

# McClintock faces hostile crowd in South Tahoe



South Lake Tahoe resident Bonnie Turnbull, left, spars with Rep. Tom McClintock over climate change. Photo/Kathryn reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

Audience question: *What causes climate change?*

Rep. Tom McClintock's answer: *"It's a natural phenomenon. It has more to do with solar cycles than human activity."*

To this, most of the 50 people in attendance at the May 3 town hall at South Tahoe Public Utility District's board room erupted in disbelief. Based on reactions to and interactions with the congressman, it's unlikely most of the attendees will be voting for the Republican this year.

McClintock is making the rounds of his district, spelling out what he has done back in Washington, D.C., and what he hopes to do going forward.

Climate change was an overriding theme at Tuesday's gathering.

Several people tried to engage McClintock in a debate, that at times escalated into a near shouting match.

Many were armed with facts. Local resident Bonnie Turnbull even had a chart to add to her concerns. John Friedrich, who was in Paris during the climate summit last year, read information from his tablet.

McClintock all the while stuck to his talking points – the climate has been changing for 4 billion years.

One person shouted, “Your naiveté is absolutely stunning.”

McClintock claims this is the first such meeting where the crowd wouldn’t let him finish his sentence. What they were upset with were the rehearsed answers that were not based on science. At no time did McClintock cite sources for his beliefs/facts.

Several asked how he can dispute the facts when **97 percent** of the scientific community says climate change is real and human caused. McClintock’s assertion was that the data is nearly 20 years old. It’s actually a figure from 2013. This is when the congressman did what he accused the audience of – not listening.

Before opening the floor to questions, the congressman talked about if mandatory spending – like Medicare and Social Security – were under the discretionary column, that the budget would be easier to balance.

Forest health is another concern of his. Something he often says at these meetings is that the timber will come out one way or another – either harvested or via fire. He wants to allow trees to be felled for profit. That is not allowed in the basin anymore.

“The forests are dying because we’ve allowed them to be catastrophically overgrown,” McClintock said.

Part of his bill that is a scaled down version of the Senate's Lake Tahoe Restoration Act calls for more forest thinning. It has passed out of committee.

He is also working to get more funding to fight fires, including having forest fires be listed as a natural disaster so they qualify for federal aid in the same manner as earthquakes and hurricanes.

McClintock's answer to dealing with drought was to create more storage. But in order to build more dams in California, he said, environmental regulations need to change.

An attendee brought up subsidies for oil companies.

"I'm against all subsidies. Period. People deserve honest pricing," McClintock said.

Another person spoke about being against trade agreements, saying the United States usually comes out on the losing end.

McClintock disagreed, touted the merits of NAFTA, adding, "Generally speaking I support free trade."

Jude Wood, executive director of the local Boys & Girls Club, asked McClintock what he is doing to help families and touched on immigration.

The congressman said he won't help those who are here illegally, even if it were their parents who brought them here. He said a path to citizenship exists and that everyone should follow it.

As for families, he'd like to raise the child deduction when it comes to filing taxes.