

Roth: Boss and governor find common ground

In an interview I saw on television with New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, he shared how Hurricane Sandy has in an interesting way made him and his longtime music icon and fellow New Jersey native Bruce Springsteen great friends. Even this widely outspoken liberal Springsteen was able to join together with a polar political opposite to help restore his home state. The aftermath of Hurricane Sandy has generous Americans everywhere coming together working tirelessly to help rebuild a special part of our country.

We all must similarly come together to face the reality of climate change and its devastation affecting people. No matter what your political perspective, we must begin betting on the future of our families on the side of this reality.

Consider this truth: Hurricane Sandy has caused at least \$50 billion in damage and killed at least 131 people. Scientists and climatologists across the country are beginning to study to what extent this horrific event was spurred or worsened by certain man-made changes to our atmosphere and ecology.

For example, take that Hurricane Sandy slammed the East Coast with a 13.2-foot storm surge. Now consider that arguably a foot of that storm surge was caused by climate change. This is because the coastline has experienced a rise in sea level of at least 1 foot over the past century, attributable to climate change. Scientists agree.

Or consider that because the temperature of the surface of the ocean was warmer than normal, this caused the release of high levels of water vapor that only intensified Hurricane Sandy, causing more extreme rain and flooding. Scientists agree.

You could also consider the fact that unusually warm temperatures in Greenland created a high-pressure system over its expansive land mass, blocking the storm's path and pushing

it toward the East Coast. Traditionally, meteorologists tell us that the jet stream usually carries these kinds of hurricanes away from the coast and off into the Atlantic Ocean.

Some recent estimates suggest that for every \$1 spent on preparation and efforts to avoid worsening climate effects, we (and future generations) could avoid \$4 in storm damage and consequences to human life. That's a pretty good return on investment for even the most cynical climate skeptic.

Can you even imagine perhaps the price effects that climate change has had on this disaster? As Americans, we should be concerned for the future of our families and start betting on the side of climate reality. There is real work to be done, but the benefits to our future are enormous.

Maybe Springsteen put it best in his song, American Land: "There's treasure for the taking, for any hardworking man – Who will make his home in the American land."

We all have work to do. Let's start by letting the scientists' consensus bring us together to seek solutions.