



# Climate First!, Inc.

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

### Youthful Enthusiasm Drove the Climate Movement in 2019



*Climate Strike March, Washington, D.C.; Sept. 20, 2019, above  
Climate Strike, Silver Spring, MD; Sept. 27, 2019, below*

Due to an infusion of energy from young activists such as Greta Thunberg from Sweden, Maryland's own, Kallan Benson, and groups like the Sunrise Movement, and Fridays for Future, the climate movement switched into high gear in 2019. The youth, with their seemingly limitless energy, unassailable moral authority, and pure determination, transformed the effort to save the world's unravelling climate. And, of course, Climate First! was affected by the young rabble-rousers--its bank actions morphed into "strikes", and not surprisingly, they became bigger and louder.



Climate First! made some changes in its #DefundClimateChange campaign. Due to the stark warnings from the latest science, Climate First! organizers began demanding that Wells Fargo bank, and later Chase Bank, start divesting from fossil fuels. Also, after running our 26<sup>th</sup> consecutive monthly action at a Wells Fargo Bank branch in late May, we decided to switch our target bank to JPMorgan Chase bank. The strategic shift was mostly due to the fact that Chase Bank had been recently discovered to be the #1 funder—by far--of fossil fuels of any lender in the world since the signing in 2015 of the Paris Climate Accord. Add to the mix that

Chase was in the process of expanding into the D.C. metro area, and Climate First! was raring to harass a new bank over its climate misdeeds.

Over the course of 2019, the campaign ran 10 direct actions in the metro D.C. area, split evenly between Wells Fargo bank branches and Chase Bank branches. Of the 10 bank actions, Climate First! activists:

- 1) Delivered a “demand” letter with other documents to 6 branch managers or employees;
- 2) Caused the temporary shut-down of 2 bank branches,
- 3) Entered 2 bank branches with signs and began chanting, among other things; and
- 4) Likely caused 2 branches to hire security for the day.

Some highlights of 2019 follow.

## JANUARY



*Extinction Rebellion action, Wash., D.C, Jan. 26, 2019*

Into the new year, Climate First! continued its relationship with the recently-formed D.C. chapter of the Extinction Rebellion (XR), helping the group organize another action in Washington, D.C. While no civil disobedience (CD) occurred, the group’s blocking of a major street clearly showed that CD would be sometimes used in its future events.

## FEBRUARY



*Annual Meeting, Wash., D.C.; Feb. 24, 2019*

Climate First! held its sixth Annual Meeting at the Tenley Library in Washington, D.C. We ate delicious home-cooked food as Barbara Briggs, a former labor union activist now working on climate issues, shared her thoughts on what climate activists could learn from labor’s organizing strategies. A lively discussion followed.



## MARCH



*Capitol Hill, Wash., D.C.; March 12, 2019*

When Wells Fargo's CEO testified on Capitol Hill, we joined forces with the Sierra Club in organizing a nearby rally to protest the bank's funding of fossil fuel projects.

As spring approached, Climate First! began to embrace the burgeoning youth climate movement by attending the D.C. Youth Climate Strike.



*D.C. Youth Climate Strike, Wash., D.C.; March 15, 2019*

## APRIL

Our campaign against Wells Fargo picked-up steam in Washington, D.C. during our 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive monthly action against the lender. We entered the bank branch with a photographer to give our message loud and clear. Watch the video of the action: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yljhbGgkFQ>.



*Action inside Wells Fargo, Wash., D.C., April 10, 2019*



The warming temperatures of spring brought the start of the festival season for Climate First!. We “tabled” at numerous outdoor festivals, including Montgomery County’s GreenFest, which was held at the incomparable Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Maryland. The well-



*An electric police car on display*

attended event offered a cornucopia of delicious food, presentations of clean energy technologies, advocacy from nonprofit groups, and products for sale by environmentally-friendly businesses. Climate First!, of course, had plenty to offer to passersby regarding our work to save the climate.



