

A Greener Future EPA's Michael Regan & Marc Benioff

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Speakers:

Speaker A - 38.71%

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Notes:

- All right. How are you all doing? Good. Um, has anyone built an agent yet? Oh, wow. How has your experience been so far? Fantastic. All right, is the conference going well?
- Mark O'Mara: I've always had a natural interest in the environment and the interconnectivity of our environment and public health. Both of my parents set examples for what true public servants are. They understand the work that I'm doing. And they're grateful that it is a goal of mine to not leave any child behind.
- Growth up in North Carolina encouraged him to pursue a degree in environmental science. His first job was an intern at EPA. Coming back to lead this agency has been the best experience of his lifetime so far.
- In North Carolina, you and your father hunted quail and dove. Now in Hawaii, you have quail on your property. Whenever I see them, I'm like, oh, my father would be thrilled to take out his shotgun. But no, they're alive and happy and getting quite plump.

- Former Environmental Defense Fund senior vice president worked for North Carolina governor for four years. Says Roy Cooper is an exceptional leader, but an especially values based leader. Says working with Cooper forced him to be solutions oriented.

- Mark Watson: Every major movement and social movement in this country has been led by young people. Watson: I'm very optimistic, because the solutions are there. You gotta plant trees, we need to recycle. We need to leverage technology. He wants to inspire an ecopreneur revolution.

Speaker A

00:00:01

All right. Okay. How are you all doing? Good. All right, fantastic. Um, has anyone built an agent yet? Oh, wow. We have a lot of agent builders. Fantastic. How has your experience been so far? Wow. Fantastic. All right, is the conference going well? All right, great. Okay, well, I'm very excited to introduce you to Michael, uh, Reganhe. Michael, come on out.

Speaker B

00:00:29

Thank you. Ah.

Speaker A

00:00:35

So we are so excited to have Michael here and to, uh, have an opportunity to meet someone that we would not normally meet. And you've come a long way, uh, to be with us. We're very grateful to you.

Speaker B

00:00:47

Well, I'm grateful to be here and, uh, excited. This is a pretty cool thing you've put together.

Speaker A

00:00:52

Well, thank you very much. We do this every year, bring, uh, 45,000 of our closest friends, uh, here to, uh, San Francisco to have a discussion around technology and where it's going. And we've seen it unfold in all kinds of different ways over a long period of time, from the cloud to social to mobile, to AI, to data. And now we're talking all about agents and, uh, what's happening. Um, but enough about us now. We're really interested in you. And, um, first of all, you've dedicated your life to the service for our country. So thank you for everything that you're doing. Thank you for our country. We're so grateful to you. And you're the administrator of the EPA. I think maybe a lot of folks here don't really understand who the APA is and, uh, what the agency is, so maybe we could just start there at high level.

Speaker B

00:01:47

Well, Mark, first of all, thank you for having me, and this is such a great opportunity. You know, I never thought this kid from Goldsboro, North Carolina, eastern North Carolina, would, uh, be sitting in the president's cabinet, leading, uh, the environmental protection Agency. And for those of you who don't know, it's about a \$11 billion a year agency charged with protecting clean water. Clean, ah, air. And we are at the tip of the spear in President Biden's agenda to combat the climate crisis. Um, we are having a really good time. It's a mission driven organization. Um, and our values are grounded in the fact that every single person in this country deserves clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, deserves to live in a healthy environment. And thank you. Um, I'm also proud to be the first, uh, black man to ever lead this agency. I am a. Yes, um, a graduate of a historically, uh, black university. Also, um, got a master's from George Washington. So I believe that the president um, selected me not just because of, uh, academic, uh, accolades or anything of that nature, but just he wanted a cabinet that was reflective of America. And I do believe my experiences have helped me to reimagine, uh, what EPA is like. Uh, this is, uh, not your father's EPA. This is a brand new EPA. I'll tell mark we're trailblazers. Um, and we're doing it differently. Typically, we are seen as just a regulatory agency. We regulate every industry in the United States of America. Um, but thanks to, um, the inflation reduction act and the bipartisan infrastructure law, we have about \$140 billion to invest in new technologies that will help ensure that no communities are left behind as we tackle these climate issues and as we deliver safe, affordable, clean water to every single child in this country. So it's an honor, Mark, to lead this agency, and it's an honor to have this conversation.

