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## Point Person: Our Q&A with 'green Republican' Trammell S. Crow

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Published: 19

December 2015 06:46 PM

Updated: 21 December 2015 11:03 AM

Dallas philanthropist and green energy advocate Trammell S. Crow was in Paris during the global climate talks and was part of a panel discussion on mobilizing groups in a low-carbon world. Points talked to the man behind the popular Earth Day Texas festival, held in Dallas each spring, about the conference and the challenges for Texas.

### **Can you assess, in a few words, the climate change agreement reached in Paris?**

Important. Never good enough. Better than last time. This periodic review seems to be a major win. It is the first time there is a mandatory programmatic requirement.

### **James Hansen, a father of climate-change awareness, came out of the conference saying this just doesn't do it — a lot of words, no action. Are you disagreeing?**

I would say it was not the success we need to reduce global warming. I always try not to be negative because I am always so gloomy about global warming. Hansen wants to speak at Earth Day, and when he wrote me, half of his letter was railing against the environmental Left for being harmful to the cure of global warming while insisting that business and innovation were the only way to save the planet. So I don't think he is wild-eyed. I agree with him.

### **Make an argument for why conservatives should embrace the Paris deal.**

To conserve is conservative. Global warming is a reality. The seeds of doubt are planted by those with conflicts of interest. People like James Hansen are living proof that global warming is not a communist plot, or a plot by Democrats to increase government. The green business is the biggest opportunity of the 21st century, and that is why conservatives should embrace it. The number one reason is for business opportunities.

### **What should Texas do at this point to help the cause?**

We should realize that the costs of shutting the coal plants are only half of what Texas Commission on Environmental Quality said they would be. We should do like Georgetown, San Antonio and Austin, and go as solar as possible. I think there should

be government incentives at all levels and residential incentives, too. Austin — the lieutenant governor, the Republican legislators — should take simple measures to make the [Toyota headquarters here sell hydrogen cars](#), which they won't do not only because there aren't hydrogen refueling stations around here, but because the political climate of the state and North Texas are so anti-renewable energy.

### **So what is going to change the political climate in Texas?**

This is a weird one. All these surveys, what do they show? Seventy-four percent of the Republicans in the state of Texas believe that global warming is man-made. But when they go vote, there is cognitive dissonance there. I think it comes down to the elected officials. They can read the polls and still speak publicly as global warming deniers. Many of them privately, one way or another, let it be known that they are believers. So what does it come down to? Corporate campaign funding. The vested interests in business are still giving to politicians under the tacit agreement to be deniers. I am a proud Texan, and we're abdicating our destiny.

### **So what's it like to be a green Republican?**

It's lonely out there. But it is encouraging that things are changing really fast. There are green Republicans and there are green millionaires and billionaires. You've heard of [Jay Faison out of North Carolina pledging \\$175 million](#) to get the party to take global warming seriously. And there is a recycling company in New York City that is dedicated to converting Jeb Bush to global warming. But the far right has this litmus test of global denying that makes it look like we don't have any presidential candidates who know what they are talking about.

### **China is a major polluter, but its people also are gagging on pollution, and now they realize they're gagging. Does this help move American politicians toward plans to slow climate change?**

I think it will help a lot. With television and the Internet, you can't deny the truth anymore. It was so bad over there they had to shut the schools in Beijing on the same day as the climate talks. China is going to get there, and it is not going to be a decade, it will be sooner. They are not going to be able to tolerate international opinion, and internally they are not going to be able to deny or ignore public outcry.

### **Would you support a carbon tax?**

I would support a carbon tax, and with proper education, the American public and Republicans would support a carbon tax. There is a huge number of major corporations calling for a carbon tax.

### And why is that?

Because they think it's inevitable. They believe in global warming, and they want to have certainty in the future.

### Why don't more conservatives talk about global warming as a national security issue?

I think we're all apathetic. When I go to D.C. and talk to the military, there is no controversy. They are serious about saving our nation. I don't know, except there is such great denial on the side of conservatives.

### Any takeaway thoughts from Paris?

There has been a recognition that business and environmental groups need to work together. I can't talk to any midsize company that doesn't have a chief sustainability officer. I think the public needs to know that business is a leader, and they need to hold their elected officials in Texas accountable. I am a Republican, and Democrats I meet down in Austin know what they are talking about. This is embarrassing to me.

*This Q&A was conducted, edited and condensed by Dallas Morning News editorial writer Jim Mitchell. Reach him at [jmitchell@dallasnews.com](mailto:jmitchell@dallasnews.com). Trammell S. Crow can be reached at [trammellscrow@gmail.com](mailto:trammellscrow@gmail.com).*

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