

# Opinion: Maine's recent storms show us climate action cannot wait

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February 8, 2024



Young people like me are increasingly worried about the reality of climate change. With the devastating damage brought by recent storms, this reality has become even clearer here in Maine. If we learn anything from the storms it should be that we are out of time – climate change is here and action must happen now to address it. The future of our planet, the future of young people around the world, my future, depends on moving away from polluting fossil fuels to create cleaner and healthier communities. These changes must happen now.

At times, the effects of climate change can seem far away, geographically and temporally. But climate change has already arrived to Maine and it is hitting us hard. Young people are especially aware of this. We saw the three freakish storms that hit Maine in less than a month, causing extensive damage, destroying inadequate infrastructure and taking lives. We feel winter days warming and bringing rain instead of snow. As I try to focus on school and prepare for my future, I can't help the worry I feel about whether I will have a future to prepare for.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Let the recent storms in Maine be a wake-up call. We must come together to take bold action on mitigating climate change and protecting the environment. In local communities, across Maine, nationally, and even internationally. A lot is at stake as we head into a big election year and see climate impacts worsening every day. There is no longer time to wait for money to become available or technology to advance. This action is too urgent.

Maine's recent storms have given us a glimpse into how devastating climate change will be. We have seen culturally and historically important places destroyed, like the fishing shacks washed to sea in South Portland. Numerous people tragically lost their lives in the recent storms. Further loss of both people and culture can be prevented if we move quickly to pass strong policies to tackle the climate crisis and elect leaders who will protect the environment that sustains us. If we fail to act now, we will surely lose more beloved community members and historic landmarks.

As we move forward now with the recovery and rebuilding, we cannot focus just on returning to the way things were. We cannot even just focus on upgrading our infrastructure to withstand future storms. We must go even further to stop the source of these extreme weather events.

The time for action is now. If you care about your future and the future of young people, stand up and fight for change.

While in many ways Maine has been a leader on climate action, a lot more work is urgently needed.

Speak up to your elected officials at all levels of government; support policies that will stop climate change; campaign and vote for candidates who will support these policies; make changes in your own life to lower your carbon footprint; tell your friends and neighbors to take action as well. Together, we can have a big impact and make real progress towards stopping climate change and securing our future.

I urge all Mainers to come together in support of bold climate action that will create a healthy and livable environment now and for generations to come. We cannot wait.

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