Speaker A

00:04:12

Well, Michael, we're so grateful to you. And, uh, we met because one of my mentors, Al Gore, had been telling me how amazing you are and all the great work you're doing and the leadership that you've been, uh, um, executing has been phenomenal in the transformational work that you've been doing with the agency, but also how we see so many things that have come through as well in this administration in terms of legislation and advancements, but really investments in making, uh, the country healthier, just exactly like you're saying in improving the environment. Um, but let's take a step back because you're from North Carolina, and that was really where you got your start in government and different places. But maybe you could just tell us about your family, North Carolina growing up, what it was like, how you got these values to have a life of service.

Speaker B

00:05:04

Well, you know, I was fortunate enough to, um, I grew up hunting and fishing with my father and grandfather in eastern North Carolina. Um, but I also grew up with, um, elements, uh, or characteristics of asthma. So during these high ozone pollution days or days where there was a lot of pollution, I was stuck in the house, um, envying the fact that

my father and grandfather were out doing the things that I love to do. So I've always had a natural interest in the environment and the interconnectivity of our environment and public health. My mother retired as a nurse. She was a nurse for 40 years. And my father, the first in his family to go to college, was drafted shortly after he graduated into Vietnam. Um, and he spent some time, um, serving in our military and retired, um, as a full colonel in the North Carolina national guard. Both of my parents set examples for what true public servants are. And so I've always wanted to emulate their contribution, uh, to society. Uh, my father I was sharing with Mark is 76 years old. And because we grew up in, or he grew up in a segregated southeast, uh, he was 19 before his family had electricity. He, um, saw a lot of hardships. Um, so did my mother. Uh, but they instilled values into us, um, that we could do and be anything we wanted to be in this country. So you can only imagine they are very proud, um, when they see me traveling the country with President Biden and Vice President Harris. Um, more importantly, they understand the work that I'm doing. And they're very grateful that it is a goal of mine to not leave any child behind. And so, uh, I love this job. And I met, uh, Vice President Gore, um, a couple of years ago, um, working with Reverend Barber on some environmental justice issues and really looking at the disproportionate impact that black and brown and tribal communities, low income communities face in this country. Um, and that is because those communities have never had a seat at the table. And we've never attempted to look at how we invest in technologies in their neighborhoods to not only reduce pollution, but create jobs and economic development opportunities. So, um, that's how the vice president and I connected. And, uh, he's been riding with me ever since.

Speaker A

00:07:42

Well, it's been very impressive. And so growing up in North Carolina with your, this tremendous relationship that you had with your father, and your mother's a nurse. And so there's a natural, uh, natural, uh, tendency to have public service, which is coming through your whole family line. And, you know, when you think about those days hunting and fishing in North Carolina, what was that like? What were you hunting and fishing for? And what were you, what was your personal experience in nature? And then how did that kind of start to get you to be more ready, um, for this position?

Speaker B

00:08:17

Well, you know, nature, uh, is a part of me and who I am. Um, it's, you know, when you go fishing, you have to catch something or at least purport that you've caught something and it has to be purported larger than what you've actually caught. But the reality is it's just being out on a lake, um, with a, uh, hook in the water. It's so serene. And you really just get a chance to take in God's creation and sit and talk with your father or grandfather or family members just about life. Um, that was just wonderful. We hunted small game quail and things of that nature. So it's mostly bird hunting, but just moving through the woods and listening to the sounds of nature call. Uh, um, it really impressed upon me that we all

have a role in preserving this and we all should do everything that we can to preserve it. And that there is a connection to preserving our ecology, uh, preserving our nature and the benefits that that has for our physical and mental health. And so, uh, just growing up and being connected with nature encouraged, uh, me to pursue, uh, uh, a b's degree in environmental science just to learn a little bit more. Interestingly enough, my first job was an intern at EPA. Um, and I never thought I'd come back. Um, but, you know, I have. And coming back to lead this agency, uh, for President Biden and Vice President Harris, has been just the best experience of my lifetime so far.

