

Hello,

My name is Nadia Nazar. I am 16 years old and I am currently a junior in high school. My SATs are in two months, and even though I'm swamped with my academic studies and obligations, climate change is so important to me that I'm here to talk to you about this crisis and the impact it will have on my and my peers' future. I need your help to solve this crisis that is taking away my future.

I live near Baltimore, Maryland. I was born and raised there. Both of my parents are immigrants from Kerala, India. I have been surrounded by nature for as long as I can remember, and I'm sure you have too. My mother is a marine biologist and every year she would take me to the National Aquarium. I would stare at the stingrays, sharks, turtles, jellyfish, and seahorses as they swam by my tiny self. The beauty of life in the ocean was absolutely mesmerizing. As I got older, people would tell me about how humans kill these animals. I'd always wonder why, and I still do.

I have been studying climate since I was in the 8th grade and I have become increasingly troubled by the dangerous impact of climate change to people, wildlife, and the planet.

That is why I co-founded Zero Hour, a youth-led organization, with three friends online. We were youth who just wanted a livable planet. This organization became Zero Hour, a youth led climate organization. We organized the Youth Climate March on July 21, 2018. We had a Youth Climate Lobby Day, where 180 youth from across the country lobbied for the [Zero Hour Platform](#) and the No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge. We also had a Youth Climate Art Festival where we brought together art, music, and climate action. I love my work with Zero Hour because we push for change on all levels. Change starts from the ground up; we must work locally, nationally, and globally. One of the key aspects of Zero Hour's platform is that it provides a variety of solutions systematically, and for individuals. Climate change is an issue that needs to be fought on a global and at a household level in order to achieve a livable planet.

Zero Hour will soon be launching a campaign that will educate youth across the country about climate justice and how systems of oppression intersect with the climate crisis.

I am the Co-Executive and Art Director of Zero Hour. I wake up early to go to school. Send out emails on the school bus, during lunch, and on the school bus home. I do my homework and then work for Zero Hour for hours. I stay up till 1 am almost every night, sometime 3 am, doing calls, emails, and homework for my AP classes. That's how important this issue is to me.

This lifestyle is something I'd never imagine myself pursuing. I always saw myself having a normal high school experience with my friends. But I had to act on climate because it just didn't seem many of the adults were. We are spending our teenage years, which you only have once, are being spent organizing for something we didn't choose to happen to us. None of us wanted this burden to be passed down onto us.

Why do we have to clean up the mess that past generations, and YOUR GENERATION, has left us?

People always ask if I have hope. As a young climate activist, people look to youth like me and see hope. Everytime that happens I lose hope, because the adults are looking for us to solve the problem. But how can we solve it if many people doing nothing. My hope is equal to the time we have left. We have such little time left, so we must act upon that hope, not just stare at it ignorantly from a distance. Adults are glad that we are taking action, but we need YOU adults to take action too. We, the youth, need everyone to act in order to solve climate change, before it is too late.

According to the [United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](#), that time is in 11 years. We have until 2030 to kick our addiction to fossil fuels if we want to have a chance at keeping warming below 1.5C. I will be 28 years old in 2030. The rest of my life, then, will depend on the decisions we make today. As the latest [National Climate Assessment](#) shows, I've already lived my whole life in a changed climate.

My peers have similar worries.

Youth all over the world have held strikes from school to bring attention to climate change, and its effect on my generation. On March 15, youth from all across the United States will be on strike to protest and demand climate action. Specifically, **Zero Hour and the youth striking will be asking you, members of Congress, to support the Green New Deal and act on climate. Please, listen to the youth of this country.**

Climate change may not have affected you personally yet, but many individuals all around the world are already coping with the effects from the suffocating and deadly wildfires in California to the massive flooding from the most vicious hurricanes our United States has ever seen.

The magnitudes of natural disasters will only continue to increase as climate change grows stronger. There will be more floods. Deserts will be drier. This past summer's heatwave has already shown that summer is getting hotter. These irregular weather patterns are from the

changing climate. Climate is different than weather, but climate has a significant impact on the weather.

Here are some more natural disasters from just the past three years:

November 8, 2018	Paradise, CA	Camp Fire	79
September 13, 2018	Carolinas	Hurricane Florence	42+
September 9, 2018	Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, and southern China	Super Typhoon Mangkhut	69+
July 23, 2018	Redding California	The Carr Fire	8, 1,604 homes destroyed
July, 2018	Japan	Japan Flooding And Mudslides	122+
May 2, 2018	Western and Northern India	India Dust Storms	125+
January 9, 2018	Southern California	Montecito Mudslides	21, 129 homes destroyed
August 14, 2018	Sierra Leone, West Africa	Sierra Leone floods and landslides	1000+
August 17, 2017	Houston, Texas	Hurricane Harvey	68
August 30, 2017		Hurricane Irma	52
July 2017	Indian Subcontinent	2017 South Asian floods	1,300+
September 16, 2017	Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands	Hurricane Maria	2,975
January 23, 2016	US Northeast	Winter Storm Jonas	49
September 28, 2016	Atlantic Ocean	Hurricane Matthew	603

Systems of oppression have magnified the effects of climate change. Systems including - racism, patriarchy, colonialism, homophobia, ableism - have made the effects of climate change disproportionately affect certain groups of people.

