

Media Contact: Lee Stedman
Email: lee.stedman.gaiacoalition@gmail.com
Cell: (414) 520-9410

Climate activists engage in nonviolent civil disobedience at Wells Fargo Bank in response to continued fossil fuel investment; lack of renewable energy investments

Milwaukee, December 6th, 2019 — At 10:30am today, hundreds of people from Milwaukee walked out of their classes and workplaces and gathered at Zeidler Park to demand action on the Global Climate Crisis. The protest began with a rally at Zeidler and included four buses of elementary school students from Greenfield Bilingual Elementary School performed their class Earth Day Rap.

Speakers at the rally included Fabi Maldonado, Racine County Board Supervisor 2nd District, Cheyenne Rupert, Hub Coordinator of Sunrise Milwaukee and Maleak Taylor and Allaysha McBeath, North Division High School student and members of Youth Rising Up.

The march was led by North Division High School's drumline and Mark Denning, an indigenous organizer for The Protectors of the Menomonee River. The march concluded at the Wells Fargo Headquarters on Water Street and Wisconsin Avenue where eleven protestors participated in a peaceful sit-in, as demonstrators took turns walking between crosswalks chanting "Keep the oil in the soil" and "People over profit."

Among the sit-in protesters arrested were Alex Brower, the Substitute Teacher President for the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association Union, Mike Quesada, Co-Founder of Extinction Rebellion Milwaukee, Keshia Patel, Co-Founder of the Gaia Coalition Network, Terry Wiggins of 350 Milwaukee and Jim Kennedy, Hub Coordinator for the Sunrise Movement Milwaukee.

Among the demands of the protesters were for JP Morgan Chase and Wells Fargo stop loaning to fossil fuel companies and their executives, and instead reinvesting those funds in renewable energy, green infrastructure, sustainable and equitable practices; and fair labor practices.

The December 6th Milwaukee Climate Strike was planned by the People's Climate Coalition, a new-united effort to address the Climate Crisis in Milwaukee, in accordance with the International Youth Climate Strikes planned for the same day.

Statements:

Hana, Co-Founder of Extinction Rebellion Milwaukee

"In this time of ecological collapse, we must remember that existing in this time is not about individual survival or personal escape. The global elites must tell the truth about the state of our crisis so that collectively, we take action accordingly. The collective life forms on earth, that we depend on and subsequently betrayed, need our help now. We are called upon to act; to be better ancestors and stewards of the earth."

Cheyenne Rupert, Hub Coordinator at Sunrise Milwaukee

“Combating the Climate Crisis is important to me because having a safe place to call home, and having access to fresh, clean water is vital for our lives.”

Lee Stedman, Co-Founder of the Gaia Coalition Network

“We spend too much time rationalizing change as being associated with whomever hold the elected offices. But, change--real change--comes from our ability to recognize ourselves as a collective community, to bridge our divides, and become the catalysts for citizen-led action. Climate change is an existential threat to all life, and unless we face it in that regard, deteriorating agricultural crop conditions and temperature variations will be the least of our concerns.”

Brian Eisold, Director of Tax March Wisconsin

“The economic reality of the climate crisis is that short term profits can either be invested in long term solutions immediately or catastrophic disaster relief in the near future.”

Ginny Fendt, Field Organizer at NextGen Wisconsin

“The government, influenced by the money of fossil fuel companies, is still denying what scientists have known for years and now we only have a few years to enact real change in order to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. We can no longer pretend that this is an issue we can deal with tomorrow and it has been made clear to us, ‘the youth,’ that this crisis is not being taken seriously. People will say that what we are demanding is extreme, but it is the situation that we are now in that is extreme.”

Event photos attached separately.

People’s Climate Coalition Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/PCC.MKE/>