Speaker A

00:10:12

And I want to get there. But before you got to Washington, you also, though, had this incredible service in North Carolina. Back in North Carolina. And by the way, it reminds me a lot of my own relationships with my father because we were hunting quail and hunting dove. And so I just had a lot of good memories as you were thinking about that. Now, where I live, uh, in Hawaii, I have quail on my property. And whenever I see them, I'm like, oh, my father would be thrilled to take out his shotgun right now. But no, they're alive and happy and getting quite plump, walking, uh, around. So thank you for mentioning that. But you're back in North Carolina, and you did go into service in the environment in North Carolina. Can you just tell us that story?

Speaker B

00:10:55

Yes. You know, for me, I've never really planned life out. It's just been being prepared for opportunity. And I was the senior vice president for clean energy with the environmental defense Fund. Um, and I wanted to pursue equity and justice at a faster rate at the time than EDF did. So I left EDF to start my own consulting business. And the goal was to bridge our rural and urban communities, um, bridge that gap and connect it with technology and economic development ideas. And at the time, the attorney general was Roy Cooper, and he was running for governor. And it was the first campaign that I've ever paid attention to. Um, so I went to a few of the campaign events and some members of his campaign were interested in my business idea. And so, um, I started offering thoughts, um, thinking that maybe I could be a consultant at some point in time. Uh, um, but the governor won and I was invited in for an interview and he selected me as his secretary for the Department of Environmental Quality, um, amazing opportunity to begin to look at marrying everything that I believe in from a moral and value standpoint and think about how do we protect more North Carolinians, water quality and air quality, uh, and really focus and tackle environmental justice using the full force of state government. And, uh, in North Carolina, it was a republican governor, super majority republican legislature. And it really forced me to think about how to be solutions oriented. And for those four years, we moved the needle. We introduced a historic climate roadmap for the state of North Carolina that, uh, really encouraged clean energy economic growth. Um, the secretary of commerce and I recruited more jobs, more clean jobs than any other administration. Um, I, uh, negotiated

and settled the largest coal ash settlement in United States history with Duke energy, uh, which removed coal ash ponds from black and brown and poor communities all over the state who were exposed to toxics. Yes, we started our state's first environmental justice advisory committee where we brought advocates in, sat them down at the table, and we discussed regulations, the application of technology. And we really started to build in equity in everything we were doing in North Carolina, proving that you could bring community members to the table, focus on technology standards, uh, build economic development opportunities in all communities through the power of the markets and technology. And I think Governor Cooper would say that, um, we were very successful in doing that and recruiting record numbers of companies to North Carolina. So that was an amazing experience to think about how we blend values, technologies, humanity, uh, preserving our environment, but, um, more importantly, keeping our state, um, and the United States globally competitive as we compete with our counterparts all over the world.

Speaker A

00:14:25

Well, I'm so glad that you brought that story into the conversation because I had some great experiences with, uh, Roy Cooper. And, um, you know, I think he's an exceptional leader, but he's an especially values based leader.

Speaker B

00:14:38

Yes.

Speaker A

00:14:39

And this is something that I, um, noticed about him. But he was also someone who realized that values were bringing value, uh, to very much, you know, the people, his constituents. And he was deeply committed to these core values that all of a sudden became the heart of an illumination of North Carolina. Did that impact you and your own leadership, working with somebody like this?

Speaker B

00:15:03

Absolutely. You know, these are, these political jobs are tough jobs. And, um, when I think about the values of Roy Cooper, the values of Joe Biden, it's very easy to work for leaders who share your values and who have a North Star or moral compass, uh, and the desire to create a rising tide for everyone. Uh, so that was, uh, Roy Cooper still serves as a mentor and, uh, has had an excellent political career as attorney general and governor and still has a lot to give. And I think North Carolina is much better off, um, but watching him work every day and make the hard decisions that aren't politically expedient, but the right thing to do for Joe, for John, for Sally, um, it paid off watching that very closely for four years. But he also gave me the freedom and flexibility to pursue that very aggressively as an

environmental regulator. And he entrusted that we would come to the correct solutions if we worked through this values based system and kept certain principles as we proceeded. And that is a belief of mine that if you focus on your values, not sacrifice your principles, uh, the inconvenient political barriers that you face on a daily basis, that'll work itself out. And you show up on the other side of these very complex problems with the politics being very minute and the principles and values really, uh, outshining everything that, uh, would have tripped you up along the way. And that's something that Roy Cooper and Joe Biden do extremely well.

