

Vermont Youth Lobby
2/14/2020

Dear Earth,

We've come to the State House to express our deepest affection for your climate and to declare our commitment to reducing harmful levels of atmospheric pollution, which threaten life as we know it. We are forever grateful for the beautiful home you've created. The clean water, green forests, luminous stars, and deep snow that bring us joy. However, I worry that your treasures are being robbed. The rampant use of fossil fuels has begun to fundamentally disrupt the bounty of life that your inhabitants take for granted. The earth is warming, the stars have begun to dim, and one in four species are at risk of extinction.

We are already watching people struggle from the consequences of climate change. Our cries for you too often fall on deaf ears, on minds unwilling to take action, minds unwilling to change despite the clear and indisputable science. To us, climate change is not a political issue; it's an existential threat. The effects of which we have only begun to feel. We are proud to come from a state that chose to keep the promises that were made at the Paris Climate Accords.

However, we are ashamed that, with all of our goals, we are not reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. Vermont's carbon emissions have risen by 16%, while climate pollution in all of our neighboring states has fallen.¹ It is imperative that we act soon to prioritize combating climate change and making the switch to clean energy, infrastructure, and protection of the livelihood of Vermonters.

The consequences of climate change continue to reveal themselves. We point to Australia and their burning continent, Venice and their constant flooding, and the many Pacific Islanders whose homes are disappearing beneath their feet. We point to the fact that in 2008, a Cornell study written by leading climate scientists found that if we wish to live on a planet that can sustain human life, we must limit carbon in our atmosphere to at least 350PPM. Unfortunately, that was 12 years ago and the problem has only gotten worse, with CO2 levels now over 415PPM.²

With many distractions it is easy to forget the radiant and winter-filled future we strive for. It is easy to get caught up in the trenches dug by those who profit off of our destruction. However, for those of us who still storm the beach, run towards the fight, we will not stop, we will not forget. Forget the clean water, the green forests, the luminous stars, or the deep snow.

Love always,
The Vermont Youth Lobby

¹https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/agc/climate-change/documents/_Vermont_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Inventory_Update_1990-2015.pdf

² <https://www.co2.earth/daily-co2>