

McMorris Rodgers visits Pullman

By Josh Babcock, Daily News staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, May 4, 2016 12:00 am

The conversation at a town hall held Tuesday afternoon at Pioneer Center in Pullman by U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers was dominated by global warming, dams, talk of the presidential race and campaign donors.

A member of Citizens' Climate Lobby, Virginia Lohr, questioned McMorris Rodgers about climate change and regulations. She said even though Washington has made progress, it means nothing if other states and nations are not on the same page.

"I'm still learning," McMorris Rodgers replied. "I think (any regulation) needs to be smart. I think it's important to recognize we brought down carbon emissions."

McMorris Rodgers said she has been a champion of hydropower and she is concerned that hydropower is not recognized as a clean source of energy.

"We could double hydropower in America without building a new dam," she said, noting new turbine technology being introduced now.

A local veteran asked the congresswoman if the dams would be removed and replaced by the energy from wind farms. He said many dams lack fish ladders on the Spokane River, and this is harming the salmon populations.

"To remove the dams? I hope not," McMorris Rodgers said. "We had record salmon returns."

Caleb Pletcher, a member of WSU Cougs for Bernie Sanders, asked how McMorris Rodgers can consider herself a champion for the environment with her vote to eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency.

McMorris Rodgers criticized the EPA for saying waters need to be protected from unregulated agriculture. She went on to ask a local farmer if agriculture is unregulated. The question was met by a laugh.

McMorris Rodgers said the EPA recently contaminated the Animas River in Colorado by spilling toxins in the river.

"The EPA is not holding themselves to the standard they hold everyone else to in this country,"



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Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers speaks at a town hall meeting on Tuesday at the Thomas S. Foley Institute in Pullman.

she said.

Pletcher went on to ask about corporate donations, specifically from JP Morgan, that McMorris Rodgers has received for her campaign. McMorris Rodgers denied receiving donations from JP Morgan, but said it was the individuals who work for JP Morgan who donated to her campaign.

She said no one can donate more than \$5,000 a year to her campaign, and in 2015-16 she received money from multiple donors.

"It's online. It's an Excel spreadsheet that you can search, and it's all there," McMorris Rodgers said.

Pletcher told the Daily News his information came from www.opensecrets.org.

Minutes before word got out about Republican Ted Cruz dropping out of the presidential race, Tom Horne, a Republican planning to run against the congresswoman later this year, asked McMorris Rodgers who she would support in the election.

She said she hasn't endorsed anyone and has decided not to get involved, as it's a hot topic for conversation.

Airport

Earlier in the afternoon the congresswoman met with Pullman Mayor Glenn Johnson and Airport Director Tony Bean to discuss the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport runway realignment.

McMorris Rodgers said from the capitol she is working close with the airport board to keep up on the project. She said she would like to see the lines of communication open up and the realignment to stay on track and be completed.

The Daily News asked McMorris Rodgers if she had the ability to pull strings to have the Federal Aviation Administration pay for the relocation of Washington State University's infectious disease research facilities, which rests in a Runway Protection Zone and needs to be moved.

"Part of the reason for the meeting today was to look into that a little more and see what I can be doing to be helpful in finding funds that are available," she said. "I'll have to reach out to the FAA and have that conversation."

Josh Babcock can be reach at (208) 883-4630, or by email to jbabcock@dnews.com.