Speaker A

00:16:54

Mhm. Yeah, well, that was definitely my experience. And, um, I really was, uh, impacted by that, because I hadn't seen really a governmental leader who was able to kind of, uh, execute, but also advocate for his values at that level. It was the first time that I had really seen up to that point, I felt that, you know, our, our company, or even our leadership at times, was having to advocate at a state level for certain values. It was the first time that we saw it coming back at us, and I was extremely impressed with that. So I'm so glad you could bring this also into the conversation. And so. But then you got the phone call to, uh, come to Washington. Was that a surprise?

Speaker B

00:17:37

Well, it was. I was thinking, uh, through, uh, whether or not to serve a second term with Governor Cooper, who had become a friend just as much as a boss. Um, and, you know, I wasn't quite sure that I wanted to take on such a big task. But when the president's team reached out, uh, they very quickly expressed to me that North Carolina was pretty much reflective of the country. Uh, the issues of climate change, the issues of water contamination, the issues of environmental justice, the fact that Roy Cooper and I had navigated this with a super republican majority legislature and still got things done, um, it became more and more compelling to me that I pursue it with all of my might and step up and try to deliver personally. Uh, my wife and I lost our first son to a rare form of cancer, neuroblastoma. And as I watched my son go through this process, um, he had these angelic values and this fight and this perseverance and the resistance to, um, being down. And so after losing him, I promised him that any challenge that came my way, I would apply those lessons learned that he taught me. And so I saw this as an opportunity, to be frank, to make him proud. Um, and so stepping up and taking on this challenge, knowing that, and this is not a political statement, but just knowing I, that the previous administration had decimated an agency that I once worked at and loved. Uh, we lost, ah, hundreds, if not thousands of scientists. And in losing them during the previous administration, that institutional knowledge walked out the door. Um, a lot of the values that should not be partisan, but are associated with the mission of protecting public health were also lost. So I saw this as a huge opportunity to step up and help my country, but also help an agency that I had an affinity for. And, you know, I said my prayers and jumped in.

And again, it was an easy decision because I knew the values of Joe Biden, I knew the values of Kamala Harris, and I knew what they wanted to achieve from a conceptual standpoint. And I knew that I could do it if I brought the values and the experience that Roy COoper and I had just demonstrated in North Carolina.

Speaker A

00:20:37

Uh, one of our programs that we started here at Salesforce that you may be familiar with because it's also gotten manifested in the US through the replant act and also through, uh, the work of an ngo that we work with very closely in, uh, Washington, DC, which is american forest. Started with an amazing story with Al Gore. And Al Gore and I were in a meeting together in Geneva, Switzerland, and Al came up to me and said, mark, I've just read this research of Tom Crowther at ETh University very close by here in Zurich. Have you read the research? And I'm like, no, why would I be reading this research? And he's like, well, I have to tell you that 1 trillion trees represents 200 gigatons of carbon in the atmosphere. And I'm like, all right, you've already lost me. And he's like, well, you have to understand, it's not just 1 trillion trees, it's 200 gigatons. But really, if we look at the oceans, it's holding 20,000 gigatons, that it's a huge carbon bank and that the soils are holding 3000 gigatons of carbon. And as we put more carbon in the environment, uh, because we're burning fossil fuels and this kind of thing, um, it gets recirculated back and that's why we have rising temperatures in the oceans and, uh, so forth. And he said, the fundamental mathematics that you need to kind of get your head around is we had 6 trillion trees on the planet. So I said, okay, 6 trillion times, um, 200 gigatons. Okay, that's 1200. He's like, but now we only have 300. We only have 3 trillion trees. So we lost 600 gigatons of carbon banking. And he said, so I was just reading the research and thinking, where do you think that carbon went? That's. It's ending up in the. It's ending up in the ocean. This is why the ocean temperatures are going up. It's very. Just simple mathematics. And that we've only displaced about, uh, 200 gigatons of carbon since we, since the first industrial revolution. So this is of consequence, the deforestation. But we've noticed, and I know that where I live in Hawaii and also throughout the US, we don't have that value around our environment and our country. We don't even have that mindset that maybe trees are maybe the most scalable way to improve our environment. Or like you mentioned, the importance, and we were talking backstage, the importance of, uh, clean, uh, water. Why do you think that is? Where did we lose our way? Is it because in the Ten Commandments, it just. There's not an environmental commandment? Or what is it that we just don't have the awareness or the consciousness that we need to be paying attention to some of these subtle aspects of our environment?

