

Solar Solutions and Climate Change Forum

March 26, 2017



Abhaya Thiele

Today March 26, 2017, in Gainesville at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, there took place a forum on solar solutions and climate change. The forum was presented by the

Interfaith Climate Group and the Unitarian Universalists Earthkeepers.

There was a large turnout (and among them several OSFR members) to hear three well-informed speakers who addressed this topic .

Citizen Climate Lobby Region coordinator Abhaya Thiele started off by bringing to our attention the Climate Solutions Caucus, which is a bipartisan group in the US House of Representatives, dealing with issues of climate change. Interestingly, the caucus was founded in February of 2016 by two south-Florida representatives Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) and Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL) who serve as co-chairs of the caucus.

“The Caucus will serve as an organization to educate members on economically-viable options to reduce climate risk and protect our nation’s economy, security, infrastructure, agriculture, water supply and public safety,”

Of the 26 members in the caucus, there are a total of five from Florida, or about one fifth of the group.



Dr. Wendell Porter

Dr. Wendell Porter, known as the “Energy Guy,” is a professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at the University of Florida, and is a specialist in sustainable construction practices and structures that conserve energy and resources. Dr. Porter explained Florida rules and federal tax credits associated with solar energy, did some international comparisons of countries and states in the U.S. in regard to their solar standings, showed us that LED lights are about six times more efficient than the old incandescent lights, and two times more efficient even than florescent bulbs.

As far as solutions, we heartily agree with Dr. Porter when he suggests that we vote in the right candidates for our leaders.



Wes Wheeler

The third speaker was local attorney Wes Wheeler, with the League of Women Voters, who did fundamental work with the recent solar amendments in Florida. He gave a summary of the recent past history, which for now sees solar as winning. Florida should be in the top three states in solar, but as we know, we are not. Less than one tenth of one per cent of electricity in Florida is from solar. In order to move solar forward in

Florida, Wes Wheeler suggests community co-ops.

After each of the speakers had finished, the group retired to the social hall for light refreshments and an opportunity to converse with and ask questions of the speakers. OSFR commends the Interfaith Climate Group and the Unitarian Universalists Earthkeepers for their work in education regarding solar energy and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship for providing spacious and pleasant accommodations for the meeting.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-
