

A Call for Action on Climate Change 'We have a voice and we care'

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Climate activists demonstrate in support for action on **climate change** Friday afternoon from the Evergreen Boulevard overpass on Interstate 5. Demonstrators included Sarah Collmer, middle, who brought her two daughters to the event. "It's important that we stand up for our kids' futures," she said.

Climate activist Kim Harless honks her horn while driving past fellow demonstrators Friday afternoon on the Evergreen Boulevard overpass on Interstate 5. The event was one of several demonstrations in Vancouver in support of action on **climate change**.

Amanda Cowan/The Columbian

Marcy Maxwell of Vancouver, seated, joins her grandson, Columbia River High School sophomore Calvin Andres, 15, white shirt, and other demonstrators as they raise awareness for the planet at Esther Short Park on Friday.

Body

They may not be old enough to vote yet, but dozens of Clark County teenagers are sure old enough to know they'll be bearing the brunt of global **climate change** - and they want people to know it.

A crowd of students, mostly from Columbia River High School, skipped school Friday morning to demonstrate in Esther Short Park against what they describe as government failures to address the steady uptick of warming across the planet. Another group of about 30 met at the Evergreen Boulevard overpass at Interstate 5, waving signs and holding a large banner declaring "Act on **climate**."

"This is our future," said Nia Stillman, a 16-year-old Columbia River junior at the demonstration in the park. "We're trying to make it known that we have a voice and we care."

Vancouver's showings were nothing like the Portland or Seattle demonstrations that drew thousands of students for Friday's Global **Climate** Strike, but those in the small crowds were nonetheless vocal in their insistence that government at all levels take action to reduce carbon emissions.

The students in Esther Short Park held signs, waving at passersby who honked as they drove through downtown. The students also collected letters they plan to submit to Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-Battle Ground, asking her to support legislation to reduce fossil fuel outputs and support investments in green energy.

"I feel like it's really powerful that we're out here," Nia said.

Calvin Andres, a 15-year-old freshman at Columbia River, was joined on the line by his grandmother, Marcy Maxwell. Maxwell perched in a chair holding a sign that read "There is no Planet B," while her grandson hoisted a sign reading "1.5° more and we're DEAD."

"I don't want to see all my grandchildren not have any place to live," Maxwell said.

Skipping school, meanwhile, wasn't a concern for Calvin - in fact, that's the least of his concerns unless massive **change** isn't made to address **climate change**.

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"You're not going to have any school in an apocalyptic world," he said with the same touch of fatalism as his sign.

Later in the afternoon, demonstrators stood on the Evergreen Boulevard overpass, waving signs at commuters headed home. That demonstration was spearheaded by the Southwest Washington hub of the Sunrise Movement, a group of grassroots activists working to promote the Green New Deal, sweeping legislation proposed to address climate change and create new jobs in renewable energy.

Mike Ellison, a retired science teacher, waved a flag featuring a photo of planet Earth. Ellison said he had been teaching about climate change since the 1980s. This is a longstanding issue, he said, and the time for action is now.

He added his excitement and pride at seeing young people protesting and speaking out about the issue.

"I think that they realize what's going on and they're rightfully concerned," he said. "I'm glad they're taking responsibility for their own educations."

By way of example of those young activists, take Sarah Collmer's daughters, 12-year-old Lucy and 9-year-old Vivian. The family was among those who attended the afternoon protest.

"They ask a lot about what climate change will mean for their futures," Collmer said of her daughters. "It's frightening and overwhelming for kids to understand."

Collmer's mother, Edie Cotton, also joined her family, rounding out a three-generation demonstration.

"It's their future security and if we're not engaged and supportive of that, we've lost it," Cotton said, giving her granddaughters' shoulders a squeeze. "How can I not want a better world for these kids?"

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