Dear Friends,

“How are you?”

This simple question, used in nearly every conversation I have, has become a form of code-speak since November 2016. This greeting often creates an uncomfortable silence, while the person asked seeks an appropriate answer. “Pretty good” elicits a chuckle often followed by a Donald Trump-oriented reality check. “All things considered, things are going ok,” garners a knowing nod or melancholy smile of a mutual understanding. “I fear for the future of the planet and country,” is followed by sobering silence.

So, how are you?

I am growing more hopeful by the day.

A resistance full of leaders is forming around the country and world, opposing Donald Trump and what he represents. The March for Science, the Women’s March, the People’s Climate March, as well as the rise of Indivisible demonstrates a tremendous capacity by community leaders from around the country to mobilize, resist and transform the political discourse. Our marching, our protesting, our organizing, our solidarity is creating new political power in our country.

Our leaderful movement is campaigning in an environment where most of the social, political and economic norms are no longer viable. Yes, Donald Trump is bringing chaos, disruption and incompetence. In the shattering of all conventional wisdom, though, Donald Trump has presented us with a tremendous opportunity to reshape the political dialogue. However, to do this, we must move beyond the incremental strategies and tactics that have dominated the environmental discourse for at least the last decade. A political space now exists to embrace Naomi Klein’s thesis, “This [climate change] changes everything!” We must act. This opportunity will not last.

I am also heartened by your response (our Members) to the Trump moment. We asked you to become leaders in your communities on behalf of Friends of the Earth, and thousands of you responded by joining our training calls to learn how to be vocal advocates within your community, and with your local members of Congress. We just completed training our first class of member volunteer organizers to build community power. We asked you to act in solidarity with immigrant rights groups, reproductive rights advocates, and health care for all advocates – and tens of thousands of you heeded our call.

The movement that we are building is having international impacts. I am hearing from the Friends of the Earth groups from around the world about the impact the anti-Trump movement is having on global right-wing politics. Momentum and energy from the United States is helping to fuel progressive movements around the world.

Look, we’re in for the toughest fight of our lives and we may lose some fights in this long battle for the planet….But I believe we can and will rise to the challenge ahead. I am resolved and optimistic.

So, how are you, now?

Erich Pica, President
Get involved in issues and debates affecting human health and the planet by signing up for Friends of the Earth action alerts. Visit us at www.foe.org today!

COVER ART: Keiko Okisada

Friends of the Earth Newsmagazine / SPRING 2017
For everyone who cares about the future of our Earth, the specter of a Trump presidency is terrifying. Now, that environmental nightmare is fast becoming reality.

In one of his first acts as president, Trump cleared the path for the disastrous Keystone XL and Dakota Access Pipelines. Then he took aim at the Environmental Protection Agency, proposing to gut the agency’s budget by over thirty percent and initiating executive orders to dismantle the agency. Paving the way for yet more destruction, Trump signed an executive order to undo the Clean Power Plan and expand coal mining on our public lands – opening the door for fossil fuel companies to ramp up drilling and mining.

These moves are only the beginning. To ensure that his anti-science, anti-planet plans are carried out, Trump picked a rogue’s gallery of polluters and Wall Street cronies to head his cabinet.

There’s Scott Pruitt – a climate denier and Big Oil puppet – leading the EPA. As Oklahoma’s attorney general, Pruitt received nearly $315,000 in campaign contributions from fossil fuel industries. While leading the Republican Attorneys General Association, Pruitt raised at least $3.5 million from fossil fuel interests.

Trump's toxic cabinet also features former ExxonMobil CEO and multimillionaire Rex Tillerson as secretary of state. Rick Perry, Trump’s energy secretary, received nearly $2.5 million in political contributions from Big Polluters and sat on the board of Energy Transfer Partners, the company behind the dangerous Dakota Access Pipeline.

It’s clear that the Trump administration is facilitating a massive takeover of our government by Big Oil and Coal. Taking the cue, other polluting industries are lining up to profit from the billionaire-friendly administration. Big Ag is counting on Trump to try to destroy the federal organic standard and to approve massive mergers, like the Bayer-Monsanto deal that would consolidate two of the world’s biggest pesticide producers into one company – a mega-corporation that would control one-sixth of the world’s agriculture market.

All of these actions are leaving the environment more vulnerable than it has been in over three decades. It is painfully clear that Donald Trump doesn’t care about protecting our planet; he only cares about helping his buddies in polluting industries.