Speaker B

00:23:30

Well, you know, Mark, I think for me, um, I just believe that we have lost connectivity with nature and with our planet. Um, as I tell the story about hunting and fishing with my father and grandfather, I don't run into a lot of people who have had that experience. And

so we're constantly trying to find ways not to beat people over the head, but reintroduce them to nature, understand the connectivity we have with this planet. I just think in, uh, the United States of America, which I've traveled all over the world in this job, I think I've been to 14 or 15 countries in the last three years. Um, we are about the hustle and bustle and just moving from one thing to the next, um, in a very competitive environment. Um, and I've noticed in other countries, there seems to be just more education, more connectivity. But many of these other countries are also experiencing the worst impacts of climate change, and that is forcing folks to rethink about it. So, listen, it was a time where we were denying the science. Um, our politicians were denying the science still. Some are. But now, Mark, I think we're starting to come back to it. And it's because you don't have to talk to people any longer about climate change. You just ask them to look out their windows. And there are wildfires and there are floods in places that have never flooded. Saltwater intrusion in our farmlands where we've never seen it before, droughts. Um, I think now people are starting to feel those pressures and they're feeling these pressures from the physical impacts of these storms, but we're also feeling these storms economically. Um, and so as I begin to look at the conversations that I'm having with younger people, younger people are getting it, um, they get it much easier and better than folks my age and older. And I think it's because we sort of lost our connection and lost our way.

Speaker A

00:25:44

Mhm.

Speaker B

00:25:44

Um, so I think education is the key. Um, but I also think, um, experience. Just having experiences with nature, um, will force you to think completely differently about preserving this planet. The last thing I'll say is I think we don't do a great job of talking about it. Um, when I'm on Capitol Hill, uh, there are a lot of people on the other side of the aisle that don't want to publicly talk about climate change and science. But behind closed doors, there's an acknowledgement that there is a foot race happening globally, that clean energy plays a part, and that clean energy is an economic solution to global competitiveness and that they're willing to embrace the financial piece of that. And they also see the benefits from a, uh, conservationist standpoint because many of them like to hunt and fish just like I did. So I also think, Mark, that our politics have become so divisive, we can't have values based conversations. And if we could go back to the days of having values based conversations and not political conversations, we could think about conservation, we could think about hunting and fishing, we could think about science, we could think about technology that's applicable to all of us. And we have to get back to those discussions.

Speaker A

00:27:10

Well, I think it's really powerful what you're saying. And I think it is kind of a reboot of core values is what you're saying. And I, you know, it's, uh, you know, different cultures all over the world, everybody's a little bit different. And, uh, you know, one thing I noticed, we. I went to Indonesia and I had an opportunity to go Bali. And I've also. Everyone's seen these great movies and, you know, eat, pray, love, and all these amazing movies about Bali. But then, uh, you know, wherever I go, I love to get in the ocean and to swim, snorkel, see the fish, all of this. It was the first time I got in the water and I saw a huge amount of, you know, just plastic and trash and everything. Because the culture is really that, that doesn't really matter. And they, you know, just put their, um, trash, uh, right in the, in the river or, uh, in some places that I've been in the world, I've seen them put it on the beach. But, you know, we, we have a slightly different, more advanced view of that here. We wouldn't tolerate that in the US. We just haven't, um, it seems like there's still one more level for us to go in terms of getting to this next capability. Do you think, are we breaking through? Because, like, when you said both sides of the aisle on the trillion tree thing, I had to call Al Gore and say, look, uh, as you know, at the time, hey, President Trump is in office. I'm gonna go there and ask them to adopt the trillion tree program. And he's like, well, I don't think that's gonna work. But I did because I felt so passionately in the mathematics of it. And then he agreed and then he actually went to Geneva and announced it, uh, there. And I'm like, yes, I think that this is possible. And this is also kind of what you're saying. It's not both sides of the aisle. You know, the tree should be a bipartisan issue, don't you agree? I guess that's what I'm saying. Trees in the ocean aren't these bipartisan issues. And, um, yeah, but somehow our politics can become more divisive in these areas. Well, that's exactly, you must be experiencing this every day.

