# Florida Meteorologist Criticises State Legislation on Climate Change amidst Unprecedented Heat



In May 2024, Florida experienced unprecedented heat, leading South Florida TV meteorologist Steve MacLaughlin to criticize recent state legislation addressing climate change. On May 18, MacLaughlin, from Miami's NBC 6, spoke out against a new law signed by Governor Ron DeSantis, which removed multiple references to climate change from state laws and shifted the policy focus towards fossil fuels. The legislation also banned offshore wind energy, despite no planned wind farms off Florida's coast.

The policy changes occurred amidst record-high temperatures in South Florida. The National Weather Service issued its first May heat advisory in 15 years, marking the warmest May on record for the region. Florida's coastline faces continuous challenges such as severe coral bleaching and rising sea levels.

MacLaughlin urged his viewers to vote, emphasizing the importance of supporting candidates who recognize climate change and its solutions. His comments were met with support from fellow meteorologists like Jeff Berardelli of WFLA in Tampa Bay, who praised MacLaughlin for his bold stance despite the significant pressures faced by climate communicators.

Governor DeSantis justified the legislation by claiming it aimed to restore a rational approach to energy policies and to counter the “radical green zealots.” The bill promotes natural gas expansion and protects against gas appliance bans while repealing previous climate policies.

Meteorologists nationwide have experienced harassment and threats for linking extreme weather events to climate change. This includes Chris Gloninger, who resigned from a Des Moines TV station due to stress from threats related to his climate crisis coverage. As record heat and environmental challenges persist, the discourse around climate policies in Florida continues to be a contentious topic.