The watchword for the next four years: resist!

While the environmental outlook is dire, these hard times have generated activism not seen since the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam War Movements. Across the country, people who have never participated in demonstrations or politics are standing up to promote and defend progressive, inclusive values and to stand firm against Trump and his dangerous agenda.

Friends of the Earth is harnessing that momentum by leading a bold campaign of resistance against the Trump regime and everything it stands for. We must fight harder than ever for our planet, and we’re building a grassroots army to help us resist Trump in court...resist him in the halls of Congress...and resist him on
the ground in communities across the country. We know we won't win every battle, but together we can stop some of the worst Trump policies from becoming reality and lay the foundation for a healthier and more just world in the future.

Resisting Trump in court

For almost a decade, Americans have fought to stop the dirty Keystone XL pipeline from polluting our air and water. We banded together to turn this pipeline into a leadership test on climate change – and Trump flunked the exam.

Trump’s decision to push this dirty, dangerous project is already galvanizing citizens across the country. Americans recognize Trump’s agenda to sacrifice our planet for Big Oil profits, and their resistance is stiffening. Friends of the Earth is renewing the fight over Keystone XL, and using the courts to ensure that the pipeline never becomes a reality.

This is a pivotal moment in U.S. history and environmental protection. Voices for democracy and our planet’s future are being raised right when we need them most.

Resisting Trump in communities across the U.S.

Perhaps our largest task will be ensuring a progressive, pro-environment wave election in 2018 (and beyond) that ushers in elected officials who will champion a healthy and just world.

During a recent telephone town hall with Senator Bernie Sanders, attended by thousands of Friends of the Earth Members, we launched our new group of citizen activists – comprised of many people who have never taken action before – to fight back against this administration.

We need Democrats to return to their progressive roots and stand up for people and the planet – including stopping the corporate takeover of our government, building a fair economy that protects workers and the environment from corporate exploitation, and fighting for racial and social justice.

This is a pivotal moment in U.S. history and environmental protection. Voices for democracy and our planet’s future are being raised right when we need them most. In his meeting with our Members, Bernie called on us to take charge of our democracy, speak truth to power and hold leaders accountable.

We know from experience that challenging and talking to Congress works. Since the election, millions of people have stood up to be heard – at the Women’s March, at postcard-writing parties, and at Town Hall meetings around the country. They’re demanding that their representatives listen to constituent concerns, go on record with their positions, and act for the good of the people they represent, not billionaires and corporations.

Even asking a simple question can make a difference,
environmental activists across the country, providing them with strategic materials, issuing calls to action on key issues, sharing ideas for creative ways to take action, and encouraging them to tell their stories and inspire others.

In short, we’re giving them a crash-course in grassroots activism.

These budding activists are stepping up, big-time! Every week, more people sign up to receive our how-to’s and to volunteer and attend specialized trainings. They want to change the world, and they know Friends of the Earth can help them do it.

They know that Friends of the Earth has a proven track record of decades of environmental resistance, including sending teams to campaign on Keystone XL, to preserve our public lands, to fight for clean air and water, to shut down dangerous nuclear plants and more.

One recent example: our successful Bee Action campaign, which has pressured companies like Home Depot and Lowe’s to take action to save bees. Last summer, our Keep the Hives Alive Tour traveled coast-to-coast, highlighting the plight of pollinators.
Marching, rain or shine

Friends of the Earth and Members like you have wasted no time in mobilizing to resist Trump. Heavy rain on April 22 didn’t dampen our spirits as we joined thousands of environmentalists at the March for Science in Washington, D.C. And the following week we hosted dozens of volunteers for activist training – giving them the tools to bring change to their own communities. We ended the month with the People’s Climate March in Washington, D.C. – another show of strength and resistance to the Trump agenda.

PHOTOS: Friends of the Earth staff and activists attend the People’s Climate March in Washington, D.C.

and culminating in a dramatic rally outside EPA headquarters. The tour delivered nearly five million signatures to the EPA urging an immediate ban on bee-killing pesticides.

Now we’re using these skills to resist Donald Trump and his backward policies, appalling appointees and dangerous lies – so we can protect and preserve the only planet we have, for current and future generations.

The time to act is NOW!

We know we will face some losses and exhausting battles, but we won’t give up. We can and will make sure that any political leader that supports Trump’s planet-killing policies pays a huge political price.

