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Contact: Miriam Larson, ReWriting/ReRighting Cassandra Project, mimbyla@gmail.com, 217-714-6300

LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE TARGETS BANKS: CITIZENS DEMAND BANKS DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

This Friday, Champaign Urbana will join more than 2,000 cities around the world¹ participating in the November 29th Global Climate Strike. Participants in the non-partisan ReWriting/ReRighting Cassandra Project will provide numerous ways for residents to demand Chase Bank, Citigroup, Bank of America and Wells Fargo stop funding fossil fuel extraction that contributes to climate imbalance by increasing atmospheric carbon.. A “climate cafe” will be held outside of the IDEA store in Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana from noon to 5pm. There, visitors can learn about divestment and climate science basics while enjoying tea and cookies in friendly company. From 1-3pm, Faith in Place will hold #CUGreenFriday, offering alternatives to shopping. At 5:30pm, participants will gather at the south east corner of West Side Park in Champaign. At 5:45pm, they will sing and walk to Chase Bank where several participants will cut up Chase credit cards to protest the bank’s position as the number one investor in fossil fuel projects². From 6-6:30pm participants will share information about how others can divest from fossil fuels as they circulate in downtown Champaign.

Miriam Larson says, “Today I participate in the global climate strike because I want the children I love to grow up in a safe and healthy world. Illinois has already seen an increase in heat waves, severe floods, droughts and air quality alerts. We must act immediately to transition Illinois to renewable energy and non-extractive industry. A just transition will create green jobs and more resilient communities.” Miriam was inspired to leave her day job as an elementary school librarian and to work on local climate justice initiatives.

Over the past three months, the Re/Re Cassandra Project has convened a group of local, national and international citizens, artists, teachers, and activists to study, create, and act to stop climate change. Leading up to the November 29th event, the project held three consecutive “Community Potlucks on Climate Action” to increase literacy and engagement on climate-related topics. Potluck topics included understanding the history of the climate strikes, learning the basics of climate science from a UIUC professor, and understanding what divestment is and how it works in terms of impacting fossil fuel production and alternatives.

Katherine Bustin, a participant from Germany, has brought a public awareness campaign to Champaign Urbana that she calls Climate Cafes. These informal, friendly, non-partisan public conversations have been held twice a week in Champaign Urbana for the past couple months at Urbana Farmers Markets and in downtown Champaign in order to create space for people to

talk about the potentially paralyzing topic of catastrophic climate change. As the Re/Re Cassandras explain: “You can’t fix a problem you aren’t talking about.”

About the November 29th Global Climate Strike, Katherine says, “We finally need to treat the climate crisis as an emergency. It is the biggest threat in human history and we will not accept that our environment, our health and homes are being destroyed so that fossil fuel companies can make more profit. Today we are protesting together on every continent because the consequences of catastrophic climate change are affecting every single person. We are fighting to protect nature and build a world that is sustainable for all. We have to work together on a global scale and hold companies and our governments accountable.”

Though there was mass participation on the UIUC campus during the last Global Climate Strike in September, Champaign-Urbana residents haven’t been visibly active off campus during global climate strikes. That will change on November 29th. Following the strike, Climate Cafes (<http://cuclimatecafe.com>) will continue bringing area residents together to support each other in taking action to address the impacts of the climate crisis.

- 1 - Fridays for Future Statistics - <https://www.fridaysforfuture.org/statistics/list-countries>
- 2 - Banking on Climate Change Report - https://www.ran.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Banking_on_Climate_Change_2019_vFINAL1.pdf

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