

Asa Fortner
119 Brevard Rd
Ashville, NC 28806

Sunday November 12th, 2023

Senator Thom Tillis
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thom Tillis,

My name is Asa Fortner, I am 13, an 8th grader at Francine Delany and I live in Asheville, North Carolina. I am writing to express my concern over the issue of climate change. As the authors of the Pulitzer article “Young Climate Activists warn their Elders: Stop Destroying the Planet” by Emily Baumgaertner, Parth MN, Kate Linthicum said “The Earth is speaking. She tells us that we have no more time.” Taking action against climate change is no longer a choice, it is a priority. Like the activists in the article, I am growing up in a time when the effects of climate change are already being felt and I am trying to warn you. The world has not seen this much carbon dioxide since Mastodons and Woolly Mammoths roamed the earth, 2 million years ago. And more than 1 million plant species are at risk of going extinct. In some regions of Africa the amount of undernourished people has increased by 50 percent in the last decade. Extreme weather events were becoming more frequent and lasting longer. We have pretended that climate change is fake and not a threat for too long, there is no denying the fact that we are killing the planet. The amount of greenhouse gasses are irreversible for centuries to a millenia. According to EPA’s article, “What Climate Change Means for North Carolina”, we have experienced more frequent and severe storms, flooding, and other extreme weather events that have caused significant damage and economic hardship for many communities. Additionally, rising sea levels pose a threat to our coastal areas and species, which are a critical part of our economy and way of life. Greenhouse gasses are also changing our oceans, they are becoming more acidic which poses a threat to coral and aquatic life. The evidence is clear and overwhelming, our planet is experiencing dramatic changes as a result of human activities, and it is imperative that we take action to mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

Executive Order 246 and its goal of cutting our greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and net zero by 2050 and the vow to produce 1.25 million EV cars is a start, but we need to brainstorm more ideas for solutions to this issue. One solution that I would like to propose is the implementation of a carbon tax bill. I know that no state in the US has a carbon tax, but this would create a financial incentive for companies and individuals to reduce their carbon footprint, while also generating revenue that could be used to invest in clean energy technologies and to help communities adapt to the effects of climate change. To keep the world under 2 degrees celsius, our carbon tax would need to be \$75 per metric ton of carbon. Since we signed the Paris agreement in April of 2016 we have made a lot of improvements to the climate crisis, but we can continue these major changes by passing a carbon tax. Since it would increase the prices of fossil fuels, electricity, and products. It will cause fuel producers to lower their prices, and will promote people to switch to lower-carbon fuels in power generation, conserving energy use, and shifting to cleaner vehicles.

Another solution that could help to fight climate change is green walls and roofs in our major cities. In the past few years, we have experienced extreme heat in areas like Raleigh. According to the

national weather services July, 2012 Raleigh experienced a heat index of 105. These features can help to reduce the urban heat island effect, which is causing these heat waves. It would improve air quality, and provide habitat for wildlife. According to the EPA's article on green roofing, all it would take is 20 percent of every fifth building. In addition, green walls and roofs can help to reduce energy costs by providing insulation and shade, which can lower the need for air conditioning during hot weather. On top of that, it looks awesome and would boost our tourist revenue, and the economy in North Carolina.

I urge you to consider these proposals and to implement policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote renewable energy, and protect our natural resources and to support organizations fighting for these solutions. North Carolina has the potential to be a leader in the fight against climate change, and I believe that with your leadership, we can make a significant impact. We owe it to ourselves, to my generation and to future generations to protect our planet and to take responsibility for our role in causing this crisis.

Thank you Thom Tillis for your attention to this important matter,

Asa Fortner