And what about those who agree with us? We’re going to hold them accountable, too. We’ll make sure they know we’re behind them as they say NO to Trump and his hostile administration – and that we expect them to be unwavering in their defense of our Earth.

To protect the water we all drink, the air we all breathe, and the environment we all depend on, we must stay vigilant. Whether it’s in court, in Congress, or in neighborhoods across the U.S., we will continue to fight to protect our planet’s vital resources. It’s going to take an army of concerned citizens to stop Trump’s war against our environment and our communities.

As volunteers chanted at the end of a recent orientation call, together we are issuing a full-throated cry against the Trump administration: “Resist!”
Organic in Trump’s Crosshairs

Fighting for the future of organics

by Dr. Kendra Klein, Ph.D., staff scientist, agroecology and environmental health & Lisa Archer, food and technology program director

There are so many reasons we love organic farming. It’s more profitable for farmers and boosts local economies. It helps pollinators and other beneficial insects flourish, and promotes biodiversity. It helps protect the health of farmworkers, farmers, rural communities and other vulnerable populations, like children, from highly toxic pesticides. Compared with conventional agriculture, organic farming is less energy-intensive and sequesters more carbon in the soil, making it a big win for the climate. Four decades of scientific evidence makes clear that organic farming is critical to feeding ourselves now and into the future. And demand for organic, now a $43.3 billion market in the U.S., is booming.

Evidence continues to mount that, to survive sustainably, we must shift our food systems toward regenerative, organic agriculture. Environmental harm caused by industrial farming costs the world an astonishing $3 trillion each year, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Confirmation of industrial agriculture’s destructive path is everywhere: from soil erosion and depletion of water resources, to oceanic “dead zones” associated with synthetic fertilizer run-off and the industry’s major greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than feeding the world sustainably into the future, the industrial food system is cutting off the roots of our own survival.

But in the current political climate, agrichemical companies with a stake in maintaining their toxic grip on our food system are sharpening their knives to come after organic – with plenty of help from their friends in Congress and the Trump administration. They aim to undercut the integrity of the National Organic Program to make it more friendly to corporations. The program, which is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, was established by the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 to set uniform national rules for foods and products carrying the “USDA Organic” label. Having a national standard ensures that food labeled “organic” really is organic – raised without synthetic pesticides, hormones, GMOs and fertilizers.

The Trump administration is already going after vital conservation and technical assistance programs that support organic and sustainable agriculture. Trump’s proposed budget would slash many key U.S. conservation programs by more than 50 percent, including the Organic Research and Extension
Initiative – crucial for funding organic research. If these programs are gutted, it would mean less support for farmers who grow organic food without highly toxic pesticides. That’s bad news for bees, our health and our environment.

We can’t let these cuts pass. Organic is essential to our future – the only option we have to choose food that protects our health and environment, and the farmers and farmworkers who grow our food, from toxic pesticides. As demand for organic food outpaces domestic production, these USDA programs are key to helping our farmers grow the organic food people are demanding.

With your help, we will protect the standards and programs that support organic and sustainable agriculture. And we need your help to tell your senators you’re watching them, and that it’s unacceptable to remain silent about organic. In this critical time, we need all hands on deck to vigorously defend and strengthen the National Organic Program now and in the coming years.

We all deserve access to healthy food grown without synthetic hormones, routine antibiotics, GMOs or toxic pesticides. The farmers and farmworkers who grow our food have a right to not be exposed day in and day out to chemicals linked to cancer, asthma and other serious health problems. We are committed to ensuring robust organic standards into the future. Join our fight to protect organics – for all of us.

Organic is essential to our future – the only option we have to choose food that protects our health and environment, and the farmers and farmworkers who grow our food, from toxic pesticides.
Before the election last November, I joined a march to the White House in opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline. The march was a powerful coming together of indigenous communities and environmentalists to support the rights of the Standing Rock Sioux to protect their water.

Only one elected official addressed the crowd – Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who delivered one of his fiery speeches that never fails to inspire.

Friends of the Earth has a long working relationship with Senator Sanders, and we were proud to give our Members the opportunity to speak directly to Bernie at a telephone town hall in January.

Thousands of our Members joined the call to hear Bernie talk about the threats Donald Trump poses to our environment, and some had the opportunity to pose questions directly to Bernie on the call.

The arrival of Donald Trump at the White House has already put our environment under threat in ways we have not experienced in living memory.

Friends of the Earth Members were eager to ask the senator about his views on how to resist the Trump agenda.

