



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - August 13, 2014

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Republican Conservationist and Democrat Philanthropist Agree on Climate Change Solutions

Businessmen Ted Roosevelt IV and Tom Steyer call for dialogue with religious groups to find common ground.

Historian David Brinkley moderated the dialogue at American Renewable Energy Day Aug 13.

ASPEN, CO – Republican Ted Roosevelt IV, the great grandson of President Teddy Roosevelt, and Democrat billionaire businessman turned political activist, Tom Steyer, expressed similar political philosophies and agendas today as they shared the stage on the last day of the 11th Annual American Renewable Energy Day (AREDAY) Summit in Aspen, Colorado. As both businessmen and conservationists, they agreed that effective social change in America comes through politics. The panel was moderated by historian and author Douglas Brinkley from Rice University who wrote a book about Theodore Roosevelt called *The Wilderness Warrior*. Roosevelt and Steyer demonstrated they have a lot in common, despite their political distinctions.

Brinkley brought up the changes fostered by the first Earth Day in 1970, such as creation of the EPA, the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act, and asked what we can do today to galvanize the masses and create a groundswell.

Steyer's answer was to make issues local. "Polar bears aren't a voting issue," he said. He pointed to Miami and noted the reason someone there might care about climate change. Miami is the most exposed city in the country because the sea is rising and storm surges are affecting sewers. Climate change will make it unsafe eventually for people to work outside. Another example he mentioned was Iowa and its eventual loss of agricultural productivity.

Roosevelt called for a "Paul Revere" moment to galvanize action. He suggested that those in the audience sit down with someone on the religious right or with political conservatives to develop a dialogue and instill trust with those who might say, "My beliefs trump your views." He continued, "We can't be saying, 'You're wrong and I'm right.' We have to have a message and a narrative with a story. That's how we will move people." He also noted that there is now a "green" Bible where passages about stewardship are underlined.

Steyer said there are large groups of evangelicals who could be helpful. "Two of their primary messages are stewardship of the earth and caring for the most vulnerable among us. This pope could be the most influential of anyone," he noted. He called this "a potential game changer" in the climate change discussion.

Brinkley ended the discussion by asking if there was something about Teddy Roosevelt's approach that could be useful for today's movements. His great grandson answered, "He wasn't afraid to act."

“In order to drive this critical transition to a clean energy economy, we need a collaborative dialogue among a variety of stakeholders,” says Sally Ranney, American Renewable Energy Institute (AREI) President. “Ted Roosevelt and Tom Steyer embody the core principles necessary to build bridges among Republicans, Democrats, businesses and environmental groups. They are great examples of working toward the common good,” she continues.

Roosevelt is managing director of Barclays Capital for Investment Banking and Chairman of its Clean Tech Initiative and board chairman for the [Center for Climate and Energy Solutions](#) (C2ES) which formed the [Business Environmental Leadership Council](#) (BELC) in 1998. The BELC is the largest U.S.-based association of corporations focused on addressing the challenges of climate change. Its 36 members (mainly Fortune 500 companies) represent over \$2 trillion in combined revenue and more than 3.5 million employees. According to Roosevelt, the BELC influenced shaping of the recent [Carbon Pollution Standards](#), also known as the Clean Power Plan for utilities, released by the EPA on June 2.

Barclay's is also the chief financial advisor for Cape Wind, a controversial wind generation project offshore from Martha's Vineyard where Roosevelt lives. That project has been fought, unsuccessfully, in the courts 32 times by the Koch Brothers, who ironically is the duo with whom Tom Steyer has gone head-to-head in a fundraising campaign through his new PAC, [NextGen Climate](#). It is dedicated to helping elect candidates who support action to fight climate change.

Tom Steyer co-founded the [Advanced Energy Economy](#) (AEE) after retiring from the private sector where he was the Senior Managing member of Farallon Capital Management. In 2012, Steyer served as chairman for Yes on Proposition 39, which closed a tax loophole for out-of-state corporations and created jobs in California. In 2010, oil companies to dismantle California's groundbreaking clean energy law, AB 32.

In addition to his [NextGen Climate](#) PAC, Steyer is part of [The Risky Business Project](#), a joint, non-partisan initiative which also includes former Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, Jr. and the former Mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg. The project produced a groundbreaking report this summer, "[Risky Business: The Economic Risks of Climate Change in the United States](#)," the first risk analysis of its kind. It summarizes findings of an independent assessment of the impact of climate change at the county, state, and regional level, and shows that communities, industries, and properties across the U.S. face profound risks from climate change.

About AREDAY – The 2014 AREDAY Summit took place August 10-13, 2014 in Aspen, Colo. The agenda included a multi-day speaker series, a film festival and other events. AREDAY offers attendees the opportunity to engage with clean energy world leaders from the public and private sectors, including the fields of finance, investment, solar, wind, biofuels, geothermal and leading-edge energy technologies. For more information, visit www.areday.net.

About AREI – The American Renewable Energy Institute (AREI), a registered 501(c)(3) organization based in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley, is focused on fostering actionable solutions around climate change. Its programs emphasize the “Five E's” – Energy, Environment, Economy, Education and Employment – which run as threads throughout the organization's core initiatives. These include the annual AREDAY Summit and Speaker Series, American Climate & Education Literacy Initiative (ACELI), RENEW Program, and Start-Up Green. For additional information, visit <http://www.areday.net/arei/arei.html>.

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