

**Climate Change Tea Party**  
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**Rethinking Schools ([www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org))**

**Draft**

**Matthew Gilbert, Gwich'in**  
**Northern Alaska/Northwestern Canada**

I am a member of the Gwich'in, the northernmost Indian nation on the American continent. There are about 8,000 Gwich'in. Because of global warming, we are threatened as a people.

We survive mostly from hunting caribou. Less snowfall is making sled and snowmobile transportation more difficult. Creeks are freezing later, and the ice is too thin to carry heavy loads. Lakes are drying up.

The worst threat is to the caribou. In ten years, their number dropped from 178,000 to 129,000. Calves drown when they try to cross rivers that are usually frozen. My grandfather remembers vast numbers of caribou moving in waves near their village during spring and summer. No more. Our environment is in chaos. The hunters find it harder and harder to find the caribou that feed our people.

We must reduce greenhouse gases. My people are dying.

### **Anisur Rahman, Bangladesh**

I am the mayor of Antarpara, a village in Bangladesh. Antarpara is on the Brahmaputra River that flows from the Himalaya Mountains in India. We are in the lowlands, and our village floods every year. We are used to it, and, in fact, the flooding is good because it leaves our land more fertile.

But now the floods are much worse. Now the floods are huge and each year they destroy our homes and carry off the land underneath them. My village used to have 239 families. Now we are 38 families. But where can we go when our homes are gone? Our country has 150 million people — the most densely populated in the world. I have an 18 month old child. By the time she is grown, this village won't be here.

Where are we supposed to go? Do we all get tickets to America?

## **Larry Gibson, Kayford Mountain, West Virginia**

They say that to move away from oil we need to rely more on “clean coal,” mined here in the USA.

Clean coal. That’s a lie. That so-called clean coal comes from mountains in Appalachia that have been destroyed by coal companies, like Massey Energy. They blast mountains apart to get at the coal and dump everything they don’t want in the valleys and streams, poisoning everything around.

When they talk about “clean coal,” they sure don’t mean how they got it. They want you to focus on the fact that burning coal today produces less sulfur dioxide than it used to. That’s the stuff that causes smog and acid rain. But burning coal still releases about twice as much carbon dioxide as oil — for the same amount of energy. And carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, the gases that cause global warming.

So mining coal is bad for the people of Kentucky and West Virginia, but it’s also bad for the planet.

I’ve been fighting mountaintop removal of coal for over 22 years. I’m not gonna sit around and watch my home and the planet be destroyed. The coal companies care about the money. For me, it’s not about the money. It’s about the land. My mother gave me birth. The land gives me life.

**Koleo Talake**  
**Prime Minister, Tuvalu**

Most people have never heard of my little island that is 400 miles from Fiji in the South Pacific. Tuvalu has 10,000 people in a place that averages just 6 feet above sea level. My people live on fish and fruit; everyone knows their neighbors and people don't even lock their doors.

Rising sea levels, caused by global warming threaten the very existence of my land and people. Beginning in 2000, at high tide the water began covering places in the island that had never before been covered in the memory of even the oldest residents. In August of 2002, the entire island flooded and the increased salinity has forced families to grow their root crops in metal buckets instead of in the ground. Many people believe that if current trends continue, there will be no more Tuvalu in less than twenty years.

The former Prime Minister of Australia said that if Tuvalu disappears, then people there should be relocated elsewhere. What incredible selfishness. How can anyone say that people in Tuvalu should suffer so that people in the so-called developed world can continue to fill our atmosphere with carbon dioxide by driving their SUVs and buying stuff made half-way around the world? This is sick. That is why I have been speaking out.

**Chris Loken, Apple grower  
Hudson Valley, New York**

Everybody is saying awful things about global warming, and I know that it's bad for a lot of people. But recently Fox News did a report on the "winners" of global warming and they came to talk to me. As they said in their report, "there are some upsides to global warming."

Frankly, I saw this coming. I knew that things were going to get warmer and you know what they say about a crisis: It's also an opportunity.

I live in a beautiful place. Rolling hills. Good for apple trees. But I decided to diversify. Right next to the apples, I planted peach, apricot, and plum trees. Years ago. As I say, I saw this coming. These trees wouldn't have survived the winters of the old pre-global warming days. But our winters are getting milder, and I'm betting my trees will do just fine. As I told the Fox News people: "This farm here has been set up for the future." It's not easy running a farm these days, and if the weather decides to cooperate a little bit, who am I to argue? I'm sorry for those folks who are hurt by all this, but I've got to think of my family.