*GreenFest, Wheaton, MD; April 28, 2019*

## MAY



*Action against Wells Fargo, Clarendon, VA; May 31, 2019*

Click here to watch the video of Climate First!’s action above, our 26 consecutive monthly action against Wells Fargo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yljhbGgkFQ>.

## SEPTEMBER



*Chase Bank action, Wash., D.C.; Sept 19, 2019*

Climate First! began transitioning its activism toward JPMorgan Chase. And in September, we teamed-up with Green America in Washington, D.C. to run our first Chase Bank action. And then, the very next day, we attended the high-energy D.C. Climate Strike March. We were captivated by the energy of the youth as we marched to the U.S. Capitol.



*Global Climate Strike, Wash., D.C.; Sept. 20, 2019*





*Climate Strike, Silver Spring, MD; Sept. 27, 2019*

As the year went on, Climate First! continued to support the young activists concerned that the climate crisis would wreck their futures. In late September, our climate “strike” was likely our largest event ever with around 51 people, many high schoolers, participating.

## NOVEMBER



*Wash., D.C.; Oct. 25, 2019*



*Image from Mandel Ngan/AFP via Getty Images*

Alarmed by the climate change issue, the actress and long-ago anti-Vietnam war activist, Jane Fonda, started hosting in the fall her outdoor “Fire Drill Fridays” (FDF) rallies every week at the U.S. Capitol. In an effort to jump-start congressional action on the unravelling climate, the weekly event highlighted an issue related to the crisis, and offered experts and various luminaries a chance to expound on the issue. Climate First! attended some of Jane’s rallies.

The fall and winter brought more climate strikes at Chase Banks, this one led by Climate First! volunteer leader, Bernie S., the day after Thanksgiving. The bank responded to the event by closing for business. Success!



*Rally at Chase Bank, Silver Spring, MD; Nov. 29, 2019*

## DECEMBER

Climate First! closed-out the year by running two simultaneous bank actions just before Christmas against Chase Bank, one in McLean, Virginia, and the other in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland. While neither action was well-attended during the holiday time, the McLean Chase branch apparently hired security guards to protect the bank from these two dangerous-looking protesters.



*Chase Bank Rally, McLean, VA; Dec. 20, 2019*

In close, as the U.S. administration continues to delay, if not blatantly sabotage, critically-needed efforts to address the overwhelming threats posed by the climate crisis, Climate First! will continue its work to push U.S. corporations, such as JPMorgan Chase, to stop funding climate-wrecking fossil fuel projects. We believe that it is imperative that the U.S. government commit to a massive response—something akin to the Green New Deal—to avoid an unraveling of the climate. However, until there is a major “overhaul” of the administration, it seems likely that efforts to effect dramatic change vis-à-vis the climate crisis will be more successful if financial companies are encouraged to end their investing in fossil fuels. And as corporations wield their considerable powers towards addressing the climate issue, invariably government leaders at all levels will certainly feel the

pressure to join them. And, of course, voters will have enormous effects on just how much local and state governments, as well as the federal government, get behind the drive to save our climate.

Underlying those societal pillars are the climate activists and their supporters who work tirelessly to move the U.S. society towards addressing the greatest threat that the world has ever known. As a result of their undying commitment to saving the climate, Climate First! remains guardedly confident that the world will be able to avoid the worse effects—and then some--of our wounded climate.

###

Climate First! is forever indebted to 1) its' Board of Directors, which helped set the direction for the organization over the past year, while its individual members gave time to various projects; 2) its "staff" and many volunteers, who were critical to the organization's successful events throughout the year; and 3) its' loyal supporters who gave generous donations that permitted the nonprofit to continue its climate protection work.

#### Board of Directors – Dec. 31, 2019

1. Carrie Biggs-Adams, Treasurer (CA)
2. Ted Conwell, President (MD)
3. Sasan Dehghan (MD)
4. Walter Ebmeyer (MD)
5. Adriana Henao (VA)
6. Molly Snyder (NY)

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#### Mission Statement

Climate First! strives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean energy in the Mid-Atlantic region, by organizing grassroots efforts that encourage corporations and local governments to think climate first.

