

Bill McKibben's Speech at the First Church, Seattle, July 2, 2024

Evidence of Climate Change

- Hurricane Beryl is evidence of climate change with water temperature 3-4 degrees higher than average. Delhi in India has temperatures over 120F. Death Valley may challenge record of 130F.
- Now we are seeing effects in real time; ocean temperatures are spiking.
- Temperatures are the highest in 125,000 years, when humans were emerging. We are now over the 1.5C set in Paris Agreement. At 3C we will have 1-3 billion climate refugees; that is 1000 times the number of refugees that have entered in Europe.
- Vermont had record rain and flooding; we can recover but other countries cannot. 10,000 people drowned in Libya from floods.

What can we do?

- Now that danger has reached highest point, we are starting on renewable energy, solar power. IEA said we need to increase pace 50% over next few years. Prices have come down 90% on solar.
- California has provided 100% of energy from renewables one day last week.

What would we avoid?

- 40% of ship traffic is fossil fuels, coal, oil and gas. Decarbonization can reduce this.
- Fossil fuels kill 9 million from pollution, this pollution is no longer necessary.
- Koch brothers deformed our democracy and Putin launched land war in Europe; we need to deprive these people of their power.

Why is it important?

- IPCC has said we need to cut emissions by half by 2030.
- Fossil fuel has done everything they can to slow down transition with denial.
- Now they are using "solutions denial" to delay action.

We need to build movements. I get arrested to get our leaders to see what it takes. We have to build on our divestment movement. I have founded Third Act to take advantage of the activism and voting power of old people. It is no longer true that older people are more conservative, but older people are now veterans of the 1960's and 1970's.

What is the most important thing we can do? Be less of an individual and join together in groups large enough to make change.

McKibben then pivoted to discussing I-2117: Washington has been magnificent – the kayaks vs. Shell, Cherry Point, Climate Solutions, Gov. Inslee – and you have Climate Commitment Act. Brian Heywood has distorted the gasoline price issue, while the CCA has worked for electric buses, tribes and farms. That kind of change is threatening to fossil fuel interests. You can take the pledge against 2117, join Third Act and other groups.