

Elders Statement of Concern about Democracy and Global Warming

As Elders for Future Generations, we express deep concern for the future of our planet, our country and children everywhere.

The extreme risks of global warming for future generations cannot be underestimated especially given recent events: unprecedented heat waves, catastrophic fires, and lethal floods of epic proportions. A new global study by the United Nations raises the alarm to a terrifying level.

Confronting this crisis requires a functioning democracy. The current, nationwide attack by the Trump-Republican Party on the voting rights of all Americans, and especially people of color, is meant to ensure that the power remains with corporations and not the people. Failure to pass the *For the People Act* and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Act* will doom efforts to enact needed legislation to move our country to a decarbonized economy critical for reduction of global warming.

We call upon all people of good conscience to put aside their differences, speak out boldly, and do whatever we, the people, can to stop the vicious attacks on our democracy and environment, and stand up for what is right — namely, the well-being and future of children, the country and the planet. Let us all wake up to the reality that if we don't raise our voices loud and clear, we will lose our democracy, and our environment will become unlivable. It's on us!

Action Steps on the Issues of Global Warming and Voting Rights

The following is a list of actions we can take to address global warming and voting rights. There are both long term actions we can personally take in our life style and consciousness, and short term regarding the urgency of political action now. They are intersectional -- individual, communal, and educational.

Voting rights

Contact your state and federal legislators now: let them know where you stand on the issues of climate change, voting rights and the threat to our democracy, and ask where they stand and what positions they have taken, in word and deed, on major legislation, particularly *For the People Act* (HR 1) and the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*.

For state legislators' contact information, you can go to "Find Your Maine Legislators" <https://nrcm.salsalabs.org/mainelegislatorlookup/index.html>

To reach our federal legislators (Senator Angus King, Senator Susan Collins, Representative Chellie Pingree, and Representative Jared Golden) you can go to the internet and type in “contact” followed by their names. Their office phone numbers will be listed and a form to fill out in sending an email.

Support and join **When We All Vote**, a leading national nonpartisan initiative on a mission to change the culture around voting and to increase participation in each and every election by helping to close the race and age gap. It was created by Michelle Obama and Stacey Abrams. <https://whenweallvote.org/>

Join and participate in the efforts of the League of Women Voters of Maine, a grass-roots organization that has fought since 1920 to improve our government and to engage our communities in the decisions that impact our lives. The League operates at the national, state, and local levels through more than 800 state and local leagues in all 50 states, as well as DC, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong. <https://www.lwv.org/> and <https://www.lwvme.org/>

“Vote 411” is a League of Women Voters one-stop site for nonpartisan information for voters, how to register, polling places, and what’s on your ballot. <https://www.vote411.org/>

Global Warming

Support Maine’s *Pine Tree Amendment* (LD 489) by contacting your local state legislator and advocating support of your town council. This constitutional amendment guarantees the right of Maine residents to clean water and air.

Eat a plant-based diet (see books below).

Learn about growing and eating organic foods and fostering healthy soil (see books below).

Install solar collectors on your roof or join a solar farm. Contact: ReVision Energy, <https://www.revisionenergy.com/solar-power-for-your-home/community-solar-farms/>

Support wind turbines in Maine, onshore and offshore.

Join Veterans for Peace Climate Crisis and Militarism Project: climate@veterans-forpeace.org

Support the education of girls: <https://www.ungei.org/>

Hold a neighborhood meeting on your street, in your community — or with friends — to discuss the issues and how to raise your voices

Join the efforts of Portland and south Portland's Sustainability Leadership group, "One Climate Future": <https://www.oneclimatefuture.org/>

Drive less and walk more.

Where you can, plant, and support, the planting of trees.

Learn about "Green Funds," and support the movement to invest in fossil free organizations and corporations.

Make one-page papers/flyers about the need for urgent action on the issues of global warming and voting rights for distribution at community events, such as Portland's monthly Art Walk.

Self Education: Books to Read

Guns, Germs, and Steel by Jared Diamond, explores the idea that the differences between societies and societal development are primarily from geographic causes.

Daring Democracy: Igniting Power: Meaning and Connection for the America We Want, by Francis Moore Lappe and Adam Eichen.

Hope Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet by Francis Lappe.

Animal, Vegetable, Junk: A History of Food from Sustainable to Suicidal by Mark Bittman, explores the ties between agriculture, colonialism, and the climate crisis and myths surrounding the food we eat (e.g., organic food can count as junk food, the limits of fake meat and the possibilities of agroecology).

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents (2020) by Isabel Wilkerson, describes American racism as a part of a caste system, described by hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, and purity. Wilkerson identifies eight pillars of caste and compares racism and caste to a chronic disease that can be cured with effort, bravery, and collective will.