

Common Sense and Climate Change Mitigation
Sean Hayes, Executive Director of the Oberlin Project
Saturday 5/6, 4:15-5:15pm

We need to understand the underlying mindset and beliefs of those who could be considered “climate change skeptics.” Find common ground, based on their concerns. 70% of Americans believe that global warming is happening, but we are less sure about what is causing it and even more uncertain about scientific agreement about climate change. This leads to a great uncertainty about what the government or we should do to mitigate climate change.

Only 4 in 10 Americans think global warming will harm them personally. This is the most critical failure in our ability to perceive global warming threats and is a tipping point in responding appropriately. As a species, we do not respond well to threats that are not immediately personal and of grave concern in the near future.

But! 7 in 10 Americans think that future generations will be harmed a “great or moderate amount” by climate change. How can we link the concerns for the future with action needed now? Engage with people on the issues that concern them.

WATCH https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbmt_WeNBck

Focus on Conservation, Energy Freedom, Innovation, Energy Choice, Competition; do not lead off with “Climate Change”

Important truth to keep in mind: **We must power civilization on renewable energy and leave 75% of known fossil fuel reserves in the ground.**

Examples from the Oberlin Project for engaging citizens, re-envisioning food production and energy cycles, supporting economic development with “jobs for the future.” Personal efforts are important.

“While you’re taking independent and collective action, remember to push for large scale political change. March when necessary but also build coalitions that unite different constituencies. Do not neglect local and state initiatives. Those are arguably just as important as the national initiatives and get a tiny fraction of the attention.”