



BY DANIEL FARBER AND
ROBERT VERCHICK
progressivereform.org

Let's talk about the Octopus in the Parking Garage. A live octopus? Which garage? Is it still there? Stay with us. We'll take your questions in order.

And what about the Elephant in the Room — Donald Trump? You're right. Under The Media's New Rules of Play, Trump is necessarily part of every story, and we agree he plays an important role here. We'll get to him later.

Now, you may be wondering whether there really was an octopus in a parking garage. Yes, there was, and it was quite alive. Last month, the Herald reported that a live octopus had been found in a flooded parking garage at Miami's Mirador 1000 condominium complex, along with a number of fish. This was, to say the least, a surprise. You'll be relieved to learn that security staff filled a bucket with salt water and transported the cephalopod back to the sea.

What was an octopus doing in a parking garage? Well, these luxury condos are near the ocean, as is the parking facility and all of its drainage pipes. Those pipes, which feed runoff into the ocean, used to be well above the water's surface. But sea level is rising, and so the pipes are flooding more during very high tides. No one thought to install an octopus screen on the drain's opening.

Events like this are part of a general pattern of increased flooding in South Florida, which threatens everything from drinking water supplies to billions of dollars' worth of shoreline property. It's no coincidence that one of the few times climate change surfaced as an issue during the presidential election was when Tomás Regalado, the Republican mayor of Miami, asked about it at a Republican debate last spring.

Why are floods increasing? The aforementioned sea level rise, which is caused by climate change. Real estate values are already beginning to suffer. According to *The New York Times*, although "developers continue to build near the water in many coastal cities, homeowners across the nation are slowly growing wary of buying property in areas most vulnerable to the effects of climate change."

This brings us to the Elephant in the Room. Donald Trump has called climate change "a bunch of bunk," even as he claims to keep an "open mind." And he's tapped Myron Ebell, a noted climate denier, to head his EPA transition team. Both Ebell and Trump complain loudly about the cost of cutting carbon pollution, though those costs are dwarfed by the risks of climate change.

Changing minds on climate change is a heavy lift. But we think it's easier to enlist support by focusing on easily observable examples, like our misplaced octopus, and then open a conversation on how we might prepare for such impacts with higher pipes, broader set backs, or other building restrictions. Once you get people engaged in a conversation about values they share, research suggests they become more amenable to more difficult conversations about restricting carbon emissions.

Many South Florida communities, including those run by conservatives, see the early effects of climate change all around them. They are starting to collaborate on adaptation measures. In 2010, Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties formed a regional compact to coordinate efforts to prepare for climate impacts. Efforts like these across the nation will save lives and livelihoods, along with tens of billions of dollars.

In short, the Octopus in the Parking Garage is a wake-up call about the need to start confronting the reality of climate change. This call is nonpartisan. After all, Trump's famous retreat, Mar-a-Lago, is on the Florida coast, too.

ROBERT VERCHICK IS A PROFESSOR AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS COLLEGE OF LAW AND PRESIDENT OF THE CENTER FOR PROGRESSIVE REFORM (CPR). DANIEL FARBER IS A PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY SCHOOL OF LAW AND A MEMBER SCHOLAR AT CPR.



MORE OP-ED

YOU MAY LIKE

Sponsored Links by Taboola

The Most Addictive Game Of The Year! Play With 14 Million Players Now!

Forge Of Empires - Free Online Game

Watch the Pool, Big Quake is About to Hit

Weather.com

How One Veteran Started A Business That Supports America

American Grit | Grunt Style

The 'ab crack' is newest body trend to spark social media outrage

OddChatter

