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Testimony for H.51, H.175, and H.214

Today I am thinking of the climate refugees that have already lost their homes--farmers in the Satkhira coastal district of Bangladesh leaving due to high salinity in soil, 1000 of them shot and killed when they tried to cross over into India; 23% of the population in the north bank of Gambia fleeing severe drought; the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw First Nation currently being depopulated from Isle de Jean Charles off the coast of Louisiana as sea levels rise; Puerto Rico still reeling from Hurricane Maria. By 2020, that is by next year, The American Association for the Advancement of Science estimates 50 million people will need to move from their homes due to climate change.

Today I am thinking of Vermont and the specifics our own state website details on what climate change will look like here--heavy rainfall events, more flooding, more water and crop damage, an increase in tick borne diseases and mental health issues all of this effecting our most vulnerable and marginalized populations the greatest.

Today, I'm thinking of my 14 month old. One day, he will grow up, I hope. Will he still be fighting this same fight, and how dire will it be? What will I tell him when he asks why we did nothing? How will I explain the calculus of lives and people and profits if somehow the profits come out on top?

Representatives, I live near the statehouse. I watch the late hours you keep here and the early mornings. I wonder at your sacrifice to serve Vermont--the time away from your families and homes. The time you spend listening, the time you spend trying to make the world you and your constituents want to see. The time you are taking this evening to hear us speak--for all of this I want to thank you and I also want to ask for more.

I want to ask for you to take bold action, to be brave, to stand up to greenwashing and greed, to look critically at fossil fuel industry claims of "renewable natural gas."

We need H.51, H.175, and H.214. We need you to take these bills up immediately at the start of next session. We cannot continue to pull fossil fuels out of the ground and burn them if we want to maintain a livable planet. We cannot continue to build infrastructure that supports their extraction. We cannot continue to tell our children that we did nothing, that we did not do enough.