

# Urge Sens. Shelby, Sessions to support environment

Re “Protecting the Earth, finally” (Star editorial, Dec. 15):

The Star’s editorial had a wonderful conclusion: Since the Paris climate accord lacks penalties for nations failing to meet their goals, “Citizens around the globe must hold their governments accountable.” How brilliant! This international accord motivates citizens to stay involved; the global climate movement will keep thriving.

The Paris accord isn’t just national leaders, business leaders and environmental leaders deciding our future while we’re bumps on a log. We, the people, have an active role holding our governments accountable, so they fulfill or exceed their pledges. You also remind readers of our power: “The shame of the public spotlight is about the worse that could happen.” The threat of shame motivates many officials to do the right thing.

However, American officials who vigorously denied climate change are now stunned to witness nearly 200 nations reach agreement. Caught by surprise, they see there’s no longer room to plausibly deny climate change.

We need our government officials to act responsibly on climate. Will they dig their heels in, if they have to endure shame, admitting their earlier denials were wrong? Can we help them switch from denial to action without shame?

The New York Times’ Thomas Friedman suggests we remind Republican politicians that, in 2007, George Bush “created the ‘major economies’ strategy to address climate change through precisely the ... voluntary national targets adopted in Paris.”

Here’s a no-shame way for Republicans to sponsor market-based carbon fee and dividend climate legislation. Please urge Alabama Sens. Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions to sponsor Republican George Shultz’s carbon-pricing proposal.

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