

DeSantis purges clean energy, climate change considerations from Florida policy



By Blake Skylar

Three bills signed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis have all the attributes of a present to the fossil fuel industry, missing only the gift wrap and a bow. Thanks to the new laws, signed on May 15 and set to take effect on June 1, the state government will no longer be required to consider climate change in its development of legislation.

The move was celebrated by DeSantis in head-scratching tone-deaf fashion in his comment on X (Twitter), where he remarked, “The legislation I signed today—HB 1645, HB 7071, and HB 1331—will keep windmills off our beaches, gas in our tanks, and China out of our state.”

The legislation does indeed eradicate offshore wind turbines, and disincentivizes the restriction or oversight of fossil fuel enterprises, including the aggressive expansion of natural gas in the state. It also allows for continued use of gas appliances—such as stoves—and thus deters a more ubiquitous switch to electric ones. The bills will also repeal state grant programs that advocate for energy conservation and renewable energy. They also remove requirements that state agencies use climate-safe products and fuel-efficient cars.

“This purposeful act of cognitive dissonance is proof that the governor and state legislature are not acting in the best interest of Floridians, but rather to protect profits for the fossil fuel industry,” said Yoca

Arditi-Rocha, executive director of the Cleo Institute, a group that serves as a proponent for education on global warming. “It is alarming that leaders have eliminated statutory language that recognized the dangers of climate pollution, the importance of energy efficiency, and realities of increasing extreme weather events due to a warming planet.”

In commentary that flies in the face of such a rational assessment, DeSantis would rather paint such critics as “radical green zealots,” according

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to his post on X. The governor, who suspended his presidential campaign in January and acquiesced to his rival Donald Trump, talked up the legislation as a common-sense approach to energy policy. He likened it to a restoration of sanity, but even big money doesn't agree unanimously with this; major

As in every other policy area, the Sunshine State is a laboratory for right-wing climate legislation.

insurers have been pulling out of the state due to grappling with growing monetary losses from the floods and increasingly extreme weather that has been ravaging the state.

"It's very much out of line with public opinion," said Greg Knecht, director of the Nature Conservancy in Florida. The state, he commented, is suffering from a changing climate. "We're seeing higher intensity hurricanes and sunny day flooding, higher temperatures earlier in the season. And we're turning around and we're saying, 'Yeah, but climate change isn't really real, and we don't need to do anything about it.' We have so much potential around renewable energy in Florida, so why not allow Florida to be a huge leader across the country in addressing climate?" For example, he added, "In Pensacola you have a GE plant that produces parts for wind energy. We want more economic development in Florida like that."

DeSantis's position, however, falls in line with his behavior on the whole when it comes to global

warming and clean energy. In a presidential debate last fall, he claimed that "on Day 1" of a potential presidency, he would be "taking all the Biden regulations, the Green New Deal, and ripping it up and throwing it in the trash can where it belongs." This is the same governor who last year rejected \$346 million in federal funds to aid Floridians in making their homes more energy efficient, disregarding a request from the state legislature that he accept the money.

In the view of Brooke Alexander-Goss, clean energy organizing manager for the Florida chapter of the Sierra Club, the passage of this legislation marks a failure in the care of DeSantis's constituents. "Allowing this bill to become law jeopardizes the health and safety of all Floridians," she stated, "further proving that his top priority is to appease large corporations and fossil fuel companies. We will pay more at the pump and for our insurance premiums, and we will certainly see increases in climate-related disasters and deaths."

Student groups calling for ceasefire and Palestine solidarity face repression by universities

By Eric Brooks

Tucson's Salt of the Earth Labor College is celebrating its 30th anniversary amid growing working class militancy both nationally and locally. The school held its first class in September 1993 in a house left by Felix Padilla and Arvilla Jackson who wanted their home turned into a workers' school.

The first meetings were held in one small room, but within a few years walls were removed, creating space with seating for about sixty people. The main advocates for the school were Lorenzo Torrez who was Arizona CPUSA Organizer, and his wife and comrade Anita. —

For 30 years Salt of the Earth Labor College has offered lectures, seminars, films, and cultural events. At the height of the pandemic classes switched to zoom, and are now hybrids. The school is also a venue for community and neighborhood events.

