



LETTERS TO THE FUTURE –A NATIONAL PROJECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE—BEGINS MEDIA ROLLOUT

Alt newspapers across US to publish LETTERS TO THE FUTURE predicting the outcome of the 2015 Paris Climate Conference—before the talks begin. Participants include Pulitzer Prize winners, MacArthur “genius” winners and an ex-NASA astronaut

(November 19, 2015 Sacramento CA) From the dystopian to the optimistic, from college students to Pulitzer Prize winners, LETTERS TO THE FUTURE--a national effort to encourage people from all walks of life to write six generations into the future about climate change--has so far exceeded the expectations of the project's organizers and generated original reflections on what has been called the greatest challenge facing the planet.

The campaign (with hundreds of letters from the public continuing to be posted at letterstothefuture.org) puts a spotlight on the importance of world leaders agreeing to a global climate treaty in Paris. Dozens of celebrated public figures joined in drafting letters to future generations of their own families, predicting the success or failure of the Paris talks.

In an unusual coordinated effort, LETTERS TO THE FUTURE is a media project involving alternative weeklies and other media across the United States that will publish in print select letters over the next three weeks, potentially speaking to more than four million readers in print and 15 million unique viewers online. **The national rollout of the project began today.** The project was orchestrated out of the offices of the Sacramento News & Review and sponsored by the Association of Alternative Newsmedia and The Media Consortium.

The precedent for LETTERS TO THE FUTURE was the occasion of *The Kyoto Project* with the Association of Alternative Newspapers (AAN). Fifty alternative weeklies across the country published the shared climate crisis articles around the 10-year anniversary of the Kyoto Accord. Readership for *The Kyoto Project* numbered in the millions.

To date, LETTERS TO THE FUTURE has attracted letters from all over. (con't)

...From writers across North America

Jane Smiley, *Author, Pulitzer Prize Winner*

“West America was once a beautiful place—not the parched desert landscape that it is now. Where you see abandoned, flooded cities, we saw smooth beaches and easy waves.”

T.C. Boyle, *Author, Winner of PEN/Faulkner Award, Finalist for the National Book Award*

“At least you don’t have to worry about abattoirs, piggeries, feed lots, bovine intestinal gases and the like—or, for that matter, the ozone layer, which would have been long gone by the time you started walking on two legs.” (T.C. Boyle wrote his LETTER TO THE FUTURE to... rats.)

Kim Stanley Robinson, *Author, Nebula and Hugo Award Winner*

“Dear Great-Great-Grandchildren, I’ve been worried about you for a long time. But recently I’ve seen signs that we might give you a better result. At this moment the issue is still in doubt. But a good path leading from me to you can be discerned.”

...as well as performing artists

Nitanju Bolade Casel, *Member of the Grammy Award-Winning Troupe Sweet Honey in the Rock*

“Please know that there were also visionaries who worked endlessly for positive changes in this world—changes to benefit the many, not just the few; you may have to do the same.”

David Harrington, *Violinist, Artistic Director, Kronos Quartet*

“All those who object to the unsurvivable situation humanity faces must mobilize every available resource to circumvent dire shortsightedness.”

...To those active in the world of politics

Annie Leonard, *Story of Stuff and Exec Director, Greenpeace USA*

“Paris ... paved the way for an era of unprecedented innovation, as entrepreneurs and academics fine-tuned the best ways to harness the unlimited power of our wind, waves and sun.”

Jim Hightower, *Author, Public Speaker*

“Even a dead fish can go with the flow, and if the delegates don’t dare to swim against the corporate current, we’re all dead.” **(con’t)**

U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, *United States Senator from Nevada*
“You deserve a chance to experience the beautiful world that I grew up in. ... The idea that our actions could jeopardize your future was simply unbearable.”

Bill McKibben, *Author, Educator and Environmentalist*
“By the time the great Paris climate conference of 2015 rolled around, many of us were inclined to cynicism.”

Sen. Kevin de León, *President Pro Tempore, CA State Senate*
“This fight is larger than me, larger than any industry, state or nation. It’s about you and the future of your family.”

...from young and old

Julia Brabenec, *Retired Orchardist and Gardener* I want to tell you a story: It began in 1926 when I was born, and is near to being finished in 2015. The world that I was born in was not a perfect world. Not everyone had all they needed for a good life, to raise their children and enjoy the bounty of this earth. But it was a grand world, beautiful and filled with resources for its people.

Natasha von Kaenel, *Writer, recent college graduate* “It was easy to drive, fun to travel and the joy that comes from a steaming shower is so delicious, even in a state plagued by drought.”

From an astronaut, who has seen Earth from far, far away....

Stephen Robinson, *Astronaut (Retired), Research Scientist and Engineering Professor*
“If you look at Earth’s atmosphere from orbit, you can see it “on edge” ... And what you see is the most exquisite, luminous, delicate glow of a layered azure haze holding the Earth like an ethereal eggshell. “That’s it?!” I thought.”

Why the 2015 Paris Climate Conference is so important

Scientists have warned for decades that current greenhouse gas emission trends have put the Earth on track for calamitous storms, floods, droughts and rising oceans. But the world’s governments have yet to sign a legally binding agreement to do what it takes to avert climate disaster. The UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015 is humanity’s last best chance to finally get this done. Environmentalist and former U.S. Vice President and Nobel Laureate Al Gore has said, literally, that “the future of the world” depends on the outcome of the Paris talks. (con’t)

Here's the complete list of letters released on 11/18:

- Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Jane Smiley
- Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Geraldine Brooks;
- Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jack Miles:
- T.C. Boyle, winner of the Penn/Faulkner Award;
- Bill McKibben, 350.org;
- MacArthur "Genius" Award winner Rebecca Newberger Goldstein;
- Senator Harry Reid;
- Artistic Director, Kronos Quartet, David Harrington
- Kim Stanley Robinson, winner of the Hugo and Nebula awards;
- Michael Pollan, author, journalist, activist;
- Aisha Kahlil, Carol Maillard, Nitanju Bolade Casel and Louise Robinson, from the Grammy Award-Winning Troupe Sweet Honey in the Rock
- Dr. Stephen Robinson, former NASA astronaut;
- Annie Leonard (*The Story of Stuff*);
- Anti-coal activist Alexis Bonogofsky;
- Award-winning writer and filmmaker Donnell Alexander;
- Political activist and radio commentator Jim Hightower;
- Kevin de Leon, President pro tempore of the California State Senate;
- Author Pam Houston;
- Rhea Suh, President of the Natural Resources Defense Council;
- Roxana Robinson, Winner, James Webb Award for Distinguished Fiction; and activist and former legislator Tom Hayden.

LETTERS TO THE FUTURE will provide the letters to American delegates and accredited observers attending the conference to read, absorb and share them with COP21 Climate Talks in Paris. Letters continue to be written and posted online and, given the wide enthusiasm for the project, organizers for LETTERS TO THE FUTURE are discussing how to extend the effort beyond the Paris Climate Talks.

Media contact: Dave Webb
LettersToTheFutureMedia@newsreview.com
530-400-1253
www.LettersToTheFuture.org