

Child wants father to 'Drem big'

By Terri Harber, Daily News staff writer | Posted: Monday, March 31, 2014 1:00 am

About two dozen people attended an event in Moscow on Saturday afternoon focused on solving global warming.

"The science of human-caused climate change is settled," said Bill Barron, a Salt Lake City resident who is a regional coordinator for the group Citizens' Climate Lobby.

Barron was in Moscow to provide information about the group to people considering joining the new local chapter.

Effects of climate change, including the economic ones, are ongoing and frequently in the news. A significant part of the solution should be economic, according to CCL.

CCL members use economic points to convince climate change deniers and advocates of limited government the matter is urgent and that public policy should be reshaped to solve the problem.

Individuals recycling, gardening and practicing other mostly voluntary activities to improve the environment haven't had a substantial enough effect to stop global warming. But the effort now should come from the source of the fossil fuels, Barron said.

Individual efforts will continue to be important, however, so CCL also will continue to create "political will" for people not to use as much fossil fuel by highlighting climate change wherever and whenever possible.

Much was said about group members preparing to meet with political leaders and writing opinion pieces for newspapers. But members must be able to speak comfortably and persuasively with anyone about the fee proposal and the numerous related issues, Barron said.

CCL wants the federal government to provide a solution to climate change and is proposing a carbon fee and dividend to be approved by the U.S. Congress.

The fee would be collected by the government through the U.S. Treasury Department or even the IRS to offset damage caused by use of fossil fuels. The fee, paid by fossil fuel producers, would be based on the amount of carbon dioxide produced when specific types of fuels are used and



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Bill Barron, a regional coordinator for the Citizens Climate lobby, speaks to a group Saturday at the at the 1912 Center in Moscow.

would rise incrementally.

The money collected would be put back into the hands of taxpayers for them to use on alternative energy sources.

Over time, fossil fuels would become less dominant energy sources because the fee would cause the prices for coal, gasoline and natural gas to rise and make alternative sources more attractive, Barron said.

The fee would also provide consumers with more money to pay for those alternative fuels, which over time should become less expensive and, eventually, be considered more attractive sources of energy.

CCL was founded in 2007 by San Diego resident Marshall Saunders, and there are now more than 165 chapters worldwide, though most are in the U.S. and Canada. It has roughly 3,500 members.

It doesn't sound like an earthshaking number of volunteers, but nearly every one of them will be a citizen lobbyist advocating CCL's legislative plan, and that will require possessing knowledge about the topic and acquiring a strong ability to communicate about it, Barron told the people at the event.

Saunders started off giving presentations in his community about climate change at schools, universities and community organizations. He knew his effectiveness was highly limited, however.

"While I suggested ways for people to reduce their use of carbon, Congress extended a law that gave \$18 billion in subsidies to oil and coal companies," Saunders wrote for CCL's website.

Saunders noticed special interests dominated the attention of politicians and citizens weren't making an effort to change this political dynamic. This is why he wanted to form a group that could encourage actions and help citizens effectively convince politicians to listen and act for the good of the planet instead of fossil fuel businesses, Barron told the audience.

He asked people to tell someone seated next to them what they'd most want to preserve for future generations in a world where the effects of climate change were further under way.

Barron, who has an 11-year-old daughter, said he would hate to have his daughter miss "the lushness" of the outdoors.

Jim and Zoe Cooley, from Troy, said they were ready to help CCL achieve its mission.

"The overall damage to the environment is a matter of great concern," Jim Cooley said.

"All life depends on the resources of our Earth. We need to live sustainably with the resources we have," Zoe Cooley said.

Jeff Ramsey, also of Troy, said unless global warming is stopped, current conditions in this part of the world likely will be looked back on as a "luxury time" because society is "peaceful by not having extreme weather events here yet."

They and other would-be CCL members also formed groups. Their task was to persuade someone in the U.S. Congress the idea of a carbon fee and dividend system would benefit the country as well as stop climate warming.

The level of discomfort with speaking to a fake federal legislator was palpable, but so was their passion.

Barron provided them further encouragement by again pointing out why their effort was crucial. He proudly held up a copy of a letter his daughter wrote to him when she was 7. She used a crayon to provide her father with words of encouragement after he first became involved with CCL, a cause he considers extremely important: "Drem big for wat you want to happen (sic)."

"We're running out of time," Barron said.

The newly formed Palouse chapter of CCL will meet 7 p.m. April 7 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Palouse. Rob Briggs of Pullman and Pat Rathman of Moscow are contacts for the chapter.

For details about the local chapter, email palouseregion@citizensclimatelobby.org.

Terri Harber can be reached at (208) 883-4631, or by email to tharber@dnews.com.