School programs usually try to connect to ongoing working-class struggles. For example, a talk by longtime Chicago activist Bea Lumpkin on the importance of the Coalition of Labor Union Women led to formation of a local chapter.

The seeds for several local union drives were planted at school discussions. This Fall's schedule

will kick off on September 9 with a forum on the upcoming campaign for an amendment to the Arizona constitution to guarantee abortion and reproductive rights through a voter's initiative.

Supporters will need to collect about 500,000 signatures to get it on the 2024 ballot and then campaign for votes. Polls indicate that Arizona voter support women's rights and will vote to amend.

Supporters hope that putting the issue front and center will also help flip the legislature where ultra-right Republicans hold one seat majorities in both houses. It can also help defeat Trump.

In October Salt of the Earth Labor College President and Arizona Jobs with Justice leader, Steven Valencia will discuss the upsurge in organizing and rising militancy of organized workers. That will be followed by a class on why peace activists need to support workers' struggles in defense industries.

Salt of the Earth Labor College is urging all its Arizona supporters on Saturday, September 2 at 6:00 pm to celebrate the anniversary. The party, at the school, will begin at 6 p.m. with food and drinks followed by a discussion of accomplishments over three decades. Local musicians Rebeca Cartes and James Jordan will perform.

Call for a ceasefire and you may be labeled anti-Semitic.

Hundreds protest Colorado Dem Gov's vetoes of pro-worker bill



By Press Associates

Steaming at what they called a gubernatorial double-cross, an estimated 500 unionists and allies rallied at the Colorado State Capitol building in Denver to vow to continue fighting for three pro-worker bills Democratic Gov. Jared Polis vetoed.

HB1260 would outlaw mandatory attendance at so-called captive audience meetings, as well as outlawing corporate punishment for failure to show up. The sessions are a common tactic the corporate class and its union-busters use to subject workers to anti-union harangues and outright lies during organizing drives.

The harangues often contain labor law-breaking threats, such as staff cuts and plant closures, formally called engaging in unfair labor practices. HB1260 would not only outlaw bosses' mandatory attendance orders at meetings on political—read “anti-union”—and religious meetings, but would penalize employers who still force workers into them.

The second, HB1008, would have curbed wage theft in the construction industry, by holding prime contractors liable if their subcontractors didn't pay workers the correct wage—including prevailing wages—or overtime pay.

And the third measure earmarked “clean energy” money for retrofitting heating-ventilation-air-conditioning systems in the state's public schools, especially in rural areas. The coronavirus pandemic exposed how outmoded, and unhealthy to adults

and kids, those systems are.

“The end of the school year report cards are going up,” state AFL-CIO President Dennis Dougherty declared at the rally. “Jared Polis, you got an ‘F.’ But here's the thing: There's two more years of report cards left. You've got a chance to do right by Colorado workers.”

Polis had promised to sign all three pieces of labor legislation, passed by wide margins in the now-solidly Democratic legislature. But he waited until lawmakers adjourned for the year to cast his vetoes, killing the measures for the year. Polis said in a statement all three bills had holes, though he agreed with their aims. The workers didn't believe that.

House Majority Leader Monica Duran, D-Wheat Ridge, sponsor of the three bills, promised the crowd the party would bring the three pieces of legislation back next year.

The measures “would have protected some of our most vulnerable people from having their hard-earned money stolen by unscrupulous contractors and would have prohibited retaliation against workers who don't want to participate in required anti-union, political, or religious meetings,” she said in a written statement.

“These bills were top priorities for labor advocates and would have made a real difference for many workers in Colorado, predominantly people of color,” Duran added. “But the fight does not end here.”

Workers steaming at what they call a gubernatorial double cross—the nation's most productive.

