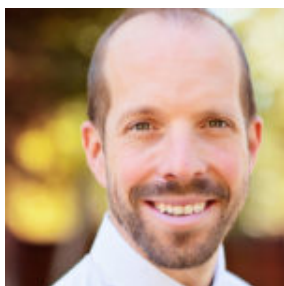


Opinion: We can make a difference post-Paris accord

By Nick Exline

On June 1, as I watched President Trump announce that his administration would be pulling the United States out of the Paris Climate Accord, I couldn't help but reflect on President Ronald Reagan's farewell address to the nation in which he imparted, for the final time as president, his vision that the United States is the world's shining "light on a hill."



Nick Exline

These words rang in my mind because with this withdrawal the United States now joins Syria and Nicaragua as the only three nations on earth not to sign onto the accord. Nicaragua didn't sign because they believed the accord did not go far enough. Abandoning the Paris Climate Accord is counter to the collective voices of 194 nations on earth, all recognized scientific institutions, our universities, our religious leaders, our military, our businesses large and small, and our citizenry who overwhelmingly supported staying in the Paris Climate Accord. From a purely economic growth stand point it is difficult to ascertain why the United States would turn its back on a \$6 trillion renewable energy growth industry whose job forecasts exceed all other sectors. Why would we cede these jobs of the future to our competitors?

It was difficult for me to see how this withdrawal could co-

exist with Reagan's vision of the United States as the world's indispensable nation, the world's "light on a hill." It suddenly occurred to me that when Reagan referred to the United States as the "light on the hill" he was not stating that he the president, the actions of our government or our military were the light, but rather that as a result of the tireless efforts of the American people to stand up for what's right and just, that we the American people, are the light.

In that vein I am more optimistic than ever that we will meet and exceed what is required to address the defining issue of our time, climate change. We must divorce ourselves of the notion that a politician or technological innovation is going to come and save us in the nick of time. We must all grab the wheel of history and become the leaders necessary to create a world of which we can all be proud to leave to our children.

Working to have the city of South Lake Tahoe commit to 100 percent renewable electricity was not an effort of us vs. them, but an effort of we. We as a community came together to demand that our homes and businesses be lighted by renewable electricity. We came together to say that not only is renewable electricity the economically wise decision, but we understand that climate change is diminishing our snow pack and impacting the clarity of our lake and we will take a stand.

My optimism is rooted in the understanding that together we can accomplish anything. In the coming months we will work with many partners to push this 100 percent renewable commitment to more cities and counties beyond South Lake Tahoe's borders and we will need your help.

In the end I am optimistic because I understand as we grab the wheel of history, and tirelessly work toward bringing about positive change, that we are in fact the "light on the hill" and our brightest hour is on the horizon.

I look forward to working with each and everyone one of you during these exciting times and please contact me if you would like to get involved in this positive change because we are all in this together.

Nick Exline is chair of the South Lake Tahoe 100% Renewable Committee.