**Roman Abramovich**  
**Sibneft Oil Co., Russia**

Recently, there have been a lot of articles wondering whether or not global warming will be “good for Russia.” As far as I’m concerned this is a dumb question. Like anything, it will be good for some people and bad for some people. But I am doing everything that I can to make sure that I am one of the people to benefit from global warming.

It’s simple: As temperatures rise every year, ice will melt and huge new areas will be open for oil and gas exploration in the Arctic. And as one of Russia’s wealthiest men, and head of a large oil and gas company, this is the chance of a lifetime. Researchers tell us that one quarter of the earth’s untapped fossil fuels, including 375 billion barrels of oil, lie beneath the Arctic. In the industry, we’re talking about this opportunity as the new “black gold rush.” Already our competitors in Norway, Statoil, are working on project Snow White, which will generate an estimated \$70 billion in liquefied natural gas over the next 30 years. I’m not going to sit back and let the Norwegians or anyone else beat me out of this new business opportunity.

I’m sure that global warming is a bad thing for a lot of people, but I’ll leave this to the politicians and scientists. I’m a good businessman — a good *oil* businessman — so it’s time to get to work.

## **Stephanie Tumore, Greenpeace climate campaigner**

I joined the environmental organization Greenpeace because I felt like I had to do something to make the world a better place. To me, it seems that climate change is the most dangerous problem facing humanity and the environment. The consequences of global warming are likely to be catastrophic, and we have to do something about it.

I've been working to save the Arctic. People think of the Arctic as just one big empty block of ice and snow. Either that, or where Santa and the elves live. But it's an amazing, unbelievable place. There are birds and fish that are found only there and a few other places. There are polar bears, musk oxen, and caribou; and in the summer, snowy owls, ducks, and swans migrate there to nest. But already Alaska's North Slope is taken over by 28 oil production plants, almost 5,000 wells, and 1,800 miles of pipes.

But unbelievably the oil companies see global warming and the melting ice as an opportunity to drill for even more oil and gas. Haven't we learned anything? Why are we going looking for more fossil fuels? The good thing is that there are more and more people who are determined to stop oil development. We've taken direct action and have confronted the oil drillers in places like the Beaufort Sea where we towed a fiberglass dome with two Greenpeace activists inside into a BP Northstar oil-drilling construction area. Two other activists unfurled a banner: "**Stop BP's Northstar, Save the Climate.**" Direct action. That's what it will take to stop these oil-drilling criminals.

**Douglas Steenland**  
**President and Chief Executive Officer**  
**Northwest Airlines Corporation**

I've been CEO — Chief Executive Officer — of Northwest Airlines since October of 2004 and have been president since 2001. I'm a businessman and a lawyer, and have been with Northwest since 1991. My job is to oversee the airline's longterm goals. Ultimately, I need to keep the company profitable for our investors and a secure and fulfilling place to work for our 31,000 employees.

I've been reading that air travel is bad for global warming. They say our jets produce a huge amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that increase global warming. An article I read recently said that, "Flying is one of the most destructive things we can do." This researcher concluded that "the only ethical option ... is greatly to reduce the number of flights we take."

But ethics cuts two ways: Don't I have an ethical responsibility to my employees and stockholders? And that means expanding air travel, advertising low fares, and trying to get people to take vacations to far-away places like Japan and China, to keep Northwest profitable. Sure, we will try to pollute less, but we'll leave global warming to the politicians and scientists to figure out. I'm just a businessman.

**Rafael Hernandez**  
**Immigrant rights activist, The Desert Angels, U.S-Mexico border**

In 1986, I crossed the border from Mexico to the United States, looking for a better life for my family. Now, I am committed to help migrants in need. My group, Los Angeles del Disierto — The Desert Angels — patrols both sides of the Mexican-California border near San Diego. We look for lost migrants and leave water, clothing and food at key spots in the desert locations to help people on their journey.

Recently, we rescued María Guadalupe Beltrán, a 29-year-old mother of four who had been burned severely in the huge Harris Fire on the border. Her father had died in Mexico and she had returned home to attend his funeral. She was caught in the fire coming back into the United States. But after suffering terribly, Beltrán died of her injuries. Afterwards, I spoke to her husband, Rafael, who sat by her hospital bed for two weeks. He told me: “I asked the Virgin tell me whatever you want, please just don’t take her. But she did. At 11 in the morning my wife went away. She died at 11.” Six migrants died in the fire and eight were injured.

The Border Patrol has pushed migrants to cross in unsafe desert areas. And global warming is making these areas even more unsafe. I’ve read that climatologists say that these fires, just like the awful ones in Greece and Australia, are going to happen more and more as the climate shifts. So María and the other fire victims are also victims of global warming.