Speaker B

00:29:21

Um, we are. I have to say that we experience it on a daily basis in Washington, DC, because the political rhetoric is so high. But when I travel the country, it's just different. Mark, um, I love to engage with governors and mayors because governors and mayors have to get things done. And so, you know, I spent four or five days with the governor of Wyoming, um, very solid Republican. Uh, we traveled the state. People looked at us like we were the odd couple, but we both talked about the importance of conservation. We also both talked about the exploration of the technology, carbon capture and storage. Um, and Wyoming in North Dakota. Governor Bergam in North Dakota was one of the first governors I visited. He may not admit that today, but, um, we spent a lot of time together in the carbon capture and storage and sequestration, conservation and hunting and fishing. These were things that I engaged with those governors on, and we've kept a very good working relationship throughout this administration. Governor, uh, Jim Pillen of Nebraska, um, and I spent some time together about five or six months ago getting to know each other, and we have a grant program that looks at carbon pollution reduction. Governor Pillen and his team submitted a grant, and we awarded them \$300 million to focus on climate smart agriculture. So my point is, when you turn on the television, it's red hot and

it's, you know, us versus them. But the reality is, is that I have tried to lead for looking forward to solutions and common values, and I've been able to find that across the aisle, uh, all across the country with governors and mayorse. I just think we have to stay at it, and I don't think we can be as cynical as our politics.

Speaker A

00:31:26

Well, you just open two incredible doors. First of all, you open the door that really, the potential bridge between our divides is through our local leadership in governors and mayors. And two, you also open the door on kind of the huge advancements in environmental technology that's occurred, uh, especially, as you mentioned, with all kinds of aspects of carbon sequestration. I mentioned one, my favorite, the tree. But there's also mechanical ways to do that as well, building all kinds of new substances. And you must see all kinds of new companies and scientists must be showing you all kinds of things. Can you give us, you know, maybe, uh, a case for optimism around what you see in terms of the environment and, uh, the future of carbon?

Speaker B

00:32:15

Oh, absolutely. The first thing I'll say is I was smart enough to realize from a historical standpoint, every major movement and social movement in this country has been led by young people. So we created, uh, a, ah, youth council, um, a youth FACA, federal advisory committee that comes in and advises me on how to think about the future and how to remain optimistic. And the first thing that they said, and a lot of these are social media influences, is stop calling it the climate crisis. Uh, let's speak with the voice of optimism, because we really are optimistic. And to your point, Mark, I think it takes all of the above. We have to plant trees, we have to think about recycling, uh, uh, we have to think about that closed loop recycling, economic opportunity that exists. Uh, we have to unleash technology. The, uh, reality is that EPA, with these technology standards, whether it be for cars and trucks or oil and gas, if we write technology standards that allow for, uh, the best technology and the best data and let that lead the way. You start to see public private partnerships that we've not seen in a while. If you want to tackle methane, I have to design a regulation that isn't outdated in 18 months, which means I have to have some trust that the system will be fed by data and technology. We should be using AI. Uh, we should be using satellites. We should be using robotic dogs. We should be using every bit of this that we can, because these climate impacts are real. And so I'm very optimistic because the ideas that I have that propel the agency right now are driven by markets and technology, and we just have to embrace that. And young people are there to help us think about how do we talk about it? How, uh, do we communicate very effectively, and how do we harness the power of technology and data, which they are much more comfortable with? How do we harness that to solve these problems? I'm very optimistic, um, because the solutions are there. You gotta plant trees. We need to recycle. We need to leverage technology. And by the way, as I think about AI and the agency, um, the one thing we want to do is build in

a value system that eliminates the biases that humans have created in our system. Uh, it's not by coincidence that poor communities and black and brown and tribal communities are the ones who bear the brunt of pollution. And as we think about using data and becoming more transparent, and as we think about artificial intelligence and technology, we now are smart enough to take those biases out, use data in a very precise way, and deploy it so that every single person in this country has an opportunity to compete and live a clean and healthy life. So, yes, I'm very optimistic because I know we have a lot of good people working on it.

