

A Call for Rapid and Just Climate Action in Washington State and Beyond

Article I: Emergency Declaration

We the undersigned people who reside in the Salish Sea and wider area known as Washington State hereby declare a climate emergency and call upon fellow residents, communities, businesses, organizations, and local governments throughout Washington State to transform our economy and our society into one that is just and sustainable within 10-years. We shall call this work Rapid and Just Climate Action.

WHEREAS global average temperatures are now 1.1°C above the pre-industrial average, and for each additional half degree of warming the number and severity of climate impacts doubles: "Leading scientists recently published a study warning a domino effect of climate events could easily move Earth into a 'hothouse' state, making any efforts to reduce emissions increasingly futile."^[1] Promises made as part of the Paris climate agreement would lead to about 3.0°C of warming by 2100.

WHEREAS the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report in October 2018^[2] describes ways to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, it leads to more inaction by relying on aggressive carbon sequestration technologies that have been ineffective, expensive, and dubious in practice.

WHEREAS the MCC Carbon Clock showed that we ran out of time on September 8, 2018 to limit global warming to 1.5°C, they downgraded our chances of survival from 50% to 33% in order to add nine years to our so-called carbon budget.^[3] We have less than a 1% chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.^[4]

WHEREAS humanity has wiped out 60% of animal populations since 1970^[5], scientists declared in 2015 that the planet is in mass extinction.^[6]

WHEREAS climate change has been largely caused by only 90 corporations overwhelmingly owned and controlled by white and Western men,^[7] while the "outmoded mainstream" tells us that individual actions will make a difference.

WHEREAS the International Energy Agency in 2011 said we must stop investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure by 2017 to have a chance of limiting warming to 2.0°C^[8]. Four banks in the United States alone increased their investments in fossil fuel infrastructure to \$580B since 2015.^[9]

WHEREAS the fossil fuel industry continues to make record profits, it also continues to pay no taxes, pollute the water, land, and air, and seize land from indigenous peoples and people of color. It

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continues to target indigenous women and women of color with rape culture, and instigate communal violence, while relying on the military industrial complex to protect its interests.

THEREFORE existing institutions have failed us and will continue to fail us. We must now create a new system whose sole function is to protect life on Earth against the tyranny of the fossil fuel empire, while dismantling the old system that protects it. We must create new institutions that disrupt and innovate, while hospicing^[10] and shutting down old oppressive ones.

THEREFORE in creating new institutions, we must be careful not to perpetuate the patterns of the old oppressive institutions. We must use principles of organizing for a rapid and just transition (outlined in Article III of this document). These radical principles disrupt the systems of oppression. Without them, it is not possible to create a system that will protect life and limit warming to 1.5°C.^[11]

Article II: Vision

We envision a shift in values consistent with the Just Transition Framework (See Article III, 4.1) from which we can address the current ecological crisis, begin healing our past and present wounds stemming from systemic oppression, and prevent future damage caused by new oppressive regimes.

We know that this is not the first crisis humans or nature have faced and therefore we believe that we can and we must confront it. We envision a world in which nature and Mother Earth are not used as objects, rape culture is dismantled, and the world and its inhabitants are protected and restored to health. We will have access to food, water, shelter, medicine, nature, and community so that all may peacefully seek happiness and fulfillment without having to sacrifice their identity, spirituality, culture, or relationships. In our beautiful diversity we will be equal and free, a biodiverse collective of humanity, the way we were always meant to be.

In this version of the future, previously marginalized people are the agents of their own liberation, and all may realize their true potential. We shall not wait for political saviors to give us this future, we will create it ourselves in our own communities.

Article III: Principles of Organizing

Forefront in our motivation is to protect life on this planet. How and whether we work together to do so will determine our success. Therefore, we shall work with the following principles:

1 **Justice.** We will practice anti-patriarchy, anti-racism, de-colonization, and Just Transition in order to recenter humanity, dismantle capitalism, and build a living economy. And,

- 1.1 We will acknowledge our privileges, and apply them in service of the movement.
- 1.2 We will stand up to, dismantle, and reconsider our access to power.
- 1.3 We will do inner work to confront our fragility, accept feedback, reflect and rest.

2 Showing Up. We will meet people's needs and include everyone in the movement. And,

- 2.1 We will show up as whole people to treat ourselves and each other as humans. People need support to be able to show up e.g., eat food, drink water, take rest, have shelter, have access to transportation, and receive training.
- 2.2 We will show up with urgency and radicalism, including engaging in nonviolent direct action to disrupt systems of oppression.
- 2.3 We will find joy in taking action and have fun working together in community, even though the work is serious and challenging.
- 2.4 We will literally reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon dioxide.
- 2.5 We will work to support and uplift community organizers.
- 2.6 We will acknowledge that we are much more than our bodies—we must have a spiritual movement.

