaver said.

In Athens, Marshall Shepherd, director of the atmospheric science program at the University of Georgia and a former president of the American Meteorological Society, characterized the tracking of Harvey and Irma as an effective demonstration of science that works.

The first National Hurricane Center bulletin on Harvey was issued at 11 a.m. on Aug. 17. It made landfall in Texas eight days later. Irma was first noticed on Aug. 30, and struck the Keys nine days later.

"With both Harvey and Irma, we were talking about the threat of these days to weeks in advance. That's not by accident. That's because of advances that we're making," Shepherd said.

He thinks Trump's cuts are being reconsidered. "My sense is that cuts won't be as dramatic as originally proposed by the administration," Shepherd said. "Congress is learning the value of NOAA."

It's possible that Harvey and Irma may even make it easier for Republicans to utter the words "climate" and "change." Together.

Daniel Rochberg is a former U.S. State Department worker on the faculty of Emory University. He's one of the organizers behind the Georgia Climate Project, which debuted this spring. It's intended to become a network of academics encompassing the entire state.

"The idea is that, any time a leader in the state wants to work this issue, now or in the future, from the Republican side or the Democratic side, they should have a team of folks to turn to, ready to roll with information at their fingertips," Rochberg said.

I asked him whether any Republicans, from Gov. Nathan Deal to U.S. Sens. Johnny Isakson or David Per-due, or GOP members of the U.S. House, had expressed any interest. Not yet, Rochberg said.

But he is optimistic, and noted two "small but important" messages from Georgia's state government.

In 2015, the wildlife division of the state Department of Natural Resources produced a report on climate change's impact on animal species throughout the state.

Last November, DNR convened a "climate ready" conference. "We know that sea level's rising. To not prepare for it is really not a responsible course of action, no matter what your political inclinations," Spud Woodward, director of DNR's coastal resources division, was quoted as saying afterward.

That conference, Rochberg said, "was a signal that the state is willing to convene a conversation around this, despite the politically charged nature of the issue."

The needle that's being threaded here: Conversations about the effects of climate change may be necessary --especially when crop losses, flooding, or other observable effects are involved. Dialogue about the causes remains off-limits, for that could also lead to a discussion of remedies. And that's where the polarization starts.

Rochberg is kicking around the idea of inviting 50 conservative and 50 liberal students to Emory next spring, to see if some common ground on the topic might be found.

Just in time for the 2018 hurricane season.

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