People of color are disproportionately incarcerated, with black people incarcerated at more than [5 times](#) the rate of white people. Prisoners were forced to clean up toxic areas after the BP [oil spill](#). They're also fighting [wildfires](#), and cleaning up after [hurricanes](#) and [floods](#).

In the event of a natural disaster, [prison protocol](#) (in some prisons) is to lock prisoners in their cells while the staff evacuates the building, leaving prisoners to die if the prison is hit. Example, when [Hurricane Katrina](#) hit New Orleans. This past weekend, the inmates at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn were left without heat during the frigid temperatures of the polar vortex, that [was linked to climate change](#).

Often, the majority of industrial fossil fuel projects are constructed around or near [minority neighborhoods](#), impacting the health of those peoples.

And climate change's impacts are even more dire in developing countries.

Colonialism refers to control over a piece of land and its people by a more dominant power. One example on the negative impact climate change has with colonialism, patriarchy, and racism is the impact on girls of color in the US who are the missing and murdered Indigenous girls. Fossil fuel companies hire land men to build pipelines carrying crude oil through Indigenous lands. Some of these [men rape native girls on their land](#). Monica Jack, Aielah Saric-Auger, and Cheyenne Begay are some of the Indigenous women that have been assaulted on their land. These are just a few of the girls that were endangered. And trans native girls are more likely to be victim to sexual assault by some of these men that build the pipelines. Sometimes pipelines leak crude oil into the water source. This pollutes drinking water for the Indigenous people.

Homophobia, the hate against the LGBTQIA community, has led transgender people to be two times more likely to be homeless. Just last week, many homeless people passed away due to the extremely cold temperatures. Many homeless people don't have access to the resources to survive when climate extremes take place.

Many people's voices in the climate crisis who make up our country have been ignored. The Indigenous communities have been ignored. People of color have been ignored. Women have been ignored. The LGBTQIA community have been ignored. Disabled people have been ignored. [The Youth have been ignored](#). To solve climate change, we must work with the people, the wildlife, and nature.

I was given the honor and opportunity to speak at the United Nations for International Day of the Girl last October 11. I spoke about climate change's effect on girls around the world. Climate change's effects are intruding on a successful life filled with happiness for many girls in

developing countries. After natural disasters, sexual violence in the area increase. Girls are more likely to be raped in disaster struck areas.

I stood next to a girl from the Philippines at the International Day of the Girl event. I will never forget her story. Her name was Hani. Her community in the Philippines was hit with a typhoon. She lost many things including important legal documents and more. But she also lost her best friend.

I don't want to lose my best friend.

I don't want to lose my brother.

I don't want to lose my family in India.

I don't want to lose myself.

The youth who fight day and night for you to take action on climate change don't want to lose out on their future. That is why we fight, and why we will continue to fight.

One cause of climate change that many people overlook is industrial animal agriculture. This industry has contributed to [between 14.5 and 18%](#) of the greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere.

What disappoints many other youth and I, is that there are elected officials prioritizing money from fossil fuel corporations over the lives of my generation. I hope you aren't one of them.

Our relentless greed, our relentless thirst for things that don't make us happy, has taken away our connection from earth. Basic necessities - food, shelter, air, water - have been critically endangered because we are in a mass extinction. It is surreal that profit is being put above the people. Adults have been compromised by greed.

Not only are these actions of these corporations hurting people, but it is also harming the wildlife of this planet. Earth is now in the 6th mass extinction in all of history. More species are reaching extinction. The last mass extinction was the one that killed all the dinosaurs. Humanity's legacy on earth will be that we killed a significant amount of species on this planet. As Elizabeth Kolbert said, if you look closely in your backyard you can see species going extinct at this moment. Humanity can not survive without the biodiversity of the environment.

I have to take an inhaler multiple times a week, sometimes multiple times a day. Clean air is a necessity of life. How can “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” be pursued when clean air and clean water is harder to have?

The United States’ inaction on climate change is violating my right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as a citizen of the United States.

I ask that you push your efforts into climate legislation, for the sake of my generation. I ask that you believe in science. I ask that you make sure the sacrificed time and efforts of the youth are not ignored. I ask that you recognize climate justice.

I ask that you listen to my voice.

Nadia Nazar