



ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CRISIS

Henderson County
North Carolina



Changing nature, changing our climate

Natural beauty is still abundant in Henderson County, but it won't shield us from disruptions to our climate. Furthermore, rapid growth in Henderson County is creating new environmental challenges as we build on fragile slopes, widen and add new roads, and drain chemicals from agriculture and residential lawns into streams and rivers.

Uncontrolled burning of fossil fuels and a doubling of the world's population to almost 8 billion over the last 50 years have done extensive damage to the Earth:

85% of our wetlands and half our coral reefs have vanished.

75 million acres of prime forest disappeared during the last decade.

One third of our soil has been lost to deforestation, erosion and unsustainable agricultural practices.

A **Great Pacific Garbage Patch** twice the size of Texas now floats off California's coast.

Human impact to Earth's environment is so profound that **one million animal species** face extinction within decades. And a broad scientific consensus exists that human activity is rapidly changing our climate:

Average temperatures rose an unprecedented 2 degrees F. over the last century, melting polar and glacial ice and raising ocean levels.

Warmer temperatures are spawning storms that are more numerous and intense; drought and wildfires are now commonplace in many western states.

Shifts to Earth's climate zones have pushed U.S. tornado hotspots 500 miles eastward since the mid-1980's, and expanded the world's major deserts.

"Is [EPA] seeking input from key scientific advisory committees? Is it coordinating actively with the broad scientific community on research surrounding environmental issues? I don't think they do... Is the agency coordinating internationally to address global environmental issues? I don't think they are."

Lee Thomas, EPA
Administrator under President Ronald Reagan. Written testimony to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, June 2019



What We Believe



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“There is no doubt in my mind that under the current administration, the EPA is retreating from its historic mission to protect our environment and the health of the public from environmental hazards.”

Christine Todd Whitman, EPA Administrator under President George W. Bush. Testimony to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, June 2019

Government must act to restore our degraded environment through research, regulation and enforcement, just as it has since President Nixon established the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970. But industry lobbyists and science skeptics in the EPA are turning this key actor in protecting public health and fighting climate change into a hostage to the industries it was intended to regulate. By actively promoting fossil fuels, rejecting the Paris Climate Accords and rolling back environmental safeguards, the Trump Administration is accelerating a crisis already spinning out of control.

Business has often been an important ally in solving our toughest environmental challenges. But it will do so only if we enact reasonable incentives, science-driven regulations, rigorous enforcement and strict limits on political donations - aligning business interests with public health and safety. Without this course correction, corporate \$\$\$ will continue to exert excessive control over politicians and the laws and regulations they enact.

Voters – To address the climate crisis, we must elect responsible politicians committed to effective solutions at a scale equal to our challenges. As individuals, we must also adopt new technology and habits to reduce our “carbon footprint.” Many of these steps are easy and money-saving:

- ✓ Turn off unused lights and appliances
- ✓ Adjust the thermostat – or open a window
- ✓ Walk or bike more, and make your next car or appliance more efficient
- ✓ **Elect Democrats to local, state and federal offices!**

This article gives more smart tips on reducing your carbon footprint:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/12/03/upshot/what-you-can-do-about-climatechange.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>

Sources:

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