

Climate Change

My name is Bob Armstrong, I'm a Conway Selectman and I chair the Climate Crisis Task Force in Franklin Co.

As Chair, I want to mention the recent passing of one of our most active members, Beth Adams, the energy behind Mass Forest Rescue and who organized countless meetings on behalf of our Western Mass forests. She was a powerful leader and would be here if she could. As a Conway selectman, I want to congratulate Katie Theoharides, former Conway resident and our new Secretary of Energy. Katie, make us proud!

So, Climate Change. I think we all understand that it's primarily caused by rising temperatures due to the rising percent of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. And those gases are created by burning fossil *and other* fuels to heat our homes, drive our cars, and generate electricity.

Here in Massachusetts, we have a proud history of leading the nation by rejecting British rule, by the industrial revolution, by

our academic institutions and by MassHealth. We also have every right to be proud of our state's commitment to combatting climate change by restructuring our electric utilities, by implementing a science based RPS and APS, and by passing the Green Communities Act. But we are here today to consider the DOER rule changes that roll back the very restrictions that define our commitment to limiting carbon emissions, rules that were virtually written by Palmer Energy so they can build a huge electricity generating plant in Springfield and receive more than \$10 million per year in subsidies for burning trees in pollution spewing incinerators. These rule changes are being rushed through behind closed doors without the review of normal legislative process.

Considering these rule changes, we likely disagree on the urgency of climate change, and no one is demonstrating that urgency better than Greta Thunberg, a Swedish student who modeled her school strike after the Parkland student strike a year ago. At only 15, she's become a powerful speaker before the British and Swedish Parliaments and at the UN Climate Conference. She's met the Pope and been nominated for the Nobel

Peace Prize.

Here are a few of her thoughts:

We live in a strange world, where science tells us we are about 11 years away from setting off an irreversible chain reaction that will probably be the end of civilization as we know it. A world where politicians say it is too expensive to save the world while spending trillions subsidizing fossil fuels. A world where no one dares look beyond our current political systems while it is clear that the answers we seek will not be found there.

She says, I want you to panic as if our house is on fire. Some politicians seem to feel that panic is the wrong reaction, that it leads to poor solutions, but, when your house IS on fire, some level of panic is required. We are now in the midst of the 6th mass extinction. The extinction rate is up to 10,000 times faster than normal with up to 200 species becoming extinct every single day. We need to protect the biosphere, the air, the oceans, the soil, and the forests. You know that we don't have any other choice.

For 30 years, we've largely ignored scientist

warnings about climate change. It's now an emergency, and we need to change nearly every part of our behavior. We cannot continue with 'business as usual' by weakening the few fossil fuel restrictions we agreed to years ago, restrictions that require that when we burn wood to generate electricity, that it be done cleanly. We should remove biomass completely from the list of subsidized fuels. We should stop promoting wood and garbage as a clean fuel.

You, the DOER, are the Massachusetts authority charged with approving these rule changes that will enable Palmer to build a huge wood burning plant in Springfield. Please don't let this become your legacy. We have a governor who never met a pipeline he didn't want to build. We have the former Secretary, Matt Beaton, who never met a fish he didn't want to catch. Katie, as a fellow Conway resident, I hope your legacy as Secretary of Energy will be that you never meet an environment you don't want to protect.

thank you