

## Panel Talks Politics Of Climate Change, Election

### Shippee Says Now Is The Time For Climate Discussion

By **JESSICA WETZLER**

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**HARRISONBURG** — More than 60 people attended Wednesday’s climate panel hosted by the Climate Action Alliance of the Valley to tackle how to speak with legislators about climate change, the power of Dominion Energy and the November election.

Climate Action Alliance of the Valley focuses on addressing climate change concerns and pressuring government officials at all levels to prioritize the reduction of fossil fuel production, according to its website.

Wednesday’s event was co-sponsored by the Shenandoah Group of the Sierra Club and the Chesapeake Climate Action Network.

Panelists included Karen Campblin, a member of the Green New Deal Virginia Coalition started by Del. Sam Rasoul, D- Roanoke; Bob Shippee, legislative chair of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter and lobbyist; and April Moore, board member of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network and Democratic candidate for the 26th Senate District.

In an interview prior to the panel, Shippee said now is the time to discuss climate change due to November’s election, in which all the seats in the General Assembly are up for grabs.

“I hope people get involved with their legislators and their neighbors about climate change,” Shippee said. “We know clean energy is cleaner and better for health, but a lot of it is just talking about it.”

Moore said the discussion gave her a sense of hope.

“There is a lot that we can do as individuals,” Moore said. “Climate change is so severe. There are a lot of people here for good energy, and we have a chance.”

Panelists had an hour to answer five questions focused on climate change.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and the “anti”- Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative that was

See **CLIMATE**, Page **A5**



**Attendees listen during Wednesday’s panel, hosted by the Climate Action Alliance of the Valley, discussion on topics including the November election and Dominion Energy.**

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#### Climate FROM PAGE A1

proposed by Del. Charles Poindexter, R- Franklin, and vetoed by Gov. Ralph Northam, became a focal point of discussion.

The initiative is a market- based effort to curb emissions. Under the capand- trade program, power plants buy pollution credits at regional auctions to meet emissions requirements.

Over time, states reduce the number of credits, making them more expensive and encouraging companies to reduce pollution.

The states receive proceeds from the credit auctions, held several times a year, and put those funds toward energy efficiency programs or economic development initiatives.

Participating in the initiative, which started in 2009, are Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Poindexter's bill, which passed the General Assembly on a party- line vote, would have prohibited the governor or any state agency from adopting any regulation establishing a carbon dioxide cap- and- trade program without a two- thirds vote from the General Assembly.

Del. Todd Gilbert, R- Mount Jackson, said in February that the bill aimed to give the people more of a say on something as impactful as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

"The future is not fossil fuels," Shippee said.

Discussions throughout the night transitioned into how to speak with legislators regarding climate change and getting ready for the November election.

Shippee stressed the importance of reaching across the aisle to make changes.

"At the end of the day, we are all fighting for the same thing," Campblin said.

As a member of the Green New Deal Virginia Coalition, Campblin said there is some misinformation regarding the Green New Deal.

The Green New Deal Virginia Coalition objectives include renewable plans that leaves no workers or communities behind, direct large investments and job- training programs in renewables, building an energy efficient smart-grid for residential and commercial energy efficiency, clean water and air, and investments in local-scale agriculture.

"We are trying to reach out to everybody, but what we are saying is we need you at the table," Campblin said.

Shippee urged those who attended to write letters to their representatives to find the common ground on climate change.

"We need to not be building any walls," Shippee said. "We need to be building bridges."

Moore said that when it comes to who to elect in November, vote for climate change.

“If it’s not for our climate, elect someone new,” Moore said.

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**Karen Campblin (left), April Moore and Bob Shippee participate in the climate panel hosted by the Climate Action Alliance of the Valley on Wednesday evening.**

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