

# Don't be an accomplice in failure

It has been a half century since the first Earth Day and likewise since the enactment of the National Environmental Protection Act and the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Since that time CO<sub>2</sub> levels have risen at an unprecedented rate and exceed 410 ppm, 50% of US waterways cannot sustain healthy aquatic life, 25% of the bird population is gone and Americans are subjected to thousands of toxic chemicals every day through the air they breathe, the water they drink and the food they eat.

Made legal by our so-called system of environmental protection and designed to support commerce over sustainability this has in turn led to huge wealth gaps, social injustice, environmentally caused illness and record levels of homelessness, poverty and unemployment. All of this has been presided over by the two corporatist political parties.

Peer reviewed studies indicate that climate change increases both the risk and impact of a pandemic. Now, rapid changes in our climate directly attributed to non-sustainable resource extraction and industrial practices have literally set the West Coast on fire.

The extent of the long-term health and economic impacts are predicted by well-known economists, including Yanis Varoufakis and Richard Wolff, to lead to a prolonged depression if not a complete collapse of our financial system as we know it. Tribal loyalty and adherence to the two major parties has failed and failed catastrophically.

We are in fact a failed state. Would any voter want to be complicit in such a failure of leadership by voting to maintain the status quo?

Today, one third of Oregon is controlled by real estate investment trusts owned by out of state shareholders.

Operated as monoculture tree plantations, these farms employ harmful aerial spraying that contaminate Oregon's waterways. Studies of past Oregon wildfires has shown that plantation tree farms burn hotter than natural old growth forests and unlike real forests that burn in a mosaic pattern and recover, tree farms, on the other hand, ignite like flamethrowers, forming "firenados" that jump roads and rivers.

We are witnessing the resultant loss of human life and property as a direct consequence of a conflagration ignited by climate and these ill-thought forest practices in Oregon, California and Washington creating a perfect storm for disaster.

Supremacists arrogantly scoff at the notion our environment, our climate, the whole ecosystems we all depend upon for our very survival as a species should be entitled to the same legal protections as humankind. Nature and all its living, breathing embodiments, is regarded as chattel, enslaved to mankind, mere property under our current system of law.

Nature is now demonstrating in full force, in a voice so clear only the most obtuse can possibly ignore the folly of this belief system.

While both the Democrats and the Republicans have done their best over the years to quash true democracy by standing in the way of third parties, we do still have choices. First, of course, is the cosmic question of whether to continue to legitimize the two parties that guided our dissent into this abyss? Doing so, unfortunately, perpetuates the same thinking that created these problems in the first place.

The next choice is to reject both parties and reregister to vote or at the very least reject pro-gas, corporate sponsored candidates like Melissa Cribbins and Dick Anderson.

State Senate District 5 constituents have an alternative candidate who opposes non sustainable fossil fuel projects like the proposed Jordan Cove LNG and gas pipeline that will use eminent domain to seize private land. Nominated by the Pacific Green Party, Lakeside City Councilor Shauleen Higgins will refuse corporate campaign donations and work to improve our system of law to recognize the rights of communities to protect themselves to higher standards than state and federal regulatory agencies.

Pacific Green Party candidate, Nathalie Paravicini is running for Oregon Secretary of State. The secretary of state sits on the Oregon Land Use Board and is instrumental in determining how the State's forests, including the Elliott State Forest, are managed.

For 244 years we've given this grand two party experiment a fair shot and it isn't working. It's a hard slog to change a political system but one sure way to fail is to keep doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

Don't be complicit. Vote for change like your grandchildren's lives depend upon it, because they do.