

Green Drinks attendees discuss climate solutions

By Sean Dolan staff writer—Aug 29, 2017



The Logan chapter of Green Drinks, an international environmental meetup organization, discusses the carbon fee and dividend at the Bull's Head Grille on Tuesday evening.

Sean Dolan/Herald Journal

The drinks might not be green, but the conversation is.

For the past year and a half, a group of community members with sustainability on their minds have been meeting once a month for Green Drinks, an international environmental organization. They meet at different locations around Logan and invite a different group each month to make a short presentation to guide the discussion.

Alexi Lamm, USU Sustainability Council president and a Ph.D. candidate in the Quinney College of Natural Resources, said the Logan chapter was formed in early 2015 to create a

bridge between the community on and off campus so that students, faculty and citizens are more informed about the environment.

“It’s an everybody issue,” Lamm said. “It affects everyone.”

On Tuesday, the informal group learned about the Citizens’ Climate Lobby on the patio of the Bull’s Head Grille at Blue Square apartments near USU.

Charles Ashurst, a member of Logan chapter of the Citizens’ Climate Lobby and employee of Campbell Scientific, said the group is unusual among environmental groups in that is it bipartisan.

“You say bipartisanship in today’s Congress,” Ashurst said. “Are you kidding me?”

The closely related Climate Solutions Caucus has 52 members with an even split among Democrats and Republicans. Rep. Mia Love is the only member from Utah.

“This is lefties and righties, I’d guess you’d say,” Ashurst said.

He said the Citizens’ Climate Lobby is focused solely on one solution to reduce humanity’s greenhouse gas emissions: a carbon fee and dividend.

The revenue-neutral proposal would place a fee on carbon at the source of extraction or at the source of import. One hundred percent of the net revenue would then be paid back to households. Ashurst said Alaska has a similar system where households receive checks from the carbon fee.

He said it’s an idea that both conservatives and progressives can get behind.

Zackary Webb, a USU technology and engineering education major, said he attended a Citizens’ Climate Lobby event in Washington, D.C., and thought they were very organized and had realistic goals.

He said the challenge is convincing big business to support the carbon fee and dividend. Then, more members of Congress, particularly Republicans, would get behind the idea.

Jack Greene, a volunteer with the USU sustainability office, said the Citizens' Climate Lobby has held thousands of meetings with members of Congress or their staff to try to push the idea. When there are repeated interactions like that, he said representatives start to view it as a serious idea.

Ashurst said some environmental groups hold a big rally or event and then they disappear, but that's not the case with CCL.

"This group," Ashurst said, "we sort of stay on it."

Jean Lown, an emeritus family economics professor at USU, said it's time to recognize the cost of climate change. She said it seems like people aren't making the connection between the estimated \$30 billion price tag for recovery in Texas after Hurricane Harvey and greenhouse emissions from human activity.

The next Green Drinks meeting will be on Sept. 26. For more information, visit <http://www.greendrinks.org/Logan>.