

THE PRINCETON PACKET

SOLUTIONS

By Huck Fairman

Record heat – June hottest month in human history

This June was the hottest month ever recorded in human history. The previous record was set in June 2016. Every month this year has been among the five hottest on record. For this reason, and all the accompanying changes happening around the planet, we should all acknowledge we are in a climate crisis. Even Anchorage, Alaska, saw temperatures reach 90 degrees. That much heat near the North Pole will produce substantial melting, ocean level rise and threatens fish species.

This heat in Alaska followed a heat wave in Europe, where Paris temperatures reached 114 degrees and Berlin was not far behind.

A spokesman for a national tree-care company reported many of its Texas employees head north in the summer, as it's too hot to work outside.

People and some governments are responding. California, the national leader in dealing with the climate crisis, will require all new homes to use solar power. An entire new town in Florida will be solar powered. But, in many locations in Florida and other states, power companies are resisting the switch to solar, fearing it will impact its profitability and anger shareholders.

Although Florida experiences ample sunshine, it trails 19 other states, including New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Maryland in the use of solar power.

The reason? Utilities – there and others across the country – have fought politically and home owners directly over the use of solar power if it does not originate with those power companies. While Florida's utilities' solar arrays have increased at a nation-leading rate, its solar power

amounts to only 1% of the state's generated electricity. In California, solar energy accounts for 19% of electricity generation. In Vermont and Massachusetts, solar produces 11% of power generation.

In Florida, utilities spent \$20 million on a campaign to add fees on solar users and keep solar companies, other than utilities, out of state. Their proposal was defeated by a coalition of environmental groups, the Christian Coalition and even the Tea Party.

Twenty-four governors, including three Republicans, urged President Trump to abandon his planned regulatory rollback of automobile pollution standards. Criticism of Trump's plan has come from not only environmentalists, but labor unions and 17 automakers.

The governors called on Trump to allow states to write their own clean air rules. The governors' statement said, "We must unite to ensure a strong, science-based national standard, in California and across the country, that increases year over year."

A California spokeswoman stated, "We have the largest group of states ever coming together to back our position." In addition, she noted, "We now have over half

the U.S. auto market supporting us ... we are going to stick with the standards."

Vehicles and airplanes account for 41% of California's greenhouse gas emissions; in New York, they account for 33%. In California, industry accounts for 23% of the state's emissions; in New York, it's only 11%.

Restoring forests around the world could, according to a recent study, absorb two-thirds of historic emissions. Here, the Trump administration is returning more western lands to private owners. Will those owners be focused on profits or preservation?

Back in Washington, D.C., a rainfall equal to a normal month's total fell on the city in one morning, overwhelming the city's storm-water system. A separate, but also very large, rain storm fell on New Orleans flooding much of the city. A hurricane may follow that storm with more rain.

While Trump recently claimed he has protected the nation's air and water, the EPA found four criteria air pollutants increased in 2017. The reductions that did occur resulted from the Obama administration's efforts and court mandates.

The United States continues to be the second-largest emitter in the world, and one of the largest per-capita emitters.

While before the Trump Administration, the U.S. had reduced emissions by 15.7%, the rate was below that of more than 20 signatory nations of the Paris Climate Accord – from which Trump has withdrawn this nation. While the U.S. has reduced its per capita emissions by about 26%, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Sweden have produced significantly greater reductions. In 2018, according to the Energy Information Administration, U.S. emissions increased.

Some knowledgeable listeners to Trump's claims for environmental action found the disparity between his claims and reality to be "surreal."

Of all the many reasons to impeach or otherwise depose Trump, the most compelling and urgent one is he is threatening the nation's environmental survivability, the world's ... and all economies. His rolling back environmental protections just as the planet has reached record heat levels, which will only increase, is the most widely devastating of his capital offenses.