3 Accountability. We will center the people most impacted in our decision-making. And,

- 3.1 We will uphold progressive stack in visible and transparent ways e.g., by following the lead of, being accountable to, and prioritizing the needs of—and lifting up the voices of indigenous and native people, women of color, people of color, femme, queer and trans people, youth, and disabled people.
- 3.2 We will practice transformative justice principles to hold ourselves and each other accountable.
- 3.3 We will acknowledge feelings and actively find and give space for healing and grief work.
- 3.4 We will specifically center youth organizing.
- 3.5 We will seek to create safety for everyone, particularly those who are marginalized, but we will not compromise the safety of marginalized people to protect the safety of those with privilege.

4 Strategy. We will take action that builds power within communities, centers local and placed-based priorities, and creates a regenerative economy. And,

- 4.1 We will change the way decisions are made to: “Shift economic control to [local] communities; Democratize wealth and the workplace; Advance ecological restoration; Drive racial justice and social equity; Relocalize most production and consumption; Retain and restore cultures and traditions.” (See: climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition)
- 4.2 We will prioritize work on Just Transition, community organizing, public education, and storytelling over climate science, policy advocacy, or clean energy technology.
- 4.3 We will educate ourselves in and follow climate justice principles.
- 4.4 We will oppose false technical solutions such as geoengineering, new sources of hydropower, fracked gas as a “bridge fuel,” and new nuclear fission reactors.
- 4.5. We will oppose oppressive false capitalist solutions such as carbon offsets, revenue neutral carbon taxes, and cap and trade, and we will not waste time pursuing equitable versions of these so-called solutions.
- 4.6 We will confront internalized climate denial within the climate justice community and within ourselves, which historically and continually causes inaction and inadequate incrementalism. We will not waste time confronting the climate denial industrial complex.

5 Innovation. We will work together to create a shared body of knowledge that focuses on actual action at every level. And,

- 5.1 We will deploy proven functional, non-hierarchical systems of organizing (e.g., Agile, Lean, etc.) to provide focus and guarantee ongoing success.

- 5.2 We will make the most of every opportunity to meet and gather by using liberated facilitation techniques that do not perpetuate patriarchy and capitalism.
- 5.3 We will use the best available tools to be effective, while consciously avoiding oppressive nonprofit industrial complex tactics.

6 Solidarity. We will be in solidarity with social justice movements.

- 6.1 We will be in relationship with the climate justice movement at all scales.
- 6.2 We will agree on practices and develop working agreements.
- 6.3 We will stand in solidarity with and hold accountable other movements and declarations.
- 6.4 We will acknowledge the struggles of communities previously unknown to us.

Endorsements

We the undersigned pledge to heed the emergency call for action, adhere to these principles, and work together to support the movement to achieve a rapid and just transition. We call on others to join in working with us by also endorsing this document.

Contact

Support this work online at forthepeople.earth/derek. To endorse, email info@forthepeople.earth.

Notes

- [1] Dahr Jamail, "Sixth Mass Extinction Ushers In Record-Breaking Wildfires and Heat," *Truthout*, August 20, 2018, <https://truthout.org/articles/sixth-mass-extinction-ushers-in-record-breaking-wildfires-and-heat/>.
- [2] IPCC, Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>.
- [3] Richard Roberts, "A 6-point plan for building a new carbon economy," *Fast Company*, September 10, 2018, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90233607/a-6-point-plan-for-building-a-new-carbon-economy>.
- [4] Oliver Milman, "Planet has just 5% chance of reaching Paris climate goal, study says," *The Guardian*, July 31, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/31/paris-climate-deal-2c-warming-study>.
- [5] Damian Carrington, "Humanity has wiped out 60% of animal populations since 1970, report finds," *The Guardian*, October 29, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/30/humanity-wiped-out-animals-since-1970-major-report-finds>.
- [6] Jeremy Hance, "How humans are driving the sixth mass extinction," *The Guardian*, October 20, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/radical-conservation/2015/oct/20/the-four-horsemen-of-the-sixth-mass-extinction>.
- [7] Douglas Starr, "Just 90 companies are to blame for most climate change, this 'carbon accountant' says," *Science*, August 25, 2016, <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/08/just-90-companies-are-blame-most-climate-change-carbon-accountant-says>.
- [8] "The world is locking itself into an unsustainable energy future which would have far-reaching consequences, IEA warns in its latest World Energy Outlook," *International Energy Agency*, November 9, 2011, <https://www.iea.org/newsroom/news/2011/november/the-world-is-locking-itself-into-an-unsustainable-energy-future.html>.
- [9] *Banking on Climate Change: Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card 2019*, Rainforest Action Network, March 20, 2019 <https://www.ran.org/bankingonclimatechange2019/>, Full report https://www.ran.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Banking_on_Climate_Change_2019_vFINAL.pdf (PDF).
- [10] See also "Theory of Change," *Berkana Institute*, <https://berkana.org/about/our-theory-of-change>.
- [11] Jane Morton said, "Moving to emergency mode - effective and urgent action with a single focus engaging our whole beings," in "Jane Morton: Don't mention the emergency," *YouTube*, February 19, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBGHTRx6xAU>.