



## South Kingstown Community Forum: Addressing the Climate Crisis

Wednesday Jan 13, 2021 | 5:30 – 7:00 pm

**Zoom Link** Join Zoom Meeting <https://southkingstownri.zoom.us/j/94113366807>

Meeting ID: 941 1336 6807

Passcode: 840713

Please join us on Zoom for this **highly interactive forum**, an opportunity to:

- ✓ Hear from people on the front lines of the climate change movement.
- ✓ Meet and talk with local leaders and others with similar interests.
- ✓ Learn how you can participate in the greatest challenge of our age.
- ✓ Share your ideas and solutions to the challenges confronting us.
- ✓ JOIN OUR LOCAL, URGENT CALL TO ACTION!

### **“Never let a good crisis go to waste.” - Winston Churchill**

We are at a crossroads. The climate is already changing, and the future of our planet -- of our backyard -- depends on the choices we are making now. Timely improvements in how we use and generate energy promise us a cleaner, safer, more comfortable, and more prosperous future -- if we move fast enough. Such changes present us with both challenges and opportunities -- challenges in how we think about the world and our place in it, in how to effect change in a highly charged political environment; and opportunities for new careers, new businesses, and productive civic engagement to ensure a just transition from a fossil fuel powered world to a cleaner, safer, more equitable and sustainable world.

The recent appointment of former Secretary of State and U.S. Senator John Kerry to the newly created role of Presidential Envoy for Climate signals a major shift at the federal level. A recent Washington Post article indicated that “Kerry will report directly to Biden as part the White House’s National Security Council, underscoring how the

incoming administration views the warming planet as an issue with implications for both national defense and foreign policy.” Of equal importance, the Post continued, “the president-elect plans to appoint a high-level White House official to coordinate domestic action on climate throughout the federal government.” With urgency we must think globally while acting locally, and with an eye for what can and should be.

## Addressing the Climate Crisis: Challenge Meets Opportunity

### MODERATOR



#### **Kevin O'Neill, Citizens Climate Lobby**

Kevin O'Neill is working with 195,000 other Citizens Climate Lobby volunteers to conserve a world in which his grandchildren might have a chance to cross-country ski in Rhode Island and dive on coral reefs in the tropics. After graduating from MIT, he worked for many years as a consulting chemical engineer and manufacturing manager. Since starting The Conference Exchange in 1996, he has led a team creating new jobs in Rhode Island and enabling hundreds of thousands of scientists, engineers, physicians and others to advance their professions through large conferences held online and in cities around the world.

### PANELISTS



#### **Rudolf Kraus, Rhode Island College**

Dr. Rudolf Kraus is an Assistant Professor of Educational Studies and Science Education in the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development at Rhode Island College. He serves as the Coordinator for Secondary Science Education at Rhode Island College. When not working with the next generation of educators, his research interests include inquiry-based teaching methods and the role of cooperating teachers in professional development. He is currently working to develop Rhode Island College's new teacher preparation program which will allow for a greater emphasis on climate and how to teach climate-related issues.



#### **Kai Salem, Green Energy Consumers Alliance**

Kai Salem is the Policy Coordinator at Green Energy Consumers Alliance, where she advocates for ambitious energy policies to meet Rhode Island's climate goals. Kai graduated from Brown University with honors in Environmental Studies in 2018. Kai also serves as Policy Chair of the Environment Council of Rhode Island, a member of the RI Clean Water Action Electoral Advisory Board, and a member of Providence's West Broadway Neighborhood Association Board.



#### **Kevin Vidmar, Loureiro Engineering**

Kevin Vidmar is the Technical Director of Energy Services for Loureiro Engineering Associates, a full service consulting firm. Mr. Vidmar has 35 years of industrial experience, and has worked with over 700 different world-wide manufacturing sites on energy reduction opportunities. Prior to joining Loureiro, he worked for Pratt & Whitney, Stanley Works, and Cookson Group in a wide variety of world-wide manufacturing responsibilities. Mr. Vidmar has a B.S. degree from Miami University (OH), and a M.S. degree from Vanderbilt University in Environmental and Water Resource Engineering. He is a Certified Energy Manager, a Certified Energy Auditor, an ANSI Certified Professional in Energy Management System (Industrial), and only one of 70 Energy Fellows as granted by the Association of Energy Engineers.



#### **Rob Zarnetske, Town of South Kingstown**

Rob Zarnetske is the Town Manager in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. Rob has had a wide-ranging career in public service, having worked in federal, state and local roles as well as having worked in all three branches of government – executive, legislative and the courts. He has served as a Presidential appointee, an advisor to two U.S. Senators, a city council member, a private attorney, a university lecturer and a municipal administrator.