

Now is the time to protect science and the environment

Commentary: Politically Aware

by Joel Trambley



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Analyses of the 2010 Republican electoral wave put considerable importance on the rallies held during Congressional recesses. The newly dubbed “Tea Party” showed up at town halls to challenge President Obama’s agenda and strike fear into moderate Democrats and Republicans. They couldn’t stop the stimulus, Dodd-Frank or the Affordable Care Act (ACA), but their organization and energy led directly to the electoral successes that stymied other Obama legislation.

Congressmembers are currently home for a recess, making it a good time for progressives to organize against Trump’s agenda and lay the groundwork for their own 2018 electoral wave. Groups like Indivisible are already planning to attend town halls and demanding more of them. While there are plenty of objectionable parts to the Trump agenda, the sheer chaos makes it hard to find a single rallying point. The ACA is safe (for the moment),

the travel ban is in the courts, Justice Gorsuch is a reality and tax reform remains amorphous.

So I suggest the environment. The Trump administration continues to have success in rolling back environmental protections, including allowing continued pesticide use, refusing to calculate the environmental cost of fossil fuels, reconsidering fuel standards and generally rejecting science. In addition to advocating at town halls, there are two notable opportunities for San Diegans to support the environment while fighting the broader Trump agenda.

Thursday April 20, the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) will hold their annual awards celebration, themed “Leaders United for Justice”. Those looking for a local group fighting a multi-front war against the current administration should check them out (environmentalhealth.org). Women? Many of the leaders to be celebrated are women trained to advocate for the health and safety of their families. Health care? EHC is fighting the high rates of childhood asthma in underserved communities. The wall? EHC works on both sides of the border, building bridges with our neighbors in Mexico and serving local communities with significant immigrant populations. Working families? Labor and civil rights icon Dolores Huerta is the keynote speaker and an award recipient.

Follow that up with the March for Science on Earth Day, April 22, which “champions publicly funded and publicly communicated science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity.” Never have science, and the truth in general, been under such political assault. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who led the conservative revolution in 1994, sought to increase funding to the National Institutes of Health even as he tried to cut and balance the federal budget. He knew that investment in research, both basic and applied, was a good investment in America and saved lives. That lesson seems to be

lost on this generation of conservatives, who would shrink everything but military spending.
(marchforsciencesd.com).

President Obama was derided for not being able to ensure “if you like your health care plan, you can keep it.” President Trump’s administration won’t even try to protect science or the environment. This recess, #Resist to keep them.

In the interests of full disclosure Joel Trambley is on the Fund Development Committee for the Environmental Health Coalition.

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