



Green Sense 09/07/2014

Have You Been Waiting to Take Action?

If you've wanted to do something to demand that world leaders act more forcefully against the factors impacting our climate then join the climate march in New York City on Sept 21st, <http://peoplesclimate.org/march/>. The website for the people's climate march lists transportation and schedules for this major climate event.

September 21st was chosen because this is the weekend before world leaders will be gathered in NYC for a landmark United Nations climate meeting. The plan for the march is to peacefully flood the streets in historic numbers, both in New York City and in solidarity events around the world. The organizers have over **950** businesses, unions, faith groups, schools, social justice groups, environmental groups and others, all working together.

World leaders including political and corporate leaders, are coming to New York City for a UN summit on the climate crisis on September 23rd. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is urging governments to support an ambitious global agreement to dramatically reduce global warming pollution.

Bill McKibben wrote on global warming's "terrifying new math" in May, in 'Rolling Stone Magazine' (www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/a-call-to-arms-an-invitation-to-demand-action-on-climate-change-20140521). Here's some of what he said:

McKibben expects this march in NYC will be the largest demonstration yet of "human resolve in the face of climate change. Sure, some of it will be exciting – who doesn't like the chance to march and sing and carry a clever sign through the canyons of Manhattan? But this is dead-serious business, a signal moment in the gathering fight of human beings to do something about global warming before it's too late to do anything but watch."

He explains, "Since Ban Ki-moon runs the United Nations, he's altogether aware that we're making no progress as a planet on slowing climate change. He presided over the collapse of global-climate talks at Copenhagen in 2009, and he knows the prospects are not much better for the 'next Copenhagen' in Paris in December 2015. In order to spur those talks along, he's invited the world's leaders to New York in late September for a climate summit.

"But the 'world's leaders' haven't been leaders on climate change – at least not leaders enough. Like many of us, they've attended to the easy stuff, but they haven't set the world on a fundamentally new course."

McKibben points to some progress, such as the new mileage standards for cars, but he notes that the US has also opened vast swaths of territory to oil drilling and coal mining. He points out that summer sea ice in the Arctic has mostly disappeared, and scientists have discovered the

depth of changes in ocean chemistry: that seawater is 30 percent more acidic than just four decades ago, and it's already causing trouble for creatures at the bottom of the marine food chain.

McKibben's call to action includes the sad facts that the U.S. weathered the hottest year in its history in 2012, with a major drought affecting our corn harvest, and with a continuing drought in California. Just a few blocks south of the U.N. itself, last year Hurricane Sandy turned the Lower East Side of New York "into a branch of the East River".

So, now there's an action that you can volunteer to raise your voice along with many others. You can join the climate march in the streets of NYC for September 21st, or for the week where there will be creative non-violent actions for Climate Justice. If you can't make it to NYC, you can organize a creative action in your home community that highlights local solutions to climate change and you can spread the word among your networks and contacts.

On all levels: local, national and international, the march is calling on decision-makers to support the building of 'Just Transition' pathways towards "local, living economies". The language is hyperbolic, but the call comes at a critical time for decision makers to act. Don't wait for the next storm or tornado. This is the opportunity to make your voice heard.

A column by Reading Climate Committee members Gina Snyder and Michele Benson