**Rinchen Wangchuck**  
**Snow Leopard Conservancy**  
**Ladakh, India**

When I was a boy, after school ended for the summer, I remember slipping down the glacier that stretched far down the mountains near my village in the Nubra Valley — in Ladakh, the far northern part of India. Today, that glacier is almost gone. And I am watching the glaciers of the Karakoram mountains disappear a little more every year. One study found that each year, the glaciers lost between 49 and 66 feet, and another found that since the 1960s, over 20 percent of the glaciers have disappeared. And as global warming increases, the glaciers will begin to melt faster and faster.

Glaciers are ice that has built up over thousands of years. Because it rains only two inches a year in Ladakh, we depend on the glaciers for 90 percent of our water. Farmers depend on this water to irrigate fields, and everyone depends on it for drinking. Ladakhis in the villages have worked out a very cooperative system to share the water, but what will happen if the glaciers disappear? How will we survive?

In the rural areas of Ladakh, we have almost no cars. We pollute very little and release almost no greenhouse gases. It is unfair that the rich countries that produce so much carbon dioxide should be destroying the glaciers that we depend on to live.

**Ana Silvia Jiménez,  
Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico**

In November of 2007, after a week of rains, terrible flooding hit the state of Tabasco, Mexico, where I live. My neighbors and I helped to put bags of sand to stop the water near to the river, but it didn't work, everything was covered with water. In the countryside, the water destroyed all the crops — the corn, sugar, cocoa and bananas. Cattle all throughout the state drowned. What will the farmers do to survive?

They say that over 80% of the state was flooded. A half a million people lost their homes. It's a tragedy. Most of my friends and family lost everything. They spent 20 years working, and they lost everything in 20 minutes.

When the flood hit, we had no water to drink; many people got sick.

Why did this happen? The government has allowed the rich to destroy my state. The state's land has sunk because of a century of constant extraction of oil and gas. Logging companies have deforested the state, which has led to erosion, and silt has filled rivers reducing their capacity to hold water and making floods worse.

And some people say that the climate is changing and leading to worse storms. I don't know, but I do know that the people here who suffer the most are the poor.

**Moi Enomenga**  
**Huaorani Indian, Eastern Ecuador**

For years, the oil companies have invaded my people's lands and the lands of neighboring peoples — the Shuar, the Cofan, the Sequoya — in the rainforests of eastern Ecuador. First was Texaco. They left thousands of open pits that poisoned our rivers. Oil companies have spilled millions of gallons of crude oil and they continue to dump toxic chemicals into our rivers and streams. And oil development has also led to deforestation. When the oil companies build the roads, other "settlers" move in and chop down our forests and scare away our game.

With oil comes destruction. And now we learn that not only is oil development destroying our rainforest, it is destroying the world, through carbon dioxide pollution that leads to global warming. We say, "Leave the oil in the ground." Why do rich countries come here? People from the richest and most populated countries come to the poorest to take its resources, to take and negotiate, to live their life better and leave us even poorer. But we are richer than they because we have the resources and the forest, and our calm life is better than their life in the city. We must all be concerned because this is the heart of the world and here we can breathe. ... So we as Huaorani, we ask those city people: Why do you want oil? We don't want oil.

## **Wangari Maathai, Green Belt Movement Kenya**

Africa is the continent that will be hit hardest by global warming. Unpredictable rains and floods, prolonged drought, crop failures, and fertile lands turned into deserts have already begun to change the face of Africa. The continent's poor and vulnerable will be hit the hardest. Already, some places in Africa are seeing temperatures rising twice as fast as world averages.

Wealthy countries will be affected, too. But for us, this is a matter of life and death. What makes this so outrageous is that our output of greenhouse gases is tiny when compared to the industrialized world's output. So the industrialized nations need to raise steady and reliable funds for the main victims of the climate crisis: the poor throughout the world.

For my part, I've been working in the Green Belt Movement for the last 30 years, since I was a young woman. We have mobilized millions of individual citizens in every country to plant trees, prevent soil loss, harvest rain water and practice less destructive forms of agriculture. We must protect the trees from the logging that is turning our continent into a desert. Our goal is to plant a billion trees. We will do our part to save the planet, but it is the rich countries that are most responsible.