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Frederick Douglass, James Baldwin, and PW cartoonist Ollie Harrington featured at Yale exhibition

By Special to People's World

An exhibition on view through Sunday, July 7, explores extraordinary materials collected by Walter and Linda Evans now in the Beinecke Library's care at Yale University in New Haven., Conn. Douglass, Baldwin, Harrington celebrates three towering figures of Black history, art, and culture: Frederick Douglass, James Baldwin, and Ollie Harrington, a longtime collaborator with People's World and its antecedent papers with his trenchant illustrations and cartoons.

The Evans collections together bring political and cultural history into close engagement with arts and letters. These collections and the figures they feature demonstrate powerful ways creative work may serve as a form of social justice advocacy in ways that continue to inspire.

Douglass, Baldwin, Harrington honors Walter and Linda Evans and their work advocating for, documenting, and celebrating Black arts in America. Their ongoing leadership in public dialogue about the need for more inclusive American arts and cultural heritage collections, and for greater public access to the work of Black artists, serves as an inspiration to all of us.

Boicot, desinversión, sanciones: Hamtramck se convierte en la primera ciudad estadounidense en respaldar el movimiento BDS

By Daniel Hopkins

En una decisión histórica el martes por la noche, Hamtramck se convirtió en la primera ciudad estadounidense en respaldar plenamente el movimiento de Boicot, Desinversión y Sanciones (BDS).

El Ayuntamiento aprobó por unanimidad la Resolución 2024-51, lo que marca otro paso significativo para una ciudad ya conocida por su compromiso de defender los derechos y la justicia de los palestinos a escala internacional.

El movimiento BDS, una iniciativa liderada por palestinos que comenzó en 2005, tiene como objetivo ejercer presión sobre Israel para que cumpla con el derecho internacional, reconozca los derechos del pueblo palestino y ponga fin a su ocupación del territorio palestino.

Siguiendo el modelo de esfuerzos como la campaña internacional contra el apartheid contra los gobernantes supremacistas blancos de Sudáfrica en la década de 1980, el BDS insta a los gobiernos e instituciones públicas a boicotear los productos fabricados Alienta a los residentes a participar en el boicot y apoya el activismo estudiantil en los campus universitarios.

La resolución, encabezada por el Consejo de Paz de Michigan, exige que la ciudad de Hamtramck haga su mejor esfuerzo para abstenerse de comprar bienes y servicios de empresas objetivo del BDS y evitar inversiones en entidades que apoyan el apartheid israelí. También anima a los residentes a participar en el boicot y apoya el activismo estudiantil en los campus universitarios.

La resolución describe las duras realidades que enfrentan los palestinos,

incluido el genocidio en curso, el bloqueo criminal de Gaza, la discriminación sistémica y la negación de su derecho a regresar a los hogares de los que fueron desarraigados. Estas condiciones han provocado una condena internacional generalizada y un llamado a la acción.

“Hamtramck ha estado a la vanguardia en la oposición a la injusticia y las guerras en todo el mundo al ser una de las primeras ciudades en votar a favor de un alto el fuego en Gaza, la primera ciudad en aprobar la Resolución Move the Money, la primera ciudad en nombrar una calle importante con el nombre de Palestina”, dijo Bill Meyer, presidente del Consejo de Paz de Michigan, en la reunión del martes por la noche.

“Ahora es el primero en aprobar una resolución que abrirá el camino para que otros se unan para obligar a Israel a detener su brutal proyecto de apartheid colonial en Palestina”.

La resolución también aborda la desinformación distribuida sobre el movimiento BDS, rechazando firmemente cualquier acusación de que apoyar los derechos de los palestinos equivalga a antisemitismo. Señala que muchos partidarios destacados del BDS son judíos y que la oposición a las políticas fascistas del gobierno israelí no es antisemita.

“Cuando hay injusticia, no podemos permanecer neutrales. Tenemos que apoyar siempre al pueblo oprimido, al pueblo ocupado, al pueblo que lucha por la libertad. Merecen paz, justicia y una vida digna. Por eso no dudamos en aprobar cualquier cosa para apoyar al pueblo palestino”, dijo el alcalde de Hamtramck, Amer Ghalib, a People's World después de la votación.

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