Deborah, from Victorville, California, asked how we can continue to stand with the Standing Rock Sioux and resist the Dakota Access Pipeline. Charles, a science teacher from Otis, Massachusetts, asked how we can inspire more millennials to be as concerned about the environment as previous generations.

With his answers to these and other questions, Senator Sanders inspired hundreds of Friends of the Earth Members to volunteer right on the spot to join our organizing efforts to stand up to Trump. Many also pledged to donate to Friends of the Earth to support our resistance to the Trump agenda.

Thanks to all who participated, volunteered and donated – your support helps keep our fight for the planet and for our communities going strong. If you missed this telephone town hall, be sure to visit our website at foe.org and sign up to receive emails so you can receive an invitation for future calls.

Bernie Sanders Speaks to Friends of the Earth Members

by Peter Stocker, vice president of membership and development

MEMBER EVENT
The support of Members like you helps us fight – and win! – many important battles for our planet. We value your dedication to our work, and are committed to serving you and your fellow Members with honor, integrity and respect.

Our Commitment to you, our Members:

• We will use your donations efficiently and responsibly to advance our mission of defending the environment and championing a healthy and just world.

• We will be accountable and transparent by making our financial statement and annual reports easily accessible online.

• We will keep you informed about the progress of our campaigns so that you can help us both celebrate after victories and regroup after setbacks.

• We will send you a prompt thank-you letter or email after you make a donation of $5 or more.

• We will treat you professionally and with respect when you contact us.

• We will respect your wishes regarding your privacy and personal information.

• We will give you control over the type of communications that you receive from us.

Your legacy and ours...

A bequest is a simple way to pass on your values. You can make Friends of the Earth part of your life story by naming us in your will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy or financial accounts. Anyone can make a bequest, and every gift makes a difference. Together, we can create a lasting legacy for the planet.

CONTACT US TODAY!

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Making School Lunch Climate-Friendly
By Kari Hamerschlag, deputy director of food & technology & Christopher D. Cook

Imagine if kids’ school lunches were good for their health and for the planet. What if school cafeterias could cut greenhouse gas emissions while saving money and improving kids’ health? A new study by Friends of the Earth shows it’s not such a pie-in-the-sky idea – in fact, it’s already happening.

Teaming up with Oakland public schools, Friends of the Earth produced a study with inspiring results: one of California’s largest school districts reduced its impact on climate change, and saved money, by serving less and better meat and dairy.

Industrial meat production and meat-centered diets generate a major portion of climate-harming greenhouse gases, and guzzle huge amounts of water.

By reducing the meat and cheese in lunches and serving more nutritious, plant-based meals, the Oakland Unified School District significantly reduced its carbon and water footprint.

Over a two-year period, Oakland’s school food service cut its meals’ carbon footprint by 14 percent, and reduced water use by six percent. Meanwhile, the district saved money and was able to purchase better quality and more sustainable meat from organic, grass-fed dairy cows.

If every California K-12 school food service matched Oakland’s carbon footprint reductions, they would reduce their footprint by 80 million kg of CO2 emissions – equivalent to Californians driving almost 200 million fewer miles per year.

Kids can be picky eaters. So it’s even more impressive that Oakland’s effort increased student satisfaction by serving local, fresh and tasty meals. Equally important, these plant-based meals met or exceeded USDA meal pattern requirements. While reducing meat and dairy consumption, OUSD increased its purchases of fruits, vegetables and legumes by approximately 10 percent.

Other school districts across the country have followed Oakland’s lead. More than 200 school districts have adopted Meatless Mondays, and sustainable food procurement standards like the Good Food Purchasing Program emphasize the importance of reducing animal foods. In an effort to promote less and better meat, Friends of the Earth has teamed up with the Humane Society and other organizations to create www.forwardfood.org, a website offering tools, case studies and recipes.

At a time when people are hungry for positive solutions, the Oakland school lunch story provides an inspiring model of sustainability across California and the nation. Check out our full study at http://bit.ly/SchoolFoodFootprint - and spread the good word!
The election of Donald Trump struck a blow to all of us who care about people and the planet, at home and abroad. But his shocking win and his hate-filled agenda also united people around the world, determined to fight back.

Friends of the Earth U.S., and Members like you, are part of Friends of the Earth International – a federation of environmental groups that is the world’s largest grassroots environmental network. To show their solidarity, our colleagues at Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland invited their Members to send along messages of support, making it clear that the world has our back. Below is a sampling of the huge outpouring of friendship and solidarity we received.