**Steve Tritch**  
**President and Chief Executive Officer,**  
**Westinghouse Electric**

Before I became CEO of Westinghouse I was senior vice president for Nuclear Fuel, providing nuclear fuel products and services to nuclear power plants throughout the world. Before that, I led the merging of the former ABB nuclear businesses into Westinghouse Electric, and was senior vice president of Nuclear Services. And before that, in 1991 I became manager of the Nuclear Safety Department and in 1992 was appointed general manager of Westinghouse's Engineering Technology. Today, I belong to the American Nuclear Society and serve on the Nuclear Energy Institute's Board of Directors. I guess you could call me Mr. Nuke.

You might say that I'm a man on the hot seat these days. Not only are we running out of easy-to-find oil, but oil is blamed for global warming. Coal is an abundant source of power, but it produces even larger amounts of greenhouse gases than oil. Because I'm head-man at Westinghouse Electric, people are looking to my company for solutions. The solution is obvious: nuclear power. As I tell my employees, "What's good for the planet is good for Westinghouse."

Global warming could destroy much of life on earth. But nuclear power produces no greenhouse gases. They say nuclear power has dangers. Well, last year 5,200 Chinese coal miners died in accidents — and that's a lot more than have ever been hurt in a nuclear power accident. I see hope for the planet and Westinghouse is here to play our part.

**Ken and Nancy Tamura**  
**Hood River Valley, Oregon**

Our family has owned and operated fruit orchards in Oregon's Hood River Valley since Ken's grandparents Katsusaburo — we called him Grandpa K, for short — and Michi Tamura bought land here in 1917. Our family's only "time off" was when the U.S. government locked our family in internment camps during World War II. But that's another story.

Every generation of our family has farmed this land. And then we woke up to the front-page article in this morning's *Oregonian* newspaper. It was a shocker. In fact, it scared us half to death. A study by Oregon State University found that 75% of the water during the summer months in the Upper Middle Fork of the Hood River comes from melting glaciers on Mt. Hood. And because of global warming, the glaciers are disappearing. That's *our* river. Well, we don't own it, but it's the river that irrigates our pears and cherries. Our family has grown fruit on this land since before we were born, and now they tell us that our irrigation water may be disappearing?

To tell you the truth, I'd never known that so much of the river's water in the summer came from glaciers. You see, glaciers on Mt. Hood are kind of small compared with glaciers on other mountains. The problem is that the scientists say that the glaciers have been shrinking because of global warming. I'd always thought that global warming might affect the Arctic and the polar bears, but not the Upper Middle Fork of the Hood River.

**Robert Lovelace**  
**Ardoch Algonquin Indian leader, Ontario, Canada**

In mid-February 2008, I was sentenced to six months in jail and ordered to pay a \$15,000 fine. What was my “crime”? Trespassing on my own land — trying to block a uranium company, Frontenac Ventures, from prospecting on and polluting Algonquin Indian land. It began when we noticed people cutting down trees on land that we had never ceded to the Canadian government. Someone had given Frontenac a prospecting license and then they had gotten a court to issue an injunction against “trespassing.” But this is our land, and Algonquin Indians and our non-Indian supporters organized a 101 day blockade to physically stop Frontenac from destroying the land. I was arrested and now I’m a political prisoner.

Because of global warming, the nuclear power industry is claiming that they are the “clean” alternative, because nuclear power does not generate greenhouse gases like coal or oil. The price of uranium shot from \$43 a pound in 2006 to \$75 a pound by the beginning of 2008. Everyone predicts that it’s going to keep going up. Canada is already the world’s leading exporter of uranium, and our Prime Minister wants to increase exports and turn Canada into an “energy superpower.”

There is nothing good about uranium mining. Uranium mining has no record other than environmental destruction and negative health issues. Mining companies clearcut the land and destroy the earth to get at the uranium. Uranium can’t be stored safely and other uranium mines around Canada have left land polluted with heavy metals like arsenic. And nuclear power itself is not clean. Nuclear waste stays radioactive for thousands of years and no one has found a safe way to store nuclear poisons that long.

## **Climate Change Tea Party**

1. Find someone who believes that they are hurt by climate change. Who is the person? How has, or might, this individual be hurt?
2. Find someone who believes that he or she might benefit from climate change. Who is the person? How might the person benefit?
3. Find someone who is affected by climate change in a way that is similar to how you're affected. Who is the person? How are your situations similar?
4. Find someone whose story involves a connection between water and climate change. Who is the person? What's the connection?
5. Find someone who will have to change his or her life because of climate change. Who is the person? Why does this person have to make a life change? What might this individual do?
6. Find someone who lives on another continent than you do. How is this person affected by climate change? How is it different or similar to how you're affected?
7. Find someone who has an idea about what should be done to deal with global warming. Who is the person? What is the person's idea?
8. If possible, find someone here with whom you could take some joint action around global warming. Who is the person? What action might you take in common?