Climate First! is a nonprofit, tax exempt 501 (c)(3) corporation.

Annual Report prepared by Climate First!, Inc.- February 28, 2020.



# Climate First!

|                                    | 12/31/2013      | 12/31/2014      | 12/31/2015      | 12/31/2016      | 12/31/2017       | 12/31/2018      | 12/31/2019       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Operations Statement               |                 |                 |                 |                 |                  |                 |                  |
| Income from Donations              | 2,851.80        | 4190.00         | 7,596.00        | 8,408.00        | 7,313.78         | 10,491.86       | 3,520.33         |
| Income from Grants                 |                 |                 | 500.00          | 0.00            | 0.00             | 0.00            | 0.00             |
| Income from Item Sales             | <u>430.00</u>   | <u>90.00</u>    | <u>80.00</u>    | <u>50.00</u>    | <u>40.00</u>     | <u>0.00</u>     | <u>133.00</u>    |
| Total Income                       | 3,281.80        | 4280.00         | 8,176.00        | 8,458.00        | 7,353.78         | 10,491.86       | 3,653.33         |
| Expenses                           |                 |                 |                 |                 |                  |                 |                  |
| Operations                         |                 |                 |                 |                 |                  |                 |                  |
| Cost of Items                      | 491.40          | 0.00            | 70.20           | 35.10           | 28.08            | 0.00            | 0.00             |
| Registrations (IRS, Reg Agent, MD) | 1,017.00        | 189.00          | 189.00          | 243.04          | 224.23           | 189.00          | 299.00           |
| Memberships                        | 100.00          | 227.00          | 118.00          | 100.00          | 95.00            | 100.00          | 0.00             |
| Outreach incl Web                  | 385.00          | 135.85          | 306.78          | 474.94          | 1,955.87         | 567.44          | 494.81           |
| Professional Fees                  | 0.00            | 310.00          | 265.00          | 330.00          | 231.00           | 280.00          | 280.00           |
| Other Operating Costs              | 280.85          | 378.16          | 1,824.45        | 2,510.90        | 6,134.50         | 4,753.54        | 5,496.85         |
| Total Operations Costs             | 2,274.25        | 1,240.01        | 2,773.43        | 3,693.98        | 8,668.68         | 5,889.98        | 6,570.66         |
| Programs                           | 575.15          | 1377.34         | 2,251.11        | 737.27          | 1,579.13         | 836.84          | 887.34           |
| Fund-Raising Commissions           |                 |                 | 777.50          | 1,101.78        | 0.00             | 0.00            | 0.00             |
| Fines and Penalties                |                 |                 | 100.00          | 0.00            | 0.00             | 0.00            | 0.00             |
| Total Expenses                     | <u>2,849.40</u> | <u>2,617.35</u> | <u>5,902.04</u> | <u>5,533.03</u> | <u>10,247.81</u> | <u>6,726.82</u> | <u>7,458.00</u>  |
| Net Income                         | <u>432.40</u>   | <u>1,662.65</u> | <u>2,273.96</u> | <u>2,924.97</u> | <u>-2,894.03</u> | <u>3,765.04</u> | <u>-3,804.67</u> |
| Beginning Fund Balance             | 0.00            | 432.40          | 2,095.05        | 4,369.01        | 7,293.98         | 4,399.95        | 8,164.99         |
| Net Income                         | <u>432.40</u>   | <u>1,662.65</u> | <u>2,273.96</u> | <u>2,924.97</u> | <u>-2,894.03</u> | <u>3,765.04</u> | <u>-3,804.67</u> |
| Ending Fund Balance                | <u>432.40</u>   | <u>2,095.05</u> | <u>4,369.01</u> | <u>7,293.98</u> | <u>4,399.95</u>  | <u>8,164.99</u> | <u>4,360.32</u>  |