

April 27, 2015

HUFF POST GREEN

Edition: U.S. ▾



Newsletters



Huffington Post Search

- FRONT PAGE
- POLITICS
- BUSINESS
- MEDIA
- WORLDPOST
- SCIENCE
- TECH
- HEALTHY LIVING
- TASTE
- IMPACT
- HUFFPOST LIVE
- ALL SECTIONS

Green • Energy • Climate Change • Earth Day • Animals • Saving Strays • Girls In STEM • Keystone XL Pipeline • Fracking • Generation Change

KOHL'S **BONUS BUYS**
ENDS APRIL 28.

PLUS, GET **\$10** **cash**
FOR EVERY \$50 SPENT
through May 2.

SHOP NOW

THE BLOG

Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

HOT ON THE BLOG

Sen. Patrick Leahy
Linda Thompson

Scott Atran
Geoffrey R. Stone



Rep. Jackie Speier ♥ Become a fan
Congresswoman representing California's 14th congressional district



Remembering the Purpose of Earth Day

Posted: 04/27/2015 4:21 pm EDT | Updated: 5 hours ago

Share Tweet Pin it Comment



ADVERTISEMENT

AdChoices



I celebrated the 45th Earth Day with the Pacifica Beach Coalition, a group that collects trash and restores habitat.

Forty-five years ago, rivers were on fire because of industrial pollution. Today our entire planet is on fire because of carbon pollution. 2014 was the hottest year on record. Temperatures over land and ocean surfaces were the highest since scientists started recording them in 1880. Strange weather has made headlines around the world. We've seen polar vortices and tornadoes in the Midwest, massive snowstorms on the East Coast, rapidly shrinking sea ice at the North and South poles, record hurricanes and cyclones over the Pacific and Indian Oceans, flooding in Asia, and extreme droughts in Africa and right here in the western states of the U.S. Scientists call this the "new normal" -- in a warming world we have to expect the unexpected.

But even in California, where we are used to a dry climate, we didn't expect four consecutive years of exceptional drought. Just a few weeks ago, on April 1, Governor Jerry Brown announced the lowest snowpack on record in California. He stood on a brown meadow in the Sierras instead of in five feet of snow.

Clean Garage
SALES EVENT

Visit local dealer for great deals.

See Offers >

SUGGESTED FOR YOU

A Helpful Guide For The Future White Minority



Mom Turns In Son After Recognizing Photos In Brutal Sex Assault



Two Teens Achieve Instagram Superstardom At Coachella

Forty-five years ago, people were sick and dying from air and water pollution. They were fed up. Millions of protesters took to the streets to express their appreciation of the planet and demand its protection. One of the co-founders of Earth Day, then-Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey, says the movement resulted in the defeat of corrupt politicians and spurred a quarter-century of bipartisan environmental legislation.

In 1970, industrialization was at its height. Garbage was dumped into rivers and bays, sewage flowed straight into the ocean, and toxic chemicals from factories and leaded gasoline exhaust from cars were fouling the air. The Cuyahoga River in Ohio was so polluted that it caught on fire. Off the Santa Barbara coast one of the worst oil spills soiled miles of coastline and killed thousands of birds and fish.

Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin had witnessed the Santa Barbara oil spill and came up with the idea to combine the energy of the anti-Vietnam-War movement with public awareness about pollution in order to put environmental protection on the political agenda. He turned to Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey, who represented the San Francisco Peninsula, and to Denis Hayes, a young Stanford graduate and activist, to create a national teach-in on the environment. Hayes built up a large staff across the country and worked with thousands of universities, colleges and schools to promote the event. On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans marched in the streets to protest against environmental ignorance and pollution.

The mood in the country was ripe for environmental protection and regulations. In the 1970 election, seven of 12 members of Congress with dismal environmental policy records, dubbed the "Dirty Dozen" by the Earth Day movement, lost their seats. Landmark environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Estuary Protection Act, were signed by the Republican president, Richard Nixon.

Unfortunately, since the mid '90s, many members of Congress have spent their energy trying to tear down these protections. Right now, one of the big environmental fights in Washington is over whether water runs downhill, a blatant attempt to weaken the Clean Water Act. We must find a way to reignite bipartisan action to ensure that everyone has access to clean water, clean air and a livable environment.