“Supporting you in all the tremendous work you do. We need to keep the pressure on the Trump presidency to ensure continuing progress for our world and future generations.”
- Anna Hennings

“Don’t lose hope. We’re all in this together, and together we are strong.”
- Clifford Neville

“Solidarity and support. I stand with you and everyone in the US who dreams of a peaceful future with healthy people and a healthy environment.”
- Emilia Hanna

“Stand firm and have faith in each other and remember the rest of the world is with you.”
- Anne Emmett

“I believe in Friends of the Earth and am with you all the way. We all need the support of each other to help make this world a better, fairer, kinder, safer world for us all to live in.”
- Hazel Walters

With your support, and strong international solidarity, Friends of the Earth U.S. will keep standing up to Trump’s assaults on our democracy and bedrock environmental protections. And we will work with our fellow groups and supporters around the world to keep fighting for a sustainable, just future for people and the planet.
More Big News for Bees!

In May Walmart and True Value Hardware committed to eliminate neonicotinoid pesticides, a leading driver of global bee declines, from garden retail supply chains. Walmart and True Value have joined more than 110 retailers across the country that have made firm commitments to eliminate neonicotinoids. This achievement is the result of tireless campaigning by Friends of the Earth, allies and Members like you on behalf of our vulnerable bee population.

The Fight Against Keystone XL Continues

Friends of the Earth and our allies have filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration and its approval of the dirty, dangerous Keystone XL pipeline. Trump's State Department approved this environmental nightmare despite its threats to water, air, wildlife and public health and without any public participation – violating one of our bedrock environmental laws, the National Environmental Policy Act. “This litigation continues our resistance to Big Oil and Trump’s war against our health and our planet,” says Friends of the Earth President Erich Pica.

People vs Palm Oil

Research first brought to light in Friends of the Earth’s 2015 report on deforestation by the palm oil industry, “Up in Smoke,” was used as evidence in a recent court case in Central Kalimantan province, Indonesia. The case, filed by Indonesian citizens and supported by Friends of the Earth Indonesia, found that the Indonesian government had failed to enforce laws to prevent palm oil companies from burning forests to clear land for plantations – a factor in forest fires that devastated the region in 2015. The court ordered the provincial government to review the permits of all palm oil plantation companies, and to sanction companies implicated in the 2015 fires – a historic verdict in defense of forests and human rights.
David Zwick

David’s work over the past 30 years has focused on helping grassroots citizen organizations form, grow and campaign successfully. In the fall of 2007, he stepped down as President of Clean Water Action, which he founded in 1972. Since then he has been a Fellow at Harvard’s Institute of Politics for a semester and later worked on several election campaigns. For many years David was treasurer of America Votes, a national organization that works with its partner groups on election projects. He is the author of “Water Wasteland,” which helped shape the Clean Water Act, and co-author of the bestseller, “Who Runs Congress.” He holds a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School.

Friends of the Earth Action will host its annual meeting of the membership on Thursday, June 15, at 2:30 pm in the Washington, D.C. office. David Zwick is running uncontested for one slot on Friends of the Earth Action’s Board of Directors. Members may cast votes at the annual meeting. Additionally, members may vote by proxy ballot.

If you would like to vote for David or attend the membership meeting please contact Julie Dyer at jdyer@foe.org or by phone at (202) 222-0714.

Chris Pabon

Renewable Energy Advocate, Environmental Steward, Traveler, First Generation Citizen, Fundraiser. These are some of the words that describe Chris Pabon. He is an accomplished fundraiser, having raised millions of dollars from individuals and institutions over a two-decade and a half span of working in Washington. After spending a fifth of his life working to promote Friends of the Earth’s mission as a member of the staff, he left to further other individual pursuits and has returned to continue to promote beneficial environmental goals as a Board member. He recently had one of his letters to the editor on climate change published by The Washington Post. He is fluent in Spanish, has basic German skills and is passionate about healthy eating and science fiction.

Friends of the Earth will host its annual meeting of the membership on Thursday, June 15, at 2:15 pm in the Washington, D.C. office. Chris Pabon is running uncontested for one slot on Friends of the Earth’s Board of Directors. Members may cast votes at the annual meeting. Additionally, members may vote by proxy ballot.

If you would like to vote for Chris or attend the membership meeting please contact Julie Dyer at jdyer@foe.org or by phone at (202) 222-0714.