Speaker A

00:35:44

Well, I think that that's a huge vision for the future. You know, it's, uh, something that we call here at Salesforce that we are really trying to inspire an ecopreneur revolution. Uh, entrepreneurs like me coming together with environmentalists to build new kinds of organizations to become ecopreneurs. It's one of the reasons that I recently gave \$25 million to Stanford to bring their business school and their new environmental school together and create kind of a joint degree called an ecopreneur degree, that we could start to see incredible new entrepreneurs who are specializing in these technologies that you're thinking about, because those people are emerging. And I think you're right when you say about, it's about youth. We've seen it in organizations, even, that have emerged here in San Francisco. Like sustainable, uh, Ocean Alliance, SOA, or what we have tried to build recently with Deloitte, a whole ecopreneur network that we call uplink, which we have just thousands of ecopreneurs all over the world, uh, doing this work. And so many of them are these young people who are spontaneously getting these ideas of how to take new technologies, you know, like, exactly what you're talking about. It could be data, it could be AI, it could be robotics. It could be all kinds of things, not just software technology. It can be in material sciences. Um, and it could be even drones to plant trees. I mean, there's so many examples that I've never seen so much ecopreneurship and this kind of innovation and excitement. Excitement and, um, energy in this area. And it feels like a lot of it has started in the last decade, but really accelerated in the last five years. You're really at the heart and soul of that. They must be all coming through your office. And is this the right way to look at this, uh, movement?

Speaker B

00:37:37

Absolutely. Uh, we are at the beginning of, uh, this new frontier. Um, and let me just say, our agency is excited about it. It's pretty hard as a governmental agency when there is the perception that the government has all the solutions and has to regulate its way out of a problem. I'm, uh, excited because you've got visionaries like Mark and others who are investing in our youth and in the private sector creating this significant opportunity for public private partnerships. And it's going to absolutely take the public private partnerships to ensure that we beat this climate threat and that we reduce this pollution in our water. Um, you know, I am, um. I have to say, uh, you know, I started a journey to

justice tour at the beginning of this administration, and I went to Jackson, Mississippi, in 2021, where 190,000 people had to boil their water before they drank it. And it was because there was a lack of investment in water infrastructure, a lack of an appetite for the government to work with the private sector to think about technological solutions. Uh, and now I've worked with Congress. We got \$180 million to invest in Jackson, but we also have the private sector coming in and offering that expertise and helping to build that human capital to deploy advanced technologies so that people can have clean drinking water. So, you know, whether it's climate or public health or just basic water needs, mark, it requires people like yourself, uh, individuals like those in the audience, people being responsible in government, to say, let's figure out how we serve from our lanes, but recognize that none of us can do it alone.

Speaker A

00:39:44

Well, I totally agree with you. I think this is the next level for us to understand this relationship between water and our health. I think a lot of us understand that there's some deeper level. I know that there's a reservoir close to my house. I think I was telling you that I actually go and kind of look at, you know, where is my water coming from? I'm fortunate to live in an area called the blue zone. Um, and I think it has a lot to do with the water. I recently started a microbiome institute at Stanford and UCSF because bacteria were 90% bacteria. And we, when our bacteria goes wrong, we all realize how that can affect all kinds of different parts of our body. But back, we have to be, like, thinking about that connection between bacteria and our health, and our water is really a key part of it. And, uh, I'm so grateful that you're focused on these issues, and I'm so grateful that you're a key part of the administration and your tremendous service, not only to the people of North Carolina, but now to this whole country and maybe to the world as well. Thank you for everything you've done. And Michael, thank you so much for coming to Dreamforce. We're very grateful to you.

Speaker B

00:40:50

Thank you, Mark.