Ex-Teacher Admits To Sex With Three Boys



Michelle Obama's Dress At The White House Correspondents' Dinner Is Sparkly Perfection



This Freaky Video Of An Octopus Chasing A Crab Will Make Your Skin Crawl



For two decades we have failed to create an international treaty on climate change mitigation. In 1997, the U.S., one of the top two polluters in the world, didn't sign on to the Kyoto Protocol. Summits in Rio and Copenhagen ended with basically nothing. This year leaders from around the world will meet in Paris to negotiate an agreement that would cut greenhouse gas emissions and limit warming to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, a level scientists say is necessary to avert the worst effects of climate change.

We see the effects of climate change in California as we confront an ironic pair of threats: drought and flooding. The governor has mandated a 25-percent cut in water use on land because of the drought, yet we are surrounded by ocean water that will flood our land if we don't prepare for sea level rise. San Francisco and San Mateo counties, both of which I represent, are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise. The Bay has risen eight inches over the last century, and scientists expect it to rise at least another foot and a half by 2050. If we don't act, portions of Highway 101 and Silicon Valley will end up underwater. I've worked closely with state and local officials to coordinate a response to this threat and am pleased that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Coastal Conservancy are supporting our efforts. Collaboration and planning are essential to prepare for the future.

Sea level rise, ocean acidification, species extinctions, erratic weather events, decreased agricultural yields, harm to human health and lower worker productivity are real and costly consequences of climate change. It is past time that we reclaim the spirit of the original Earth Day and make 2015 a year of bipartisan action to preserve our natural resources and the health of our planet. We owe it to future generations.

Follow Rep. Jackie Speier on Twitter: www.twitter.com/RepSpeier

MORE: [Earth Day](#), [Climate Change](#), [Pete Mccloskey](#), [Global Warmig](#),

Kung-Fu Monkey Drop Kicks Some Jerk Who Gave It The Finger



These Unaltered Portraits Show Women For All That They Are



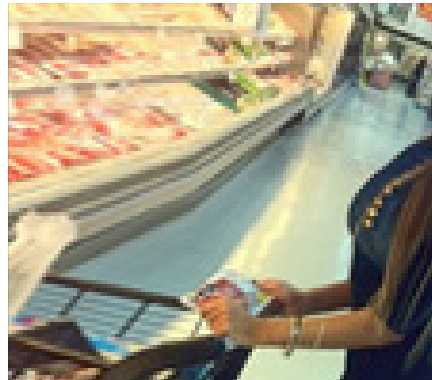
Robert Downey Jr. Posts Response To Awkward Interview





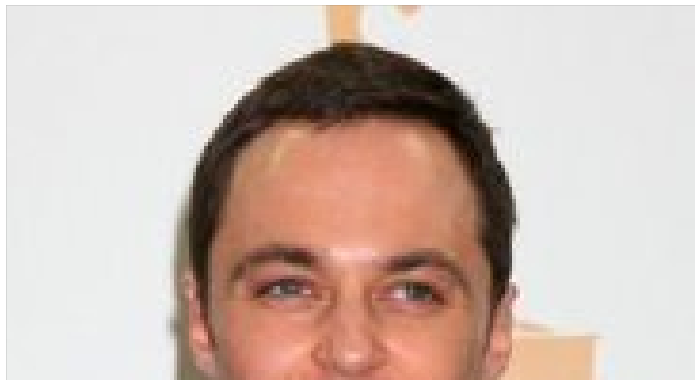
Look Twice :- 21 Pictures That Need your Extra Attention

Promoted by Cyber-Breeze



No One Was Looking When

Promoted by Trending Report



Top 15 Artists Who Are Much Older Than You Thought

Promoted by PopHitz



6.0 Magnitude Earthquake H

Alan Rickman Weds His Longtime Love Nearly 50 Years After They Met



FOLLOW HUFFPOST



Email Address

Sign me up!

The Morning Email Green

Get top stories and blog posts emailed to me each day..

From Our Partners



New fossil Evidence of



Every Animal That

Sponsored Links



American Express Travel

Earn 2x Points When You Book at Amextravel.com. Book Now! Terms Apply.
AmexTravel.com



Best Way to Reduce Puffy Eye Bags

60 Year Old Grandma Looks 40 Again
<http://www.thedailylivingtips.com>



New Rule in New Jersey

If you drive in New Jersey, this hidden rule can save you \$347/yr..
www.SmartWaysToLive.com

[Buy a link here](#)

Conversations



Sea Monster 'Kraken'
Found



Goodbye Windmill,
Hello Windwheel

Became Extinct In The
Last 100 Years



Bill Nye Shreds Climate
Denying
Congresswoman

Huffington Post Search

[Advertise](#) | [Log In](#) | [Make HuffPost Your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [Careers](#) | [FAQ](#)

[User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2015 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. | "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

Part of **HPMG News**