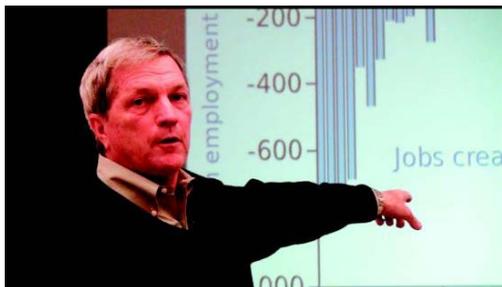




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DeSaulnier talks environment at Campolindo Town Hall

By *Sophie Braccini*



Congressman Mark DeSaulnier Photo provided

He explained how he favors the establishment of urban growth boundaries to stimulate more dense housing toward town centers and transportation, and curtail the spread of single-family residences in open space. He also discussed industrial safety, noting how he had been working with refineries for the past 20 years to establish industrial safety ordinances that are now becoming the law of the land.

DeSaulnier shared his concern about the current administration unraveling years of environmental protection. Several questions from the audience asked how to get rid of the now former EPA chief, Scott Pruitt, who resigned on July 5. The congressman noted how he is wary of the administration's attacks against the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, which were, the congressman reminded the crowd, both signed by Richard Nixon.

"There was a time when you could be a Republican and be for environmental protection," he said. The Clean Air Act was based on a cost/benefit demonstration done by the state of California showing what it would cost to remove certain pollutants and the public health benefits that would result. The EPA would then confirm the state's findings and other states would follow. It included regulations to mandate more efficient cars, something that DeSaulnier says President Trump wants to deregulate.

DeSaulnier said that California has demonstrated how protecting the environment also stimulates the economy, and that the current administration's policy will not only hurt the environment, but put the country behind in terms of innovation and future growth.

Audience members expressed concern about carbon pollution, renewable energy, endangered species, and exploitation of tar sand in the Bay Area.

Several in the audience had questions about what to do now, since the administration is overtly undermining previous environmental protections and California being at the forefront may not need extra local support. The congressman had only one answer: engagement and participation. He repeated several times that a democracy cannot function well if people do not vote and they should also be well informed.

"When the people are engaged then the